ABOUT THE ART

Islamic Art

Gallery 2

ACKLAND
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ACKLAND ART MUSEUM
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
101 S. Columbia Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
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MUSEUM HOURS
Wed – Sat 10 AM – 5 PM
Sun 1 PM – 5 PM
2nd Fridays 10 AM – 9 PM
Closed Mondays & Tuesdays.
Closed July 4th, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve
Christmas Day, & New Year’s Day.
About the Art

- These ivory panels may once have decorated a small box.
- They were acquired as objects from Sri Lanka or south India; one scholar has pointed out similarities between these panels and others in an eighteenth-century ivory casket in the Srirangam Temple Museum in Tamil Nadu.
About the Art

- This teardrop-shaped, cut-steel object made of two panels riveted together with steel bars was once half of the main decorative element of an alam, an ornamental standard. It was carried on the battlefield and in parades celebrating the Shi’a holiday at the beginning of Muharram, the first month of the Muslim calendar. The alam was believed to have protective talismanic power.

- Complete, this tour-de-force example of metalwork would have included another pair of similar drop-shaped panels so that each panel pointed towards one of the four compass points.

- The finely cut calligraphy around the outline says, down the right side:

  “Indeed, we sent the Qur’an down during the Night of Decree” (Surah al-Qadr (97), verse 2) and up the left side, in reverse, “The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months” (Surah al-Qadr (7), verse 3).
About the Art

- Mughal Indian windows in all types of buildings were filled with carved stone jalis, perforated to allow for ventilation and control of light. Most importantly, they could be seen through only from the inside, ensuring privacy from the world outside. Jalis differ greatly – some vertical, others horizontal, and others square. Some of their designs are floral, and some are geometric and curvilinear, as in this case.

- The design here is especially complex, featuring rectangles rotating around a central square with two circles organizing the pattern. The square format of this jali reinforces the power of its geometry.
Unidentified artist
Iranian, Fars region
**Candlestick Base**, 14th century
metal with traces of silver inlay
Gift of the William E. Shipp Estate, by exchange, 2019.31.1

**About the Art**

- Medieval Muslim metalwork is known for exquisite finesse of design and execution. The utterly arresting passage of the design on this candlestick base is the flowing calligraphy in a thick encircling band.

- This loose-jointed script called thuluth has a low center of gravity, with soaring uprights – all across a measured but exuberant pattern of repeating circular vine scrolls.

- The inscription indicates that it was made for the use of a wealthy private patron in Fars in northeastern Iran. It says, “Redeemer, exalted of the world, the just, the conquering, the victorious, glory to our lord the king, the most mighty Sultan.”

- The surface retains bits of the silver inlay that originally filled interstices.
Unidentified artist
Turkish, late 16th century
Iznik Plate, c. 1570
Gift of the William E. Shipp Estate, by exchange, 2019.49

About the Art

- Iznik ware, named after the town of Iznik in Anatolia in present day Turkey, where it was made, is a decorated ceramic that was produced from the last quarter of the 15th century until the end of the 17th century.

- The free-flowing and lively design of various flowers, including tulips, carnations, hyacinths and others emerging from a single tuft is characteristic of Iznik wares of this period.

- Amusingly, one carnation pierces a tulip flower.

- The rim, with its stylized blue ‘wave-and-rock’ design, is evidence of the exchange with Chinese ceramics and motifs.