

# Fine and Applied Arts | Encountering the East | Orientalist applied arts

Islamic art, and the art of Islamic Spain, was an inspiration for European artists and manufacturers.

During the 19th century, the value of decorative and applied arts was reassessed. This movement relates to the search for new decoration and manufacturing techniques to revitalise and enrich objects produced in Europe from the early 19th century to the 1930s. The reasons behind this revitalisation are related to the development of European industry and the World Fairs. The search for new aesthetic criteria led designers and manufacturers to seek inspiration in the art of antiquity and the Middle Ages, in particular Egyptian and Islamic art, resulting in trends such as so-called Egyptomania and the Moorish style. One particularly noteworthy aspect was research into antique manufacturing techniques and the use of new materials and techniques to reproduce objects inspired by Islamic art.



**Working Number:** UK 037

**Name:** Wedgwood 'drabware'

**Holding Museum:** The British Museum

**Date:** 1815–20

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** The Napoleonic expedition to Egypt generated significant interest in the art from this country, inspiring the creation of objects with Egyptian motifs, such as scarabs, crocodiles and lotus flowers, which were used to decorate all manner of objects including this tea set.



**Working Number:** FR 011

**Name:** Thebes. Hypogea. Pictures drawn after the covering of the mummies

**Holding Museum:** National Library of France

**Date:** 1809–1822

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Napoleon was accompanied on his expedition to Egypt (1798–1801) by a group of scholars and draughtsmen charged with the task of documenting the country's history. The publication of their work in Description de l'Egypte resulted in the rise of Egyptomania, the effects of which can be seen in early 19th-century fine and applied arts.



**Working Number:** UK 046

**Name:** Layard Freedom Casket

**Holding Museum:** The British Museum

**Date:** 1852

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Another source of inspiration during the 19th century was the major archaeological discoveries made in the Middle East. The publication and exhibition of the Assyrian winged lions from Nimrud, discovered by British archaeologist Austen

Henry Layard, had an impact on the decoration of fine and applied arts.

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**Working Number:** SP 056

**Name:** Details and ornaments from the Alhambra by Owen Jones, Architect

**Holding Museum:** National Museum of Decorative Arts

**Date:** 1845

**Materials:** Paper and ink; printed

**Curator Justification:** Between 1836 and 1845 the British artist and designer Owen Jones published 12 volumes entitled Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra. Jones' work, with its numerous precise architectural drawings and detailed speculations regarding the Alhambra's original colour schemes, was to exert a revolutionary influence on the European artists of his time.

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**Working Number:** AT 138

**Name:** Rose sprinkle flask in Persian style

**Holding Museum:** MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art

**Date:** Before 1867

**Materials:** Stoneware

**Curator Justification:** Théodore Deck was a well-known French ceramicist active in the mid-19th century. He was interested in Islamic ceramics, and the objects he made inspired by his interest were known as "Persian style". This rose-sprinkler flask is one such object. Deck's pieces received awards at several World Fairs.

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**Working Number:** AT 140

**Name:** Plate

**Holding Museum:** MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art

**Date:** Bought in 1895

**Materials:** Stoneware with decor imitating the 'Rhodos ceramics'

**Curator Justification:** The influence of Ottoman ceramics, in particular ceramics produced at #znik, was very important. Objects inspired by Ottoman ceramics were produced in several European countries, such as in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

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**Working Number:** SP 065

**Name:** Pair of vases and pedestals

**Holding Museum:** National Museum of Decorative Arts

**Date:** c. 1878

**Materials:** Coloured glass, mould-blown; enamelled decoration

**Curator Justification:** Decorations derived from Arab and Ottoman motifs were used on both ceramic and glass objects, and in interior decoration. The decoration

on this pair of glasses reveals the taste for arabesques and floral decoration during the Orientalist period.



**Working Number:** GR 011

**Name:** Sprinkler

**Holding Museum:** Benaki Museum

**Date:** 19th century

**Materials:** Enamelled glass

**Curator Justification:** The influence of Islamic and Ottoman art in the applied arts is seen not only in the decoration, but also in the shapes of objects and in the related manufacturing techniques. The shape of this sprinkler imitates Ottoman prototypes.



**Working Number:** SP 045

**Name:** Figures in Turkish style

**Holding Museum:** National Museum of Romanticism

**Date:** Second third of the 19th century

**Materials:** Moulded; enamelled, painted and gilded porcelain

**Curator Justification:** The manufacture of small porcelain figures increased exponentially during the 19th century. These small figures represented “quaint” types; people such as this pair of “Turks”, which are drawn with great detail and provide details of their attire. Figures like these were used to decorate European homes from the beginning of the Orientalist trend.



**Working Number:** SP 108

**Name:** Shoes

**Holding Museum:** Museum of Costume, Ethnographical Heritage Research Centre

**Date:** c. 1855

**Materials:** Silk, leather, metal; tanning, satin

**Curator Justification:** The Islamic influence also appears in fashion and footwear, such as the increased use of slippers in European dress during the 19th century.



**Working Number:** GR 039

**Name:** The Grammar of Ornament

**Holding Museum:** Benaki Museum

**Date:** 1910

**Materials:** Printed paper

**Curator Justification:** The need for decorative models, pattern books, for designers and artists led Owen Jones to publish The Grammar of Ornament in 1856. This compendium of patterns, from antique arts from around the world

and decoration inspired by nature, was used as a reference by artists and designers.



**Working Number:** PT 005

**Name:** The Palace of Porto Trade Association Headquarters, the Arabian Room

**Holding Museum:** -

**Date:** 1842

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** The Moorish style is a trend in Orientalism inspired by Islamic art from Spain and North Africa, in particular the Alhambra. The rich decoration in gilded and painted plaster was evoked in the interiors of palaces, private and public buildings and theatres, such as this Arab lounge, considered the best example of the Moorish style in Portugal.



**Working Number:** SP 094

**Name:** Chair

**Holding Museum:** Cerralbo Museum

**Date:** 19th century

**Materials:** Wood, bone inlaid

**Curator Justification:** The Moorish style and pattern books inspired architecture, interior decoration and the manufacture of objects in Europe. This chair, in the form of a traditional Spanish jamuga, its decoration imitating Arab motifs and marquetry. The inscription is illegible, however, having been copied meaninglessly by the maker of the chair.



**Working Number:** AT 131

**Name:** Cup with lid

**Holding Museum:** MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art

**Date:** Before 1873

**Materials:** Galvanoplastic gilded and enameled

**Curator Justification:** This lidded cup was made using a new industrial technique (galvanoplastic gilding and enamelling), which partially imitates the mediaeval techniques of enamelling and damascening. The English factory Elkington & Co. was known for its pieces inspired by different art forms, such as Islamic art in this case.



**Working Number:** UK 054

**Name:** Glass bowl

**Holding Museum:** The British Museum

**Date:** 1840–60

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** The glass pieces were decorated with different motifs in revivalist styles. Although the form is European, the golden and floral decoration probably refers to Ottoman pieces.



**Working Number:** UK 053

**Name:** Glass bottle

**Holding Museum:** The British Museum

**Date:** 1840–60

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Decanters are European, but the shape of the stopper and the decoration appear to be inspired by Ottoman pieces.



**Working Number:** DE 010

**Name:** Moorish Kiosk in Linderhof Palace Park

**Holding Museum:** -

**Date:** 1867

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** This building, known as the Moorish Kiosk, was the Prussian pavilion at the Paris-based International Exposition of 1867, and shows the influence of the Alhambra upon European 19th-century architecture.



**Working Number:** SP 090

**Name:** Model in plaster

**Holding Museum:** Cerralbo Museum

**Date:** 2nd half of the 19th century

**Materials:** Plaster, wood; casted, painting

**Curator Justification:** The fascination for the Nasrid Palace of the Alhambra was such that small plaques of painted plaster reproducing parts of the palace began to be produced. One of the most important workshops belonged to Rafael Contreras, who was a conservator/decorator at the Alhambra. These models were used by architects and designers as inspiration for the decoration of so-called Moorish smoking rooms and for other types of Orientalist-inspired room.



**Working Number:** AT 141

**Name:** Vase

**Holding Museum:** MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art

**Date:** c. 1905

**Materials:** Glass painted in 'Oriental' style

**Curator Justification:** A glass that was manufactured for sale in Berlin department stores. The decoration is inspired by oriental models, but large-scale

production of it reveals just how sought-after these designs were among the German bourgeoisie.



**Working Number:** SP 071

**Name:** Fan

**Holding Museum:** National Museum of Decorative Arts

**Date:** 1905-1910

**Materials:** Lace and tortoiseshell; diamonds and pearls

**Curator Justification:** The decorative patterns for lace were influenced by Islamic art, as can be seen in the pointed arches and arabesques that decorate the lace of this fan.



**Working Number:** IT2 080

**Name:** Jar with enamel decoration

**Holding Museum:** Museo Artistico Industriale, National Gallery of Ancient Art in Palazzo Barberini

**Date:** c.1906–1912

**Materials:** Glass; enamel

**Curator Justification:** This vase, made in Murano (Italy), shows the extent of revivalist trends inspired by mediaeval as well as by Islamic or Byzantine art, which led to the renaissance of glass workshops in Murano. Revivalist trends, including Orientalism, were encouraged at least in part by the development of museums of the decorative and applied arts, and the process of reassessing the “minor arts”.

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