



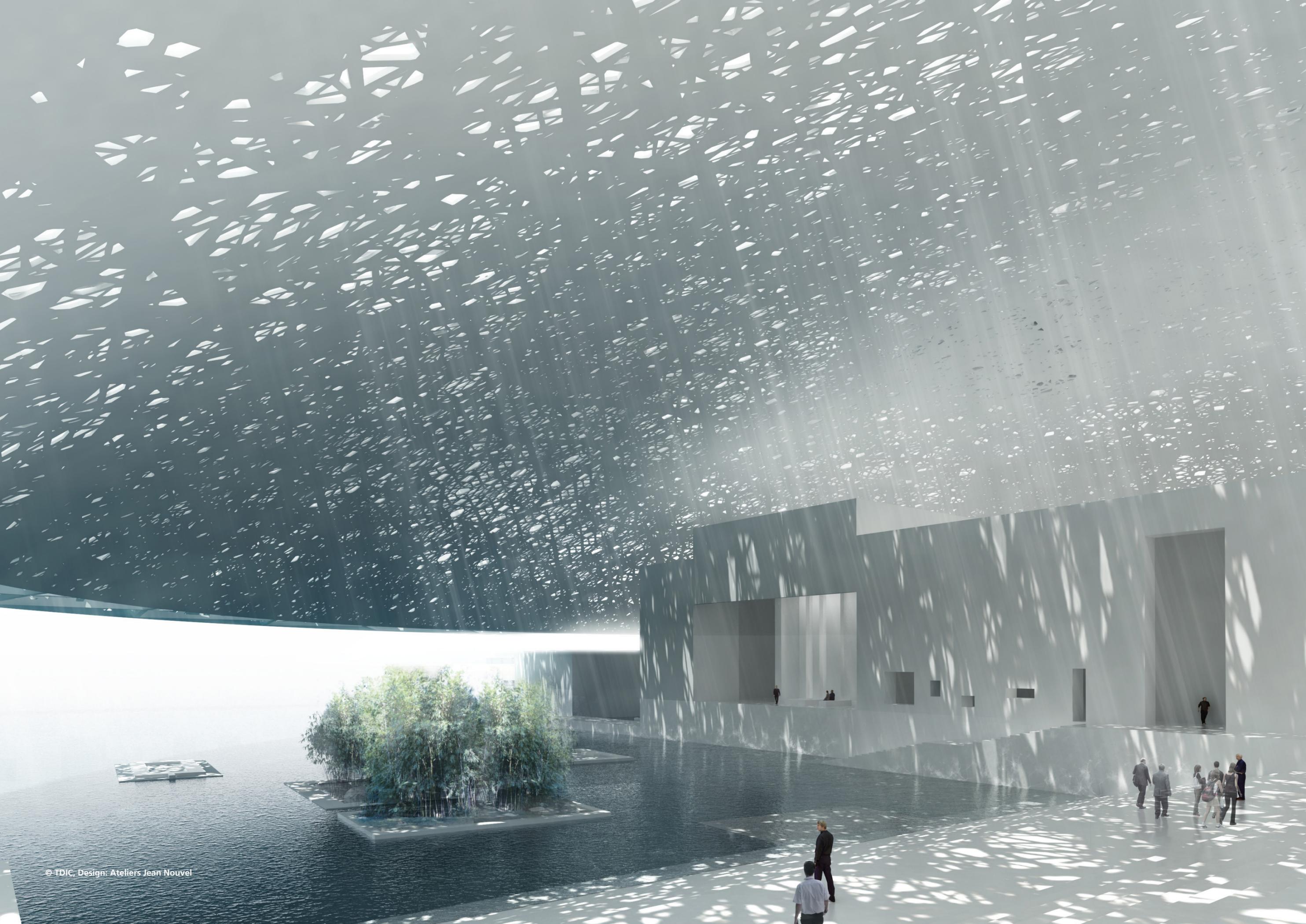
اللوفا أبو ظبي  
LOUVRE ABU DHABI

# LOUVRE ABU DHABI

EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

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## EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

The Louvre Abu Dhabi Educator Resource Portfolio produced and published by Louvre Abu Dhabi and Department of Culture and Tourism. This resource is designed for educational purposes for the Louvre Abu Dhabi Collection.

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### Contributors

This Portfolio was conceived and developed by the Education Department in the Department of Culture and Tourism, in collaboration with Louvre Abu Dhabi and Agence France Museums.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

# Louvre Abu Dhabi

Louvre Abu Dhabi, in the Cultural District on Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), presents a range of significant archaeological and fine art objects with a universal perspective. It aims to create a window to different artistic forms of the world, reflecting the mission to forge ties between different cultures and aesthetic concepts.

Rather than traditionally organising collections according to time period or region, Louvre Abu Dhabi compares artworks drawn from various cultures originating from different geographical contexts, in order to study the process of artistic creation through the spectrum of time as well as the range of exchange and mutual inspiration across cultures.

One of the core missions of Louvre Abu Dhabi is to be a place of discovery and learning that is deeply connected with its local context, accessible to the widest number of visitors.

This resource is an introduction to Louvre Abu Dhabi, its collection, and its programmes. It seeks to introduce educators to a selection of artworks and related activities, to facilitate learning and discussion with students around the Collection.



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# Objectives and Pedagogical Approaches

*The pedagogical objectives of this resource are to introduce Louvre Abu Dhabi's collection to educators, to link artworks with academic subjects presented in classrooms, and to familiarise students across the Emirates with the museum.*

*This resource presents sixteen artworks in display and outlines the principles of the Museum. This resource, presented by Department of Culture and Tourism and Louvre Abu Dhabi, was co-developed with the support of regional educators and curriculum specialists.*



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## RESOURCE AIMS

This resource aims to:

Provide a range of prompting, open-ended questions to engage different audiences (children, teens and young adults) to look closely and think deeply about the selected artworks, adding new concepts to their existing knowledge and/or experiences;

Further develop observational skills;

Develop students' visual literacy and critical thinking skills;

Convey the benefits of informal learning in museums and therefore encourage self-directed lifelong learning experiences;

Provide a variety of approaches for applying different museum learning practices;

Provide an activity 'tool kit' for students to explore artworks both pre-visit and post-visit.

## FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Informal learning settings such as museums offer untapped potential for communicating social, cultural, and scientific information. This type of learning is voluntary and self-directed, driven by curiosity, discovery, free exploration, and the sharing of experiences with companions. Learning in museums can correct misconceptions, as well as improve attitudes and cognitive skills. By complementing formal learning in the classroom with informal learning opportunities, educators can further enhance their students' cognitive skills, such as divergent thinking, critical analysis, better understanding of the past and present, and can also affect personal attitudes such as self-esteem.

# About the Resource

*This resource has been designed to be used by educators teaching students across a range of subjects, from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 12. The content of the resource is divided into three sections: KG to Grade 5; Grade 6 to Grade 9; and Grade 10 to Grade 12. Educators are encouraged to prepare themselves prior to leading the activities in their classroom by using this resource guide to highlight the main points in the description for the selected artwork. Educators may also adapt and build on the ideas in the prompting questions and activities to meet their teaching objectives and students' needs.*

## RESOURCE ELEMENTS

### Elements of the Educator Resource Portfolio include:

#### Educator Resource Guide

This guide provides an overview of the resource, its pedagogical approach, detailed descriptions of each artwork, and a glossary. The artwork descriptions are organised into a basic introduction with an in-depth description, and a focus section for those who want further contextual information about the artwork.

#### Posters

Visuals are provided so educators and students can examine Louvre Abu Dhabi artworks in the classroom with prompting questions and activities linked to subject curricula, to develop lessons depending on the subject and curriculum covered. Posters are laminated in order to draw on the image and highlight details. Additionally, all images are available digitally on the USB Flash Drive provided.

#### World Map

The map highlights geographical origins of the artworks.

#### Hands-On Tools

The magnifying loupe, viewfinder, colour swatch and USB are included to further enhance activities.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A range of activities are outlined in three sections: KG to Grade 5; Grade 6 to Grade 9; and Grade 10 to Grade 12. Each image card specifies suggested curriculum links, themes, materials required, and links with the UAE and the region. The activities include observation prompts, discussion activities, and hands-on activities. All individual and collaborative activities are designed to promote a thought-provoking and imaginative approach to art, the pleasure of discovery, and the importance of the student's personal view.

## ACTIVITY AIMS

### These activities encourage:

#### A dynamic and inherently personal interchange with art

Students are encouraged to observe, to ask themselves questions, to express emotions and impressions, and to understand that the interpretations of a work may be many and varied, according to the person's perspective.

#### The role of imagination

Students are encouraged to imagine the before and after of the moment chosen by the artist and to tell the story of the image.

#### Collective discussion

Students are encouraged to express a well-argued personal opinion, but also to reach a consensus and defend the point of view of the group.

#### Description of the works

Students are encouraged to learn the vocabulary required to talk about a work, to recognise the materials used, and to understand the artistic techniques.

#### Links between the works and the present day

Students are encouraged to compare and contrast their everyday life with the culture of the UAE, and to juxtapose different artistic domains (decorative arts, design, architecture, etc.).

#### Gaining awareness of the language used by a craftsman or artist

Students are encouraged to assimilate an artistic lexicon by making their own artworks and by analysing texts written by artists.

#### Understanding the historical and artistic context of a work

Students are encouraged to interconnect works (according to theme, period, or geographical region).

#### Learn to appreciate a work in terms of its heritage

Students are encouraged to think about where the artworks in a museum come from, the notion of collecting, and to understand the importance of the context in which the artwork was discovered.

## PREPARATION FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

### When to use the Educator Resource Guide

#### Before visiting the Museum

Students will have the satisfaction of recognising the original artworks studied prior to their museum visit, and may sometimes be surprised by seeing the differences between the real artwork and its reproduction.

#### Following a visit to the Museum

Once they have discovered the original artwork first-hand, students will be able to explore further aspects of the object in the classroom.

#### Without a visit

The students can discover an artwork as part of their curriculum or in the context of an arts workshop, triggering an interest in art in general or in the Museum.



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## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### General Questions that can be applied across all objects

#### What

Look at the artwork, what do you see? What do you think it is? What do you see that makes you say that? (composition, line, colour, shape, figure, etc.) Encourage your students to mention what they see, no matter how small the detail. Students should back up their answers with what they see, sense, etc.

#### Who

Who do you think made this artwork? Why do you think they made it?

#### How

What materials or tools do you think were used to make this artwork?

#### When

When do you think it was made? Is it old or is it new?

#### Where

Where do you think it was made?

#### About

What ideas and / or emotions do you think this work of art expresses? What have you discovered from looking at this work of art?

In preparing your students for a discussion, you could also compare and contrast objects in this resource with:

- Another work of art in Louvre Abu Dhabi's Collection
- Another work of art found while researching in a book or online
- An illustration found in a book
- A current events article
- A story, poem, song, or novel
- An historical event or figure
- A famous person or someone you know
- Something found in nature
- A modern or ancient invention
- Geometry, algebra, or calculus
- Virtually anything! The possibilities for comparison are endless.

## CHALLENGING MATERIAL

On occasion, some of the material in this resource may be challenging for your students. If your students giggle or seem uncomfortable with something they have seen, be sure to constructively address their discomfort. What is it that they find challenging about these works? Return to ideas shared in this resource regarding the importance of artworks and artefacts to human history.

# KG - GRADE 5

OBJECT	REGION	PERIOD REPRESENTED
Woman dressed in a woollen garment	Central Asia	2300–1700 BCE
Vase: animals and armed horsemen	Greece, Corinth (?)	590-580 BCE
Dish decorated with a European ship	Turkey	1625–50
Oriental Bliss	Switzerland	1938
Plank idol with two heads	Cyprus	2300–1900 BCE

# Woman dressed in a woollen garment

*This figure, depicting a woman who is standing in a dignified and calm manner, is one of the finest examples of the figures commonly known as "Bactrian Princesses", produced during the Oxus civilisation in the late 3rd – early 2nd millennium BCE (c. 2300-1700).*

Composed of several parts, the statuette is sculpted in stone and assembled together to match several colours. The elaborate hairstyle of the woman, and her long fur or yarn woollen robe, are carved from greyish-green chlorite. The face and the neck of the statuette, alternatively, are made of calcite, a clear coloured rock. The hands, which are now lost, were most likely sculpted in this same stone and joined together on the chest. The eyes and the eyebrows were assuredly encrusted from a material of another colour, giving the statuette a more lively appearance.

The Sumerian woollen garment, or, kaunakes, worn by the statuette is depicted by a diamond-shaped weaving texture. The technique is remarkably complex as the garment, even at the shoulders and sleeves, is presented as a single unit. The overlapping weaves render the composition more realistic and is a tribute to the artist's extraordinary technical prowess.

It is not known how most of these statues were discovered. Only a few, mostly in fragments, have been found on funeral sites such as Gonur Depe in Turkmenistan. The care shown in the production, the sophisticated headdress, and the textured yarn clothes illustrate that the individual depicted occupies an important place in the culture. Specialists still debate the identity of this women, some suggest a women of high stature possibly a princess.

## Woman dressed in a woollen garment: protective deity (?)

Oxus civilisation  
Central Asia, Bactria  
2300–1700 BCE  
Chlorite, calcite  
H 25.3, W 11.5 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / Thierry Ollivier

## IN FOCUS: THE OXUS CIVILISATION

The Bactrian 'princesses' are the most well-known works to be produced by the Oxus civilisation, a brilliant and highly organised society that spread throughout the territories now known as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and northern Iran. The development and wealth of this civilisation stemmed from its strategic geographical position and from trade with neighbouring cultures and civilisations such as Elam (now part of Iran), Mesopotamia (now Iraq), and Indus (now Pakistan). The Oxus civilisation was a leading exporter of lapis lazuli, a deep blue semi-precious stone, among other luxury products. The Oxus trade therefore extended far and wide and included the territory now covered by the UAE. This prosperity enabled the Oxus civilisation to develop their elaborate metal and stonework.

# Vase: animals and armed horsemen

*This is a fine example of a Corinthian krater from the early 6th century BCE. A krater was a vessel designed to contain beverages, used by the Greeks during their banquets. Its painted decoration is realised using the black-figure technique, and features highlighted elements in purple.*

The black-figure decoration of the krater spans across several bands, known as registers. On the upper register of the vessel, a procession of three horsemen wear helmets, armed with round shields and lances. An eagle can be seen flying above the croup of each horse. It has been suggested that this scene may depict the Trojan War, yet the lack of inscription makes it impossible to ascribe it to any particular event. Another section contains two large roosters flanking the writhing body of an enormous rearing snake. The lower part section features a frieze of lions and deer, encircling the krater. Winged sirens were painted on the spaces below the handles and on the square plaques on the rim of the krater.

This style, with its clean, unhesitating lines, places it firmly in the grand tradition of painters from the city of Corinth, one of the most important cities in Ancient Greece. This krater stands out, through its simplicity of forms and attention to detail, in particular the quality of the incisions and the balanced contrast between the black and purple figures.

The substantial scale of this krater links it to artefacts produced at the very beginning of the 6th century BCE. Before that time, production had been limited to small vases, designed to contain perfume and fragrant oils which were then exported to the Italian peninsula in particular. This krater, which was also designed for export, illustrates the propagation of their use, particularly in the east, during social ceremonies such as banquets. This fashion for banquets, imported into Greece from the East, was then disseminated throughout the western Mediterranean and among the Celts.

## Vase: animals and armed horsemen

Greece, Corinth (?)  
590–580 BCE  
Painted terracotta  
H 34.5, W 40.5 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / Thierry Ollivier

### IN FOCUS: THE RED FIGURES AND BLACK FIGURES ON GREEK VASES

The style known as black-figure was invented in Corinth in 7th century BCE. It is characterised by a drawing of black figures against a clay background. Once the figures were sketched onto the vase with a piece of charcoal, they were painted using a milk made out of clay and water. During the firing process, they transformed into a shiny black colour. Incisions were made on the details of the figures in order to reveal the pale clay background. Around 530 BCE, craftsmen reversed the process, painting the background between the figures and highlighting the line-drawn figures themselves, in the red-figure technique. Details such as facial traits or musculature were added on with a brush, thereby enhancing the realism of decorative vase painting.

# Dish decorated with a European ship

*In the late 15th century, the potters of Iznik, Turkey, the main production centre for Ottoman ceramics, invented a new type of ceramic pottery. These ceramics were so technically perfect that they rivalled Chinese porcelain the Ottomans had long admired.*

Between 1470 and 1480, the production of ceramics in Iznik found itself in the throes of a revolution. The pieces, now turned or moulded in a paste made of silica and lead frit, were covered in a fine layer of siliceous slip or engobe, based on fine-ground quartz. This lent ceramics an exceptional sheen and whiteness. The decoration, comprising a clearly outlined motif painted in flamboyant colours, was completed by a sheer transparent glaze.

This technical and stylistic revolution was partly due to an influx of new potters but it mainly stemmed from the close ties linking the city of Iznik and the Ottoman court, which had just set up its quarters in Istanbul, at Topkapi Palace. The court's imperial workshop would send out drawings and models, together with orders for crockery and tiles, liaising not only with the Iznik workshops but with Istanbul and probably Kutahya too. As production was therefore not limited to Iznik, the term 'Iznik pottery' predominately denotes a style rather than a place.

Production was divided into two types: everyday crockery (dishes, cups, bowls, pitchers, etc.), for daily use in Topkapi Palace's kitchens, and Chinese porcelains, reserved for the Sultan's table. There was also a demand for tiles and these can still be seen on the walls of palaces and public foundations belonging to the Sultans and members of the elite.

During the 16th century, Iznik ceramics diversified their motifs and enriched their spectrum of colours. Having been initially limited to blues and whites, Iznik pottery now gradually expanded its palette range to purple, turquoise, violet, green, black, and finally red. By the middle of the 16th century, the latter had become the most sought-after pottery colour.

The first creations, in harmonies of blue-and-white, reflect the Ottomans' fascination with Chinese porcelains of the Yuan period (1279-1368) and the early Ming period. Collections of these porcelains were kept in Topkapi Palace. Initially Iznik potters did their best to imitate these Chinese porcelains, yet, eventually went on to use them as a source of inspiration, drawing freely from their forms and motifs, which were integrated into the decorative repertoire of Ottoman ceramics. Such popular Chinese porcelain-inspired motifs include decorative rims with scroll-like cloud shapes and decorations centered around a lotus flower. The serrated, long-leafed motif, with its sweeping movements, is known as the saz style. It originated in Iran and can be found on textiles as well as wooden, or ceramic decorative architectural elements.

Around 1555-1560 a more realistic floral Iznik pottery style was developed, composed of familiar bouquet and flower imagery (roses, tulips, carnations, and hyacinths). The palette of pottery colours was expanded to include a pale green-turquoise, an emerald green, and finally a bright red, based on Armenian bowls. Between 1580 and 1650, the production of Iznik pottery evolved. The scope of the decorations became wider, to include depictions of animals, people, and sailing ships. This dish, with a ship motif, therefore illustrates the final phase of Iznik's golden age. It represents a European merchant ship with three masts and square sails. The addition of a spur on the bow, a hallmark of Venetian, Genoese, and Spanish ships, together with the scimitar-shaped rudder, illustrate that it dates from the 17th century.

## Dish decorated with a European ship

Ottoman empire  
Turkey, Iznik  
1625–50  
Painted ceramic underglaze  
Diam. 30.0 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / APF

### IN FOCUS: THE FASCINATION WITH CHINESE PORCELAIN

As soon as it arrived in the West, Chinese porcelain triggered a flurry of imitations, which aimed to capture its finesse, pure white sheen, and blue-and-white decorations. Reproductions were also attempted in the Ottoman Empire and the creation of these exceptional pieces is a real tribute to the skills of the Iznik potters. Although Iznik ceramics were originally designed to satisfy the demands of the Ottoman court in Istanbul, they were soon exported to the West and met with great success in Europe, which then produced its own imitations.

# Oriental Bliss

*Oriental Bliss is one of Paul Klee's final works. It represents not only a reminiscence of his time spent in Tunisia in 1914, but a synthesis of his aesthetic.*

Composed in Klee's twilight years, *Oriental Bliss* harks back to the time he spent in Tunisia in 1914, which was to have a profound effect on his entire oeuvre. Palm trees, a pyramid, and a solitary figure, drawn with broad sweeps of black paint, are set against an intensely luminous chequered background. The quadrilateral compartmentalisation of the surface of the canvas, a signature element of his aesthetic, was described by Klee as "the synthesis of the architecture of the city and the architecture of the canvas". In Tunisia, Klee came across inscriptions in Arabic lettering, pottery, and azulejos (a form of Portuguese tilework that originated in Morocco) from Nabeul, and Bedouin rugs, which undoubtedly also played a part in inspiring his compositions. Two pastels from 1937, *Legend of the Nile* and *Oriental Pleasure Garden*, also recall Klee's interest in eastern iconographical influences.

Klee made drawing and colour cohabit the same space without any notion of hierarchy, so they radiate without overshadowing each other. Klee achieves a balance between these two means of expression, drawing and colour, with neither dominating the other, a balance underpinned by their layout and interaction within the allotted space. In Kairouan, on 16 April 1914, Klee wrote in his Diaries: "Colour has taken possession of me. No longer do I have to chase after it. I know that it has hold of me forever...colour and I are one. I am a painter". Klee's interest in the East may have also been inspired by a major exhibition on Islamic art held in Munich in 1910, which had a huge impact throughout Europe, and Klee may have seen.

## Oriental Bliss

Paul Klee  
Switzerland, Berne, 1938  
Oil Paint  
H 83.4, W 99.9 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / APF

### IN FOCUS: THE DECORATIVE ARTS AND MODERNITY

Klee's simple, non-imitative language of signs and symbols also evoked so-called primitive sources of inspiration, which had a much broader sense in his day and included non-Western art forms, children's drawings, and popular art. These were seminal references for Klee, which he approached not in the guise of a repertory of forms but through their origin: "Children, madmen and savages have preserved – or rediscovered – the faculty of vision. And what they see and the forms produced by these visions are my most precious source of information".

# Plank idol with two heads

*This Cypriot Plaque is an example of the geometrisation in the depiction of human forms that emerged during the 3rd millennium BCE in Europe and Asia. It found a particularly original expression on the Island of Cyprus.*

Covered in an orange-red slip (clay suspended in water), the statuette depicts two rectangularly-shaped, elongated, parallel 'faces' emerging from a quadrangular torso. The main body of the object is flat, smooth, and slender. Each face features two perforations to indicate eyes, each alongside a protruding nose. Both heads bear a small lateral excrescence, or outgrowth, to represent the ear. The two heads are linked towards the top, probably by their ears. The body is covered in engraved patterned lines, in all likelihood a figurative expression of decorative ornaments such as a belt, necklace, or headdress. There are also decorative markings indicated by the patterned lines on the faces. The lines of the engravings are highlighted against the orange-red slip with white powder.

The archaeological context and purpose of these Cypriot statuettes is not clear. The engravings on the back may be a clue to the way they were originally displayed: they probably stood upright on a plinth, either nailed or mounted. This plaque can be linked to the double or multiple figurative artefacts of Anatolia. Although it is unknown whether they depict a family group or symbolic character, there are obvious formal differences between the Anatolian and Cypriot figures, which attest to the emergence of two distinct cultural groups from a common background.

No traces of the Palaeolithic era have been found in Cyprus. The first occupations date back to the Neolithic Age, during the 7th millennium BCE. The Chalcolithic (Copper Age) proved to be a period of outstanding development for the island, whose abundant copper ore reserves provided a rich source of income in years to come, when the island found itself the hub of a vast network of trade between Asia Minor, the Levant (Eastern Mediterranean), Egypt, and Greece.

## Plank idol with two heads

Cyprus  
2300–1900 BCE  
Polished and incised terracotta  
H 27.9, W 11.2 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / Thierry Ollivier

### IN FOCUS: HUMAN REPRESENTATION IN THE 3<sup>RD</sup> MILLENNIUM BCE

The emergence of a sober, sometimes even geometric form of figurative human representation was a phenomenon that affected the whole of western Eurasia, from Brittany to the Arabian Peninsula. It spanned forms as diverse as those of the Mesopotamian kings, the Pharaohs of the early Egyptian dynasties, Cycladic, Anatolian, and Cypriot figures, and statue-menhirs (standing stones) from a large part of Eurasia. The concordance between these manifestations and the uniqueness of the human figure marked humankind's new status in collective representations.

# GRADE 6 - 9

OBJECT	REGION	PERIOD REPRESENTED
Pendant with animal pairs	United Arab Emirates, Ras Al Khaimah	2000 - 1300 BCE
Mirror case (?) of imperial provenance	China	700–800
The Huntress	India	1680-1700
Composition with Blue, Red, Yellow and Black	France, Paris	1922
Aquamanile in the form of a lion	Northern Germany	About 1200
Embarkation of the Emperor of China	France, Manufacture royale de Beauvais	About 1700

# Pendant with animal pairs

*Pendant with animal pairs was part of a collection of grave goods belonging to a large stone tomb in Dhayah, Northern Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates, dating to the Wadi Suq period (2000-1600 BCE).*

The pendant belongs to the collection of National Museum of Ras Al Khaimah. It will be displayed in the Louvre Abu Dhabi for two years as part of an agreement between Ras Al Khaimah Department of Antiquities and Museums and the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi. This long term collaboration aims to promote UAE history and heritage, and it will give the visitors the chance to discover the National Museum’s iconic piece closely, in dialogue with other archeological and prehistoric pieces from all around the world.

This pendant made from a gold and silver alloy comes from a collective tomb at Dhayah, an archaeological site in northern Ras Al Khaimah. The site dates to between 2000 and 1600 BCE a timeframe known as the “Wadi Suq period” after a site near Sohar where evidence of this culture was first discovered.

The pendant is composed of two horned animals facing opposite directions, rising up out of the opposite ends of a single torso. The two animals are goat or sheep-like, but their exact identification remains unknown. Similar pendants depicting doubled animals have been found in several tombs around the UAE dating to the same period. They were almost certainly made locally and represent superb metal working techniques and a renewed interest in artistic expression. The meaning of the animals is still unclear, but it is interesting to consider that carvings of two opposing animals are known in the earlier Umm an-Nar period (2500-2000 BCE), as seen, for example, in the Hili Grand Tomb in Al Ain.

That this precious object was placed in a grave may indicate a belief in some sort of afterlife. Indeed, beads and other objects were often put in graves from the Neolithic period onwards in the UAE.

## Pendant with animal pairs

United Arab Emirates, Ras Al Khaimah, Dhayah  
2000–1300 BCE  
Gold and silver alloy  
H 5.0, W 11.0 cm  
National Museum of Ras Al Khaimah



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / Jonathan Gibbons

### IN FOCUS: WADI SUQ

The “Wadi Suq period” is the name given by archaeologists to the period from 2000 to 1600 BCE. The name comes from an area near Sohar, where remains of this period were first found. During this time, many settlements that had been occupied in the earlier Umm an-Nar period (2500-2000 BCE) were abandoned. There is, however, still evidence of human settlements found in various locations throughout the UAE from this period. One of the most significant settlements is Tell Abraq, located on the border of the emirates of Sharjah and Umm al-Quwain. During this time, the people of Tell Abraq continued to live in and around the large stone tower that had been constructed in earlier centuries. They used the rich resources of the sea and kept herded animals like sheep, goat, and cattle. Some of them were probably nomadic, and herded animals seasonally in the inland plains. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of the Wadi Suq period is the tombs. The large, above-ground tombs of the earlier Umm an-Nar period (2500-2000 BCE) are no longer used. Instead, during the Wadi Suq period people built tombs slightly underground in a wide variety of shapes. When excavated, these tombs revealed a rich assortment of bronze objects, uniquely painted ceramics, and luxury objects like the pendant from Dhayah. The finds attest to the rich and vibrant economy of the Wadi Suq period.

# Mirror case of imperial provenance

*This Octagonal Box was fabricated in Chang'an, the capital of the Chinese empire at the time of the Tang dynasty (618 – 907 CE). The box, probably an official gift to a high-ranking Japanese envoy, was preserved with the treasure of one of the most ancient and important temples in Japan.*

This box is composed of very precious materials: its wooden structure is covered with turtle shell leaves encrusted with mother-of-pearl and painted amber beads. The use of these different materials helps to obtain a very light-coloured decoration on a dark background, and which is enhanced by a few bright orange touches. This colour contrast was much appreciated during the Tang period and was also found in other artistic domains, such as textiles and ceramics. The mother-of-pearl incrustations outline, with great finesse, patterns of foliage, flowers, ducks, and birds – which were the hallmark of Tang art.

From the size and form of the box it would appear that it used to contain a bronze mirror which has since been lost. Such objects were reserved for the elite, or notables in society. One of the mirror's sides, made of polished metal, was reflecting, whereas the reverse, which would have been richly decorated, would have had a small handle for handling and hanging the object.

At the time of the Tangs, China was looking to expand its influence over its neighbours, such as Korea, Vietnam, and Central Asia. Chinese luxury objects were often taken abroad by the traders or were official gifts, so as to demonstrate the power and opulence of the Empire. Bronze mirrors were particularly coveted in Japan, and were sent there in large numbers. This box and the mirror it contained were in all likelihood presented to a very high ranking official, as they were part of the imperial

objects kept in the coffers of Shōsō-in, inside Tōdai-ji, one of the oldest and most important temples of Japan. The Shōsō-in is the treasure house that belongs to Tōdai-ji, a temple located in Nara that was the first capital of the empire. The Shōsō treasure still numbers some 9,000 pieces, including furniture, musical instruments, and objects pertaining to rituals. Many include precious items emanating from the Tang dynasty such as sandalwood, lacquer, gold, silver, and cameos, while other works, produced in Japan itself, are adaptations of Chinese models. All of them reflect the cosmopolitan nature of medieval Chang'an, a melting-pot of influences from faraway lands.

## Mirror case (?) of imperial provenance

China, from the collection of the Shoso-in,  
Japan (?)  
700–800  
Wood, tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, amber  
H 12.2, W 38.5 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / Thierry Ollivier

### IN FOCUS: THE TANG DYNASTY

In the space of only three centuries, the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE) inspired masterpieces in every domain, from literature to the plastic arts. The decorative arts in particular became a benchmark of excellence, by virtue of their luxurious materials, virtuoso craftsmanship, elegant forms, and original repertoire. It was in the capital Chang'an, known to be one of the heavily populated cities of the time, where the main imperial workshops were concentrated. Their production spread far and wide, disseminating their innovative stylistic and technical expertise in Japan and the West.

# The Huntress

*From the wall paintings of Ajanta to illustrated books and miniatures, India has developed an incredibly rich and varied art of painting. This Mughal Indian miniature is part of the James Ivory Collection, kept intact, and now part of Louvre Abu Dhabi. This rich Collection offers an exhaustive and original panorama of one of the facets in the history of Indian painting.*

A woman, standing bolt upright in her stirrups, has drawn her bow and is aiming the arrow at a tiger attacking her horse. The scene, set against a pale background, is framed by two bands: the lower register of the miniature features a rocky landscape behind a river while on the upper register four cranes sweep across the sky. A vibrant energy emanates from this scene, in the unleashed hair of the huntress, her shawl billowing behind her, and the rolling eyes of the horse expressing its fear of the battle ahead. The unusual shades of blue, brown, and orange are an indication that this miniature comes from northern Deccan.

*The Huntress* may be a depiction of the Queen Chand Bibi, the heroine who defended the Ahmadnagar Sultanate against the Mughals from 1596 to 1599. *The Huntress*, painted in one of the Muslim courts in Deccan, is in the tradition of Mughal workshops, one of the major artistic traditions in India. From the second half of the 18th century, Indian pictorial art underwent a radical change, as the influence of Western painting began to take hold. At their height, Mughal miniature painters were influenced by Western styles, yet stemmed from a desire for a touch of exoticism. However, in the case of the Company School (named after the British East India Company) workshop of painters, the tendency was undoubtedly towards a Westernisation of Indian painting. As paintings were often commissioned by the British, Indian artists began to lend them specifically European, or Western, attributes, such as atmospheric perspective or the rendition of shadows.

Miniature painting clients were not merely drawn by their exotic appeal however; collecting paintings reflected their genuine interest in anthropology. Two of these collectors, the Fraser Brothers, compiled the Fraser Albums, which were an immediate sensation and launched a series of imitations.

Between 1950 and 1970, film director James Ivory amassed a collection of Indian miniatures from a wide range of different schools and styles. The Ivory Collection also features a large number of works from the European-influenced Indian courts as well as miniatures in the Rajput style (the western Indian sub-continent) which meld ancient art and Mughal tradition.

## The Huntress

India  
1680-1700  
Opaque watercolour on stiffened cloth,  
gold highlights  
H 30.2, W 22.4 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / APF

### IN FOCUS: THE STORY OF CHAND BIBI

Chand Bibi (1550-1599) is a well-known historical figure, a contemporary of the Mughal emperor Akbar (1542-1605). Daughter of the Sultan Hussain Nizam Shah I d'Ahmednagar, she heroically defended the capital, Ahmadnagarun. Known for her great beauty and her courage, she is also famous for her political savvy, her modesty, and her generosity. When her husband died without an heir, she became regent for Ibrahim Adil Shah II, the nephew of her deceased husband, and for all intents and purposes it was she who ruled from 1580. She is above all known for her feats of arms and her fierce resistance against the Mughal Empire which was poised to dominate the entire Deccan region. It was at this point that the Sultanate of Ahmadnagar she headed was recognised by the Mughal Empire as one of the five states of the Deccan.

# Composition with Blue, Red, Yellow, and Black

*The works of Piet Mondrian (1872–1944) are rooted in the Geometric Abstraction movement, one of the major artistic trends among the European avant-garde in the first half of the 20th century. Composition with Blue, Red, Yellow, and Black represents a landmark in his oeuvre, as it is one of the first examples of the Neo-Plastic aesthetic honed by the artist in 1921.*

In the Neo-Plasticism aesthetic, its pictorial language is limited to three primary colours, two non-colours (black and white), and the two fundamental directions, vertical and horizontal. The eye is drawn by the colours on the periphery of the canvas, counterbalancing the pull of more centrally-located forms. Colour planes placed on the edge of the canvas are partially cut off by the frame, to deliberately give the impression that the picture is a mere fragment of a far more infinite world. Finally, none of the coloured planes is typically juxtaposed with any other; they are always separated by a non-colour (black, grey, or white). To Mondrian, this pictorial language, rendered as anonymous and universal as possible, symbolised fundamental principles such as male and female, spirit and matter. His works were intended to constitute an image of the world.

Before forging his own pictorial language, as a young man in the early twentieth century Mondrian assimilated the prevailing trends of the avant-garde art scene, particularly cubism, which made the most crucial contribution to the development of Neo-Plasticism. To Mondrian, cubism was a way of painting the essence of things, of discovering the 'universality' hidden behind a particular appearance of an object. In his view, Braque and Picasso did not take this concept far enough. Mondrian outlined his theory in the magazine *De Stijl* [The Style], launched in 1917 by a number of artists including Theo van Doesburg.

This painting once belonged to fashion designer Yves Saint-Laurent and has a direct connection with his fashion creations. Saint-Laurent's Mondrian dress (1966) perpetuated the determination of 20th century avant-garde artists' aim to interweave art and life.

## Composition with Blue, Red, Yellow and Black

Piet Mondrian  
France, Paris  
1922  
Oil on canvas  
H 79.0, W 49.5 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Mondrian/ Holtzman Trust © Louvre Abu Dhabi / Thierry Ollivier

### IN FOCUS: THE NEO-PLASTIC IDEAL

The aim of neo-plasticism was to go beyond the mere framework of painting and create a total work of art, a pivotal concept in Western art since the second half of the 19th century. The utopian dimension of Mondrian's art was formulated in his writings, which advocated extending the colour grid to encompass architecture and urban planning, in an attempt to invent a new way of perceiving and transforming the world. In this same spirit, Mondrian designed his Parisian studio as a neo-plastic environment, reproducing his paintings on a large scale so that they could envelop his furniture and everyday objects.

# Aquamanile in the form of a lion

*This bronze object is an aquamanile. It was used to pour water over the hands, either as part of a religious ritual or in everyday life. Made in northern Germany in around 1200, it is one of the many artefacts of this type produced during the Middle Ages, both in the West and in the Islamic world.*

The lion is holding itself proudly tall with its head thrust forward, in a fixed, hypnotic gaze. A spout, in the shape of a monster, is rearing from its mouth, above the dangling tongue.

The animal-shaped handle is fixed to the lion's body at two points, on the hind legs and on the back of its head, so that it looks as though the animal is about to leap onto the lion's neck. The movement expressed in the handle contrasts with the austere appearance of the big lion. The rounded shape of the tail and handle echo each other in a harmonious play of forms.

The aquamanile (from the Latin "aqua" or water and "manus" or hand) was used to pour water over the hands in religious and secular contexts. Since Antiquity, washing one's hands before sitting down at table has not only been regarded as a hygienic gesture but as a highly symbolic expression of conviviality and social awareness.

This kind of container, with its zoomorphic and mythological forms, was probably inspired by Islamic Art and introduced as a result of the trade between East and West, which spread to Europe during the 12th century. At the time, the foundries situated in northern Germany were witnessing remarkable developments in bronze lost-wax casting, the technique used to produce aquamaniles such as this one.

These aquamaniles were usually presented in the guise of real or imaginary creatures, taken from an eclectic range of favourite medieval animals such as horses, unicorns, gryphons, dogs, and sirens. They were decorated with zoomorphic elements, from dragon-shaped handles to taps depicting dogs or birds. Lion-shaped aquamaniles were the most popular and represented around a third of the catalogued production; they were seen as symbols of power and royal authority.

## Aquamanile in the form of a lion

Northern Germany  
About 1200  
Bronze  
H 29.0, W 32.0 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / Thierry Ollivier

### IN FOCUS: THE SYMBOL OF WATER

Rites and symbols connected with water and purification were of great significance in the Middle Ages. Water played a role in religious ceremonies as a vector of purity and spirituality, in the form of ablutions, sprinkling, or immersion. Sinks or ablution basins at the entrance of mosques and monasteries are a reminder that the ritual of washing represents a link but also a barrier between humankind and God.

# Embarkation of the Emperor of China

*Tapestries are grouped by their place of manufacture. This tapestry was woven in the workshops of the French manufacture unit of Beauvais, and depicts a Chinese prince or an emperor boarding his boat. This type of portrayal of the royal court of China is characteristic of the passion for exoticism, which flourished in 17th and particularly 18th century.*

In 1686 CE, an embassy of the King of Siam (present-day Thailand) arrived at the court of Louis XIV in Versailles, where it was received with enthusiasm. The embassy aroused great excitement for exotic objects. At the time there was a frantic interest and search for rare pieces from the far East, which managed to reach Europe, thus instigating French artists to produce art tinged with exoticism.

The director of the manufacture of Beauvais thus decided to conceive of a set of nine tapestries on the theme of the story of the Emperor of China, which were meant to decorate mansion walls of wealthy collectors. The creation of such a hanging was indeed a stupendous task: four painters were commissioned to provide models for tapestries. Since their knowledge of Far Eastern customs was limited and imprecise, these artists imagined different scenes in the everyday life of the Chinese Emperor, such as their audience, their journeys, and so forth. While some of the details and the image of the city in the background were taken from the illustrations in travelogues from 1660 CE, many other aspects of this tapestry belonged very much to the domain of fantasy. In *The Emperor Sailing*, these fantasy elements are seen in the boat, decorated with dragons and garlands of flowers, and in the architecture in which the scene takes place. Some fantastical details, such as the parasol and characters perched atop the architecture, make the scene even more picturesque. This hanging echoed the taste of the times and was hugely popular: in less than forty years, it was manufactured 18 times.

## Embarkation of the Emperor of China

Philippe Béhagle  
France, Manufacture royale de Beauvais  
About 1700  
Tapestry of wool and silk  
H 396.0, W 269.0 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / Thierry Ollivier

### IN FOCUS: THE TECHNIQUE OF TAPESTRY

Tapestries are pieces of fabric formed by interweaving horizontal threads (the weft) with vertical threads (the waft). They are created from a model in colour, called a cartoon, which acts as the basis for the image that will appear in the completed tapestry. The tapestry of *The Emperor Sailing* was made on a horizontal loom. This method is known as basse lisse. The craftsman weaves on the underside of the cloth, following the cartoon drawing, reproduced on a sheet of white paper sewn to the chain of the loom. Several tapestries can be produced from a single loom, although differences can be made between them. The clients who ordered these tapestries could therefore ask for variations to be created from an existing model.

# GRADE 10 - 12

OBJECT	REGION	PERIOD REPRESENTED
Ewer decorated with the signs of the zodiac	Afghanistan, Herat	About 1220
Young Emir Studying	Turkey, Istanbul (?)	1878
Mobile - Untitled	United States, New York	About 1934
Chirisei Kyubiki	Japan, Kazuo Shiraga	1960
Throne in "Viking" or "dragon" style	Norway, Hardanger	1900–1910

# Silver-Inlaid Brass Ewer

*This ewer, from the late 12th-early 13th centuries, illustrates the diversity of decorative metalwork techniques in the Middle Ages and also provides an insight into the generous patronage of the Sultans and other high-ranking dignitaries at the time. Its rich decoration, a blend of figurative representation and calligraphy, makes it a remarkable piece. The iconography also highlights the appeal of scientific disciplines in the Arab-Muslim world.*

This ewer was probably made in Herat, one of the main production centres for artefacts from the Khorasan province of Afghanistan, and part of Central Asia. It is made in repoussé brass, a copper alloy engraved and inlaid with silver. This process has transformed the function of an everyday object to a valuable and sophisticated decorative piece for the wealthy.

The ewer has a characteristic shape, with a cylindrical faceted body resting on a curved base. The ewer's spout and narrow cylindrical neck are decorated with three stylised lions in relief. The lions were created by repoussé technique which is done by hammering a thin sheet of metal from the back surface to appear as a high relief from the front side, using a hammer and other tools made of iron or wood. The rest of the decoration is directly engraved and completed from the front side.

The decoration, which almost covers the entire ewer, is divided into horizontal bands or registers. These bands are composed of figurative and votive inscriptions in Kufic and animated cursive script, their vertical shafts occasionally topped by human heads. The animated cursive script tends to be balanced between the writing and the figurative images, which are still readable but with difficulty. During the 12th century, metalwork was widely decorated with inscriptions that were a tribute to the owner.

The Kufic scripts are the earliest Arabic scripts, developed around the 7th century and named after the city of Kufa in Iraq. In the Kufic band on some parts of the ewer, flower and scroll decoration were added to the end of the letters, which was a style that evolved in the mid-10th century.

## Ewer decorated with the signs of the zodiac

Afghanistan, Herat  
About 1220  
Copper alloy, silver  
H 40.0, W 21.0 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / APF

## IN FOCUS: METAL INLAY

Between the 12th and 13th centuries, a new decorative technique modified both the aspect and the status of metal objects: the inlay of plates and silver, gold, or red copper threads hammered into metal. These geometric, figurative, or calligraphic inlays were then engraved with the details of the object. This ancient technique was in use from the very beginning of the Islamic period, yet, its unprecedented development paved the way for ornamental decoration, as the colours and engraved details made the motifs easier to decipher and therefore enabled more complex compositions to be created. Metal objects became luxury items favoured by the elite. The city of Herat was one of the main centres producing objects by means of this technique, which then spread westwards towards the whole Islamic world.

# Young Emir Studying

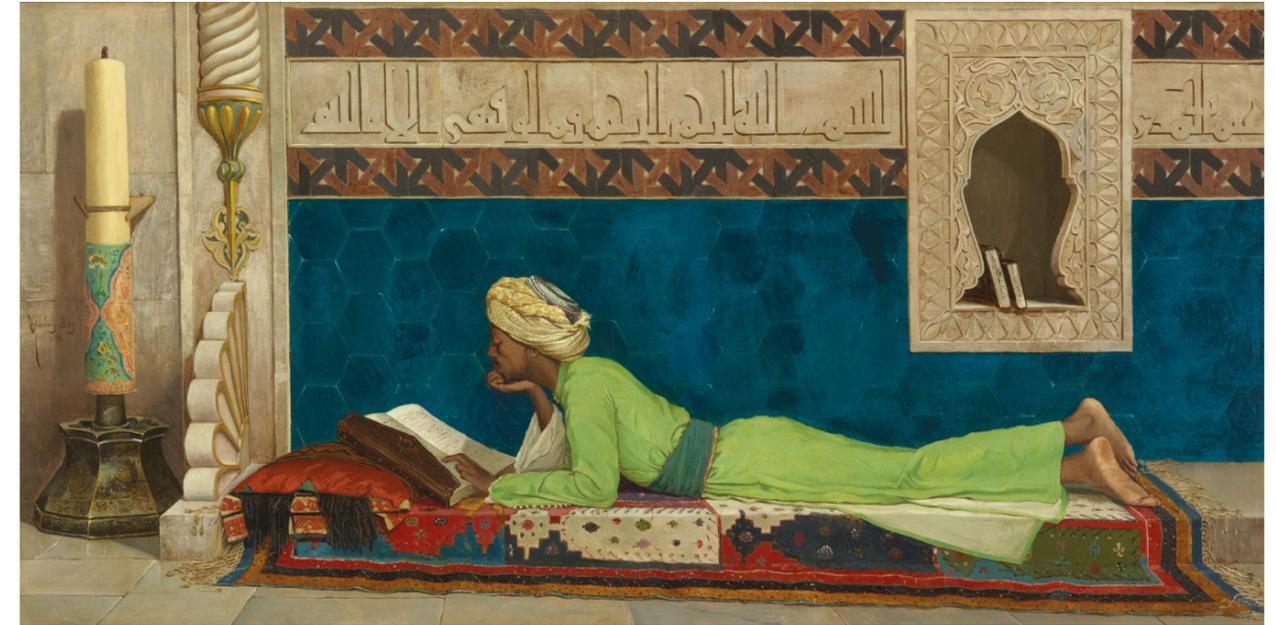
*The painter Osman Hamdy Bey borrowed the technique of oil painting and the realistic depiction of his subject from Western tradition, creating an extraordinarily detailed image in order to convey an enticing, fantasised view of the East. By adapting the visual elements of the East, this work encapsulates the pictorial world of Osman Hamdy Bey.*

Osman Hamdy Bey painted here a young man who is concentrating on reading. His clothes, a turban made of embroidered cloth and a green kaftan belted at the waist, clearly show their Eastern origin. He is lying on a Turkish carpet with his book resting on an embroidered silk cushion.

The wall above the young Emir is covered with Ottoman earthenware tiles that are similar to the ones on Mehmed I's funeral monument in Bursa (Turkey) constructed in 1421 CE. Above the tiles is a running frieze with an inscription in calligraphed Arabic. On the left, it continues with the basmala, followed by a Quranic sura, and the artist's signature is on the right. The wall also includes an alcove bordered by a rich vegetal decoration in which two books are kept; their titles in Arabic are inscribed on the spine. On the left-hand side of the painting is a chandelier from a medieval mosque and a piece of architectural decoration on the wall, reminiscent of décor used during the Ottoman Empire. The painter has, in the same painting, placed together decorations and objects of different periods and origins to achieve a unique pictorial world.

A highly cultured Turkish painter and an archaeologist from the second half of the 19th century, and the founder of the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul, Osman Hamdy Bey had good knowledge of the art of the Near and Middle East. He therefore voluntarily recomposed this scene from different elements, showing an ideal and timeless image of the East which corresponded to the vision that many Europeans had of the region at the time.

Osman Hamdy Bey also adopted his own style to attract the European public, which was all the more easy for him as he had studied in France where he had studied painting. He used materials normally used by Western painters – oil paint on a canvas – and portrayed the scene with great care to detail. He also used the techniques of perspective, depicting human anatomy and the play of shadows and light in a realistic manner. This blend of a Western style and a scene that looks very Eastern, contributed to its success with the European public of the time, convinced by the authenticity of the representation.



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / APF

## Young Emir Studying

Osman Hamdy Bey  
Turkey, Istanbul (?)  
1878  
Oil on canvas  
H 45.5, W 90.0 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi

### IN FOCUS: COLLAGE AND REMINISCENCE, BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

A photograph taken in the artist's studio in 1905 depicting a male model in precisely the same pose as in the painting provides a clue to Osman Hamdy Bey's artistic approach. In the photograph, the neutral background leaves room for the décor that the painter was to add to the canvas, combining elements reminiscent of a long-lost past, sometime between the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Ottoman Empire.

# Mobile - Untitled

**The American artist Alexander Calder moved to Paris in 1926. It was his discovery of Piet Mondrian's studio that triggered the abstraction of his first mobiles, which he termed "compositions in movement".**

According to Calder, it was Mondrian's neo-plastic studio, which he discovered in 1930, that acted as the catalyst for his abstract sculptures. "My first impulse to work in the abstract came upon a visit to Mondrian's studio, in the fall of 1930 (I had been introduced by Kiesler, and taken there by another friend). I do not know whether or not you know his atelier as it then was—a white wall, rather high, with rectangles of cardboard painted yellow, red, blue, black, and a variety of whites, tacked upon it so as to form a fine, big composition. I was really much more affected by this wall than by his paintings, tho I now like them very much, and I remember saying to Mondrian that it would be fine if they could be made to oscillate in different directions and at different amplitudes (he did not concur)" (Calder to Albert E. Gallatin, 4 November 1934).

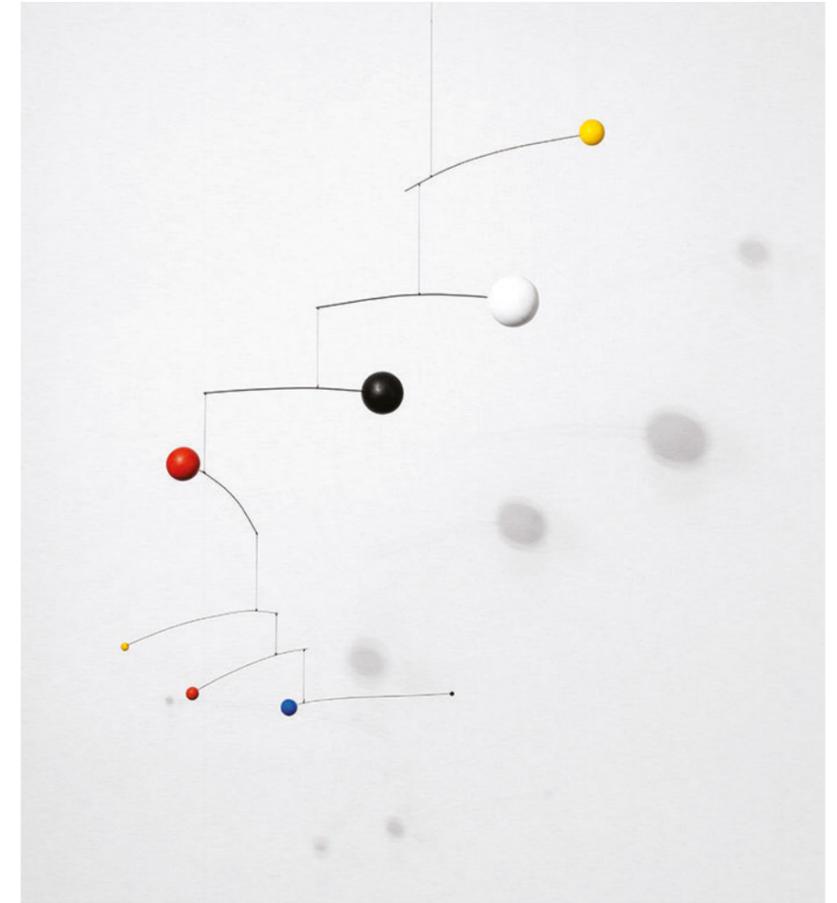
The sculpture *Mobile – Untitled* introduced real movement into art, whereas prior to Calder artists had largely been satisfied with producing the illusion of movement. Suspended in mid-air, the mobiles move randomly, in constant metamorphosis, introducing a cosmic dimension that recalls the waltz of the planets in a far-off galaxy or a mechanical ballet. This mobile is composed of painted wooden balls fixed at the tip of stalks of iron wires, which are themselves carefully suspended one over the other. The mobile seems to have been created with minimal materials that are commonplace and inexpensive, with the colours used being pure and very few (white, black, red, yellow, and blue). The iron wire is so fine that it is almost invisible to the eye, giving the impression that the coloured balls are floating in the air. Under this apparent simplicity

lies, however, an extremely elaborate construction. The size of the balls and the positioning of the iron wire attachments were carefully adjusted by Calder so as to attain a perfect equilibrium, where all forces offset each other to suspend the artwork in balance.

As the mobile has a very light structure, it moves at the slightest hint of air: the balls swing and pivot, such as when a person walks by. Some of Calder's other works are made to sway with the help of motors, which give them a constant movement. This is not the case of fixed and immobile art, as in traditional Western painting, but of artwork in movement, called kinetic art. Search of movement is one of the greatest artistic tendencies of 20th century. Some artists strived to animate their artworks, either through an optical play that created the illusion of movement, or by actually making the artworks move.

## Mobile - Untitled

Alexander Calder  
United States, New York  
About 1934  
Metal rods, painted wood  
H 62.9, 88.9 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Calder Foundation New-York / ADAGP, Paris © Louvre Abu Dhabi / APF

### IN FOCUS: KINETIC ART OR WORKS IN MOVEMENT

In the 1920s, a movement known as Constructivism was to pave the way for what was to be known as kinetic art even though Calder professed being unaware of this movement when he invented the mobile. A number of Russian artists designed objects that combined movement, space, and light. Their ideas spread to Europe and, the United States and by the 1960s, a staggering development of practices stemmed from this movement. In 1955, in Paris, Calder's work was shown alongside young artists such as Victor Vasarely and Jean Tinguely in an exhibition entitled "Le Mouvement", which made a seminal contribution towards raising awareness of kinetic art.

# Chirisei Kyubiki

*The internationally renowned Japanese artist Kazuo Shiraga (1924-2008) was one of the key figures in the Gutai group, who saw painting as the physical interaction between matter and colour.*

This large canvas embodies the vital energy and physical commitment the Japanese artist Kazuo Shiraga emphasised in his work. The painting explores a network of variations on the colour spectrum, ranging from a deep, almost black shade of blue through to red, by way of a gamut of purple shades. The artist created this painting with his feet. His method involved dangling from a rope attached to the ceiling and making swift, rhythmical movements through the matter of the canvas, which he laid across the floor.

On the edge of the canvas a series of splashes recall some of the famous dripping paintings made by American artist Jackson Pollock. In fact, the approach of these two artists is not dissimilar. In the case of Pollock, as with Shiraga, the artistic gesture is no longer limited to the hand or wrist, and involves the body as a whole. The definition of action painting, coined by American writer Harold Rosenberg in 1952, highlights the common ground between the two movements: "At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act – rather than as a space in which to reproduce, re-design, analyse or 'express' an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event". At the same period, the body was playing much the same role in the work of French artist Yves Klein, whose "Anthropometries" used people as human imprints and brushes on canvas, sometimes in elaborate public performances.

Shiraga believed in the liberating power of his materials, which he tackled physically, in gestures akin to performance art. Although his first paintings were made with his feet, he also tried other methods. In 1955, he could be seen slashing red wooden columns with an axe, in the Gutai organised exhibition titled *Experimental Outdoor Exhibition of Modern Art to Challenge the Midsummer Sun*. In his artwork titled *Challenging Mud*, clad simply in a loincloth, Shiraga threw himself into a pile of clay and wrestled with it.

## Chirisei Kyubiki

Japan, Kazuo Shiraga  
1960  
Oil on canvas  
H 160.0, W 130.0 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© 1960 Kazuo Shiraga © Louvre Abu Dhabi / APF

### IN FOCUS: THE GUTAI MOVEMENT

Shiraga was one of the key figures in the Gutai group, created in December 1954 by Jiro Yoshihara. The word Gutai, which means concrete, implies action and physical involvement. It distanced itself from traditional plastic arts and combined a number of different disciplines. Gutai was therefore a precursor of the Happenings launched by American artist Allan Kaprow in 1966 and also echoed the methods of the New Realists in France. The group was discovered in 1957 by Michel Tapié, a French critic, theoretician, and ardent proponent and defender of Arte Informale. Tapié owned this painting and, thanks to him, the group became known in Europe. Gutai had a significant influence on North American and European artists, particularly in terms of performance art.

# Throne in "Viking" or "dragon" style

*This early twentieth-century throne is a fine example of what is known as the 'Dragon' or 'Viking Revival' style. Using a visual lexicon borrowed from his country's glorious ancestors the Vikings, cabinetmaker Lars Kinsarvik (1846-1925) was asserting the identity of Norway, which had just achieved independence.*

The decorative arts were used to convey the Norwegian demand for independence. In 1905, following the domination of first Denmark and then Sweden, it finally achieved political sovereignty. This new autonomy triggered an awareness of its national and historical identity, underpinned by renewed appreciation not only of its abundant literary heritage but of its popular heritage too. A large number of museums of popular art were created while archaeological excavations revealed vestiges of Viking vessels and drakkars, particularly in Tune in 1867 and Oseberg in 1904.

The throne is in sculpted painted wood. The basic construction of this monumental piece is in sharp contrast with the elegance of its painted sculpture. The sculpted motifs such as the interlacing on the back and the cross pieces on the base are either geometric or depict heads, a touch that lends it a primitive aspect. A crowned head spans the top of the back of the chair, figures adorn the knobs of the armrests and helmeted heads cap the upright backrest forms. All these motifs evoke Norwegian history and popular legends, and recall the heritage shared with Celtic art.

Kinsarvik was one of the most brilliant proponents of the Dragon, or Viking Revival, style, and his defence of a quintessentially Norwegian decorative identity proved to have international repercussions when his work was shown at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1900. In addition to designing furniture in the Dragon style, Kinsarvik also decorated interiors,

including the Hardanger Hotel in Odda in 1896, the Youth Club in Krossvoll in 1900, the Maeland Hotel in Granvin, and the Tronderheimen Restaurant in Trondheim in 1913.

The rise in the number of schools of applied arts and the creation of decorative arts museums provided artists with historic artefacts to study, in a bid to improve the production of contemporary objects and to nurture inspiration. The decorative arts drew on this heritage, which became a source of local artistic expression. From 1890 to 1910, Norway experienced an artistic golden age encompassing the realms of literature (Henrik Ibsen), music (Edvard Grieg), and painting (Edvard Munch).

## Throne in "Viking" or "dragon" style

Lars Kinsarvik  
Norway, Hardanger  
1900–1910  
Painted wood  
H 125.0, W 66.5 cm  
Louvre Abu Dhabi



© Louvre Abu Dhabi / APF

### IN FOCUS: THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

In the face of the growing industrialisation affecting the production methods and quality of crafted objects, the late 19th century saw a renewal and mutation in craftsmanship. These concerns were first raised in England, a highly industrialised nation, through the Arts and Crafts movement, whose brief was to preserve traditional techniques and rebuild the bridges between art, society, the individual, and the workplace. Its advocates, theoretician John Ruskin and artist William Morris, were determined art should intervene at every one of these levels and that everyday objects should bring happiness and harmony through their sheer beauty. The movement created offshoots all over the world, from Europe to the United States and Japan.

# **GLOSSARY**

# Glossary

## Abstract, or Non-Figurative Art

Art which does not seek to depict or allude to perceptible reality (person, place, object, etc.), and which uses colours, lines, and materials as subjects in their own right.

## Action Painting

A process of making art, often through a variety of techniques that include dripping, dabbing, smearing, and flinging paint onto the surface of the canvas. For this reason, action painting is also referred to as gestural abstraction. Famous artists associated with the movement include Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, and Franz Kline.

## Alloy

Substance having metallic properties, consisting of two or more metallic elements or of metallic and non-metallic elements, which are miscible with each other when molten, and do not separate into distinct layers when solid.

## Arte Informale

A term coined in 1950 by French critic Michel Tapié referring to the art movement that began during the mid-1940s in post-World War II, characterised by being executed spontaneously and a generally gestural and performative approach. Arte Informale became an internationally accepted movement that reached the New York School, the Japanese Gutai Group, and the South American Abstractionists.

## Avant-Garde

People or works that are experimental or innovative, particularly with respect to art, culture, and politics.

## BCE

Abbreviation for "Before the Common Era". This is used alternatively to BC as it avoids the overtly Christian bias inherent in BC.

## Bronze Age

Refers to the period and culture that is characterised by the widespread use of bronze, which is an alloy of copper and tin, lead, antimony, or arsenic, in the manufacture of tools and weapons. It developed at different times in different parts of the world, from around 3,500 BCE in Greece and China to around 1,400 BCE in several areas of Europe.

## Calligram

Word or text in which the design and layout of the letters creates a visual image related to the meaning of the words themselves. Guillaume Apollinaire was a famous calligram writer and author of a book of poems called *Calligrammes*; his poem written in the form of the Eiffel Tower is an example of a calligram.

## Calligraphy

The art of giving a visual form to the letters of a script.

## CE

Abbreviation for "Common Era". This is used alternatively to AD (Anno Domini). Use of CE is now preferred to as it avoids the overtly Christian bias inherent in AD.

## Celts

An ethno linguistic group of tribal societies who from the 2nd millennium BCE to the 1st century BCE spread over much of Europe. Their tribes and groups eventually ranged from the British Isles and northern Spain to as far east as the Black Sea coasts, and Galatia in Anatolia, and were in part absorbed into the Roman Empire. Linguistically they survive in the modern Celtic speakers of Ireland, Highland Scotland, the Isle of Man, Wales, and Brittany.

## Ceramics

Pottery objects and containers made from modelled and fired clay. There are different kinds of ceramics whose names vary according to the materials added to the clay and the temperature at which they are fired.

## Chinoiserie

Decorative objects made in the West adopting and imitating Chinese styles and fashions. Chinoiserie artefacts were particularly sought after in 18th century.

## Constructivism

A movement in modern art and architecture that evolved in Moscow after World War I, which explored the use of movement and industrial materials to create nonrepresentational, often geometric objects.

## Cubism

An early 20th century and highly influential avant-garde art movement originated by artists Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso that marked a rupture with the European artistic traditions, traceable to the Renaissance, of pictorial illusionism and the organisation of compositional space in terms of linear perspective.

## Happening

An event that combines various elements from painting, poetry, music, dance, and theatre, and staged as live action. The term happening was coined by the American artist Allan Kaprow in the 1950s.

## Kinetic Art

Art containing moving parts or dependent upon motion for its effect, typically powered by wind, a motor, or the observer.

## Lost Wax Casting

A process by which a duplicate metal sculpture (often silver, gold, brass, or bronze) is cast from an original sculpture.

## Manufacture

A large-scale production of an industrial establishment grouping together large numbers of workers involved in creating handmade products. Several manufacturing units of art objects were created in France during the reign of Louis XIV (1661 – 1715 CE).

## Mesopotamia

The region of West Asia between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers where one of the world's earliest civilisation developed. The region includes the area that is now Iraq, eastern Syria, and southern Turkey.

<b>Miniature</b>	Small-sized painted artwork typically kept in an album or an illustrated manuscript.
<b>Modern Art</b>	A form of art which breaks with classical artistic references. Its chronology is difficult to establish, but has been traced back from 1830 onwards with the romantic vision of art. In the 20th century, onward to the 1970s, modern art leads to contemporary art.
<b>Mughal Painting</b>	A tradition of South Asian painting, typically miniatures were created as book illustrations or as single works kept in albums. The tradition emerged from Persian miniature painting, with various Indian influences, and developed largely in the court of the Mughal Empire (16th to 19th centuries). It later spread to other Indian courts, both Muslim and Hindu, and later Sikh.
<b>Neolithic</b>	The most recent period of prehistory characterised by the invention of agriculture, livestock farming, ceramics, and the appearance of settled communities. These transformations did not come about everywhere at the same time, however, so the dating of activities during this period therefore varies according to the region in question.
<b>Nouveau Réalisme (New Realism)</b>	An artistic movement founded in 1960 by art critic Pierre Restany and artist Yves Klein during the first collective exposition in the Apollinaire gallery in Milan, about new ways of perceiving the real.
<b>Oeuvre</b>	An oeuvre (or œuvre) is a work of art. It can also refer to the complete body of an artist's work.
<b>Orientalism</b>	Orientalism is a once-popular term used by art historians and literary and cultural studies scholars for the depiction or imitation of aspects of Middle Eastern and East Asian cultures by writers, designers, and artists from the West. The term also refers to the 19th century school of art characterised by its strong taste for the Orient.
<b>Ottoman Empire</b>	A large empire founded by Turkish tribes in Anatolia, and ruled by the descendants of Osman I until its dissolution in 1920. One of the most powerful states in the world during the 15th and 16th centuries, it spanned more than 600 years. At its height, the empire included most of southeastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa as far west as Algeria.
<b>Palaeolithic</b>	The longest and oldest period of prehistory (roughly from 3 million years to 10,000 BCE). In that epoch, humankind led a nomadic existence, hunting and gathering to sustain life.
<b>Performance Art</b>	A performance presented to an audience, often interdisciplinary. Performance may be either scripted or unscripted, random, or carefully orchestrated. The actions of an individual or a group at a particular place and in a particular time constitute the work.

<b>Perspective</b>	Art of depicting three-dimensional elements in two dimensions on a flat surface, in the same manner as they are perceived by the viewer in reality. Distant objects are, for example, drawn smaller to the objects nearer to the viewer.
<b>Repoussé</b>	The technique of hammering and pressing designs in relief. A malleable metal is shaped by hammering from the reverse side to create a design in low relief. Repoussé is a French term meaning "pushed up", from Latin pulsare, which means, "to push".
<b>Slip</b>	Suspension in water of clay and/or other materials used in the production of ceramic ware for adding colour, opacity, or other elements; it may subsequently be covered with a glaze.
<b>Sumer</b>	The historical region and ancient civilisation in southern Mesopotamia during the Copper Age and Early Bronze Age.
<b>Vikings</b>	Norse seafaring pirates and traders who raided and traded from their Scandinavian homelands across wide areas of northern and central Europe, as well as European Russia, from the late 8th to late 11th centuries.

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