



JOY: THE ART OF CONNECTION

Aga Khan Museum's School in Residence Program



AGA KHAN MUSEUM

JOY: THE ART OF CONNECTION

Laughter that echoes, a glance that understands, a moment that lingers – connection is the invisible thread that binds us together. It turns strangers into friends, stories into shared experiences, and simple moments into lifelong memories. Across cultures and distances, we seek the warmth of belonging, the spark of creativity, the joy of being truly seen.

For the second year, *Joy: The Art of Connection* brings students together through art and storytelling. The continued partnership between the Aga Khan Museum and the Peel District School Board strengthens our commitment to fostering creativity, dialogue, and community engagement. By expanding how young people and educators connect with art, we reinforce that learning flourishes when we come together.

At its core, this exhibition is a journey of creativity and discovery. Through hands-on exploration, students have transformed ideas into visual expressions, uncovering new ways to communicate and reflect on the world around them. Each brushstroke and composition deepen their understanding of themselves and others, proving that creativity thrives in connection.

In a fast-moving world, connection becomes more precious than ever. This exhibition celebrates the ways we reach for one another, find joy in community, and create meaning together. Because joy, like art, is something we share.

JOY: The Art of Connection School in Residence program and the student-led exhibition are a partnership between the Aga Khan Museum and the Peel District School Board.

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Joy: The Art of Connection, School in Residence program and the student-led exhibition are a partnership between the Aga Khan Museum and the Peel District School Board.

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Central Peel Secondary School



**OLIVIA
SYNOWIEC**

The Dagger of Medieval

2025

Model magic and acrylic on fabric

This piece was inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard at the Aga Khan Museum. The Dagger of Medieval is made from model magic for the dagger part, and the fabric for the sheath. I chose fabric because I mostly work with fabric. I picked the dagger for inspiration because I loved the flower design on the sheath.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963



MIA ANN FOURNIER

Patterns of Our Time

2025

Model magic, acrylic, and beads

My work explores connection, joy, and fashion through a multi-modal piece that includes use of beads, acrylic paint, and model magic. My inspiration was a blue tile from Tehran, Iran, with four women in big dresses on it. The beautiful dresses on this tile caught my eye and reminded me of the memories and interests I had in such fashion. Looking at this brought me back to my past interest in old and unique fashion and I wanted to incorporate my younger self into it, giving it a childhood feel.

Inspired by Tile, LI2015.19.1



**MUSA
MAZHAR**

The Legendary Simurgh

2025

Pen and Ink on illustration board

This is a drawing of the mythological creature simurgh, which originated in the Arabic region. It was inspired by the painting with the simurgh dying for an Iranian hero, Isfandiyar. I chose this artifact for inspiration because I was really interested in mythology, and I found an opportunity to draw it out. The drawing has a manga art style as I love making and reading mangas/comics. Also, I used a Japanese waterbrush all over and a red moon to further show the Japanese art style in this piece.



Inspired by Isfandiyar Kills the Simurgh, AKM103



**ASMAR
ABBASZADE**

Floral Passion

2025

Oil marker and colour pencil on illustration board

My artwork shows connections between floral art and music. People's passion is their main joy most of the time. This artifact is made on illustration board with oil markers, and colour pencils. I was inspired by the tiles that were made in Turkey in 1569-70. To show the music passion in my artifact I drew notes, musical patterns, and to show the floral art I took inspiration from the flowers, patterns, and similar group of colours that are in the tiles.



Inspired by Tile, AKM862



**SAAD
FARHAAN**

Gold, Steel, Ruby

2025

Cardboard, model magic, and acrylic

I was inspired by a dagger because of its beautifully handcrafted handle made of gold, blade made of steel, and a beautiful red ruby at the bottom of the handle. This dagger connects to me since I like making things with my hands, and this blade was made exactly like that. This blade's handle was made in Iran, while the rest of the dagger was built in Turkey.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963



**DANIAL
HASSANZADEH**

Blue Shiny Dish

2025

Model magic and acrylic

My art was inspired by a glass dish from 16th century Iran. I used model magic and acrylic paint as well as the star shaped cookie cutter to indent the texture into the dish. I connected with this dish because I come from the same place. I chose to work with model magic because I wanted to experience creating a dish from scratch so that I could connect to the original artist from Iran.



Inspired by Shallow Dish, AKM660



**SARAH
HUSSAIN**

POMEGRANATE

2025

Acrylic on canvas

In this art piece, I included a beautiful Persian dish holding a sliced pomegranate. This piece I made is connected to my religion (Islam). The dish I incorporated was made by Muslims, and the pomegranate I added to the painting is my favourite fruit because it was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.



Inspired by Dish, AKM588



KARAM ELBORNO

Fantastic Tiles

2025

Marker and Sharpie

I was inspired by the panel of tiles from China and the pharmacy jars from Italy. I chose these artifacts because they have the same blue colour, my favourite, and flowers. I also chose them because I have a plate at home that has the same colours and design. I thought that they would go together because they have similarities like the beautiful colours and designs, even though they are from different countries.



Inspired by Panel of Tiles, AKM580, and
Pharmacy Jars (Albarelli), AKM567 and AKM568



**NADINE
WSHAHEIN**

Ablution Basin

2025

Acrylic on canvas

This art piece shows the ablution basin, made for healing and cleaning. This piece has Qur'an verses, magic squares, numerical formulas, and astrological imagery. Water is the most praised element as it is the source of all creation. It can wipe away any type of sickness and purify the body.

It is also used for Muslim prayer. The healing bowl is a design made by Chinese Muslims. It shows a lady holding a handful of water from the healing bowl and washing her face with it, cleaning herself. She's simply purifying and healing herself from sickness.



Inspired by Ablution Basin, AKM722



KAELIN SHAND- TRELOAR

Sunrise on a Hill

2025

Pencil, colour pencil, and marker on illustration board

I made my piece thinking about the hope warriors leave behind when they pass away and how that shines bright and brings warmth and is often associated with joy. Since the sun shines bright and brings warmth and joy to many people, I decided to add a sunrise shining down the dagger to represent the hope of these warriors.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963



**LEEN
KAYALI**

Vase

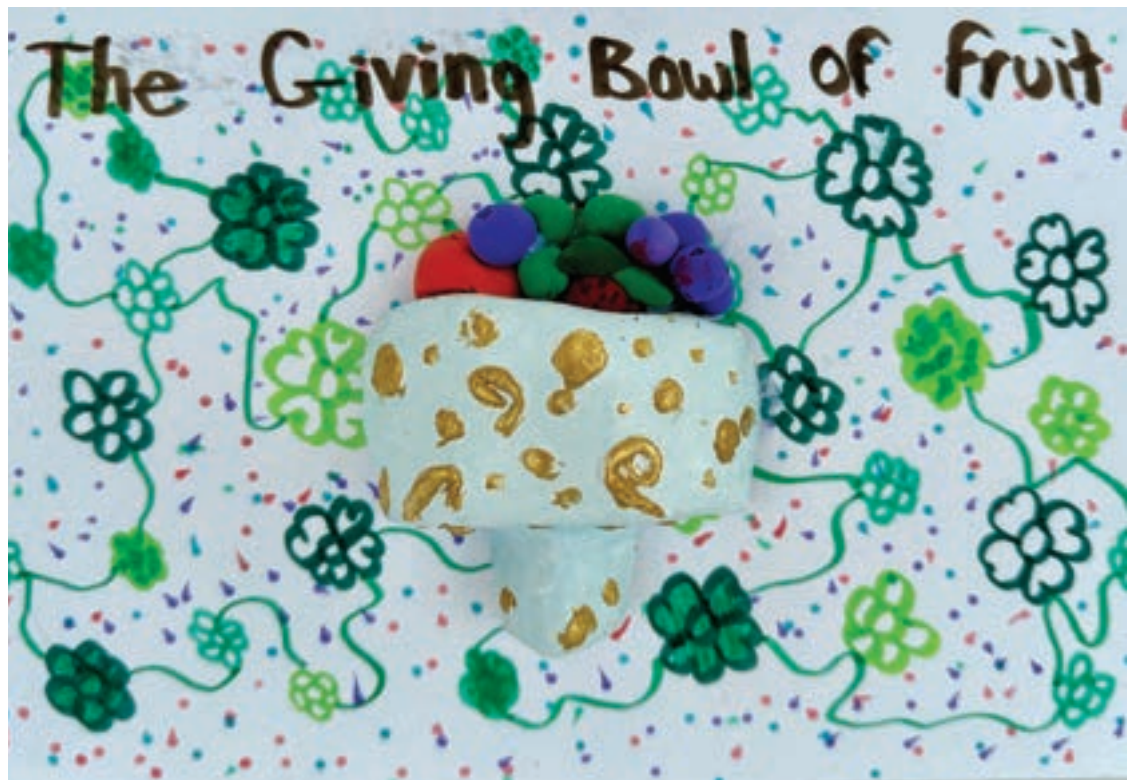
2025

Model magic and acrylic paint cardboard

I chose this artifact because it reminds me of my Arab culture and I loved the colour, pattern, and shape. Whenever I enter an Arab restaurant or a restaurant back home, I always see this vase or others like it. For this piece I added the shelf because the vase is always on a fancy shelf or just a counter. I added the shiny parts using glue, and for the colour I mixed blue and gold stuff.



Inspired by Bottle, AKM658



**ZAHRA
SHAH**

The Giving Bowl

2025

Model magic and ink on illustration board

My multi-modal art piece was inspired by Basin in the Aga Khan Museum. I got ideas from other bowls in the museum too. There were many different patterns to choose from, but I chose the floral pattern for the background of my art piece. I made it with model magic, acrylic paint, and markers. On the bowl I put golden designs, and the fruits were made with model magic and markers. The giving bowl represents kindness, caring, friendship, feeding, helping, generosity, giving, and many other things. I wanted to make this bowl of giving because of all the wonderful things it represents.



Inspired by Basin, AKM607



VALENTINO VAJDA

Sunlight

2025

Acrylic on canvas

I created this landscape painting with the oliphant horn because I felt it connected to my Viking heritage. I used canvas, acrylic paint, and silver and gold metallic markers to create layers and textures. Making my brushstrokes in the direction of the landscape, I added details to make it look realistic. I put a lot of passion into my work so people could like it and feel good energy when they see it. I hope it gives them the passion to follow their dreams.



Inspired by Oliphant, AKM809



**ELDANA
HAILU**

Blue Flowers

2025

Watercolour on watercolour paper

My artwork is a tile. I did a tile because it's pretty and it has flowers. The connection between me and the artwork is that when I see flowers they remind me of my old friend. I used watercolour paint because I felt it goes with the flowers. The colours I used were blue and white because I like the colour blue.



Inspired by Tile, AKM581



HANUSH JAYENDRA RATHOD

The Bearer of Light

2025

Colour pencil and ink on illustration board

My art piece is a candlestick from the first half of the 14th century. I chose to draw this artifact as it reminds me when I read with a dim light next to me. There are Arabic letters engraved in the base of the object. This candlestick was created with brass and gold. I created this sketch with simple drawing materials like a pencil, alcoholic markers, an illustration board, colour pencils, ink, and some paintbrushes along with a ruler. This candlestick was my inspiration to create this drawing.



Inspired by Candlestick, AKM736



**IYANNA
CARREÑO-
CRAYDEN**

Flower of Friendship

2025

Model magic and acrylic

In my art piece I was inspired by a floral pattern on these tiles from Turkey. I liked the colours and the fact that the pattern looks complex, but in reality it is much simpler. The flower I modelled after was a tulip. The tulip represents deep love, which is found in human connection and human values, whether with family, friends, or something deeper.



Inspired by Tiles, AKM862



**MUNEEB
KHAN**

The Qur'an Space

2025

Marker, pen and ink, and pencil on illustration board

The Qur'anic Space is the Qur'an in outer space because it has a very big connection with the planets and living things in the Islamic religion. The Qur'an is the main holy book of Islam; the origin of it was in Huzoor Muhammad (SAW); Jibreel (AS) put down by the Qur'an, which was made by Allah (God).



Inspired by Section (juz') of a Qur'an Manuscript, AKM285



**ADITYA
GHOSH**

The Ancient Navigator

2025

Ink on Illustration board

The artifact I chose is an astrolabe from Spain in the 14th century. I chose an astrolabe as my artifact since it represents the connection between the earth and the sky, and also because it was the most interesting artifact to me. The astrolabe amazes me because it shows how people used nature and the things around them to live their life instead of depending on technology back then (because there was no technology). It connects to me since I like space and astronomy, and the astrolabe uses planets and stars to determine the time of day or the direction to go in (used by sailors, mostly at night).



Inspired by Planispheric Astrolabe, AKM611



**SOLOMIA
TISKOVA**

The Apothecary Jar

2025

Acrylic and ink on illustration board

My artwork shows the connection between health and art. Health and medicine travelled through the jars. This jar reminds me that something as simple as a jar helps many people. People were connected by their wellbeing. I chose this artifact because I like the design. I chose the materials paint and markers. Painting is good for your brain, which connects health to art.



Inspired by Pharmacy Jars (Albarelli), AKM567, AKM568



BEAUTY FREMPONG

Moon Lady

2025

Acrylic and ink on watercolour paper

I chose the moon because to me, it was the biggest and prettiest artifact in the whole museum. When I first saw the moon, I was mesmerized by its size; it felt like I was seeing the real moon up close. Another reason I chose the moon was because I wanted to connect feminine beauty and water to the moon. That's why in my art piece there is a lady holding a crescent moon. In my opinion, the moon has a beautiful effect on the ocean; that's why I made the "moon lady" blend into the ocean. I was inspired to use blue because it is used throughout the Museum.

Inspired by Moon, 2018 by Luke Jerram



NOAH YE

Coin Collection

2025

Acrylic and cardboard on canvas

I selected this artifact because I have a coin collection at home. It makes me feel excited to find coins, old and new, for my collection. The reason why I picked the bowl is because it looked like a bowl I had at home.



Inspired by Turquoise Bowl with Waterweed Motif, AKM562, and Coins, AKM621



**MILANA
BORUK**

Grateful of Our Moon

2025

Model magic and acrylic

My artwork is about how we should be grateful for our moon because if we didn't have our moon, our water would rise higher than when we have our moon. The people gathering under the moon are grateful for it. I put in a lot of work and time to make my art detailed, especially the moon.

Inspired by Moon, 2018 by Luke Jerram



**PORCHE
FOUSA
FREMPONG**

The Shine of the Moonlight

2025

Acrylic

For my art piece I did a moon with beautiful mountain scenery with stars, and a girl holding a perfume bottle, which is the artifact I chose for this piece. This artifact stood out to me with its bold ruby and gold colours, and after finding that it had a connection to beauty I just got more intrigued by it. Not to mention, the amount of elegance it held made my scenery in the painting look beautiful and unreal. I also added flowers to add elegance and fragrance (connection to the perfume bottle). Overall, my art piece gives off natural elegance and has things that represent the fragrance of the perfume bottle.



Inspired by Perfume or Snuff Bottle, AKM891



**ANDREA
ANTONIE**

Gift of the Past

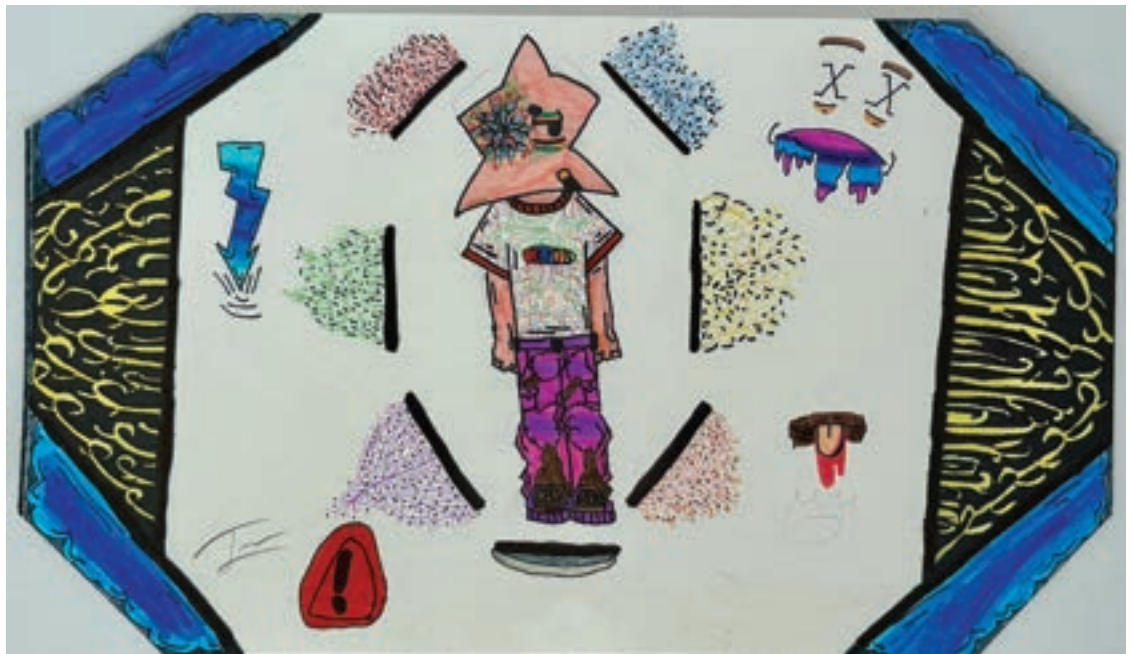
2025

Model magic, acrylic, and cardboard

My piece is inspired by some tiles I saw in the Museum. I made golden hands holding up a bowl to show giving or receiving, and I painted the bowl with blue leafy patterns and lines based on the tiles and Chinese porcelain. When I painted my design inside the bowl, I used a lapis blue to include swirls and bubbly leaves and flowy lines. I picked these artifacts because of their interesting patterns and use of blue.



Inspired by Ablution Basin, AKM722, and
Panel of Tiles, AKM580



**JAMEER
LEO
GRAHAM**

Graffiti Dagger Art Peace

2025

Ink on illustration board

My art is based on a dagger, which has gold and black, so I added that in my work. I added colours around the central figure. Then, I added design on the pants of the figure, like trees, so they stand out. I cut the corners of the paper so it can look better. The dagger reminded me of graffiti designs, which I like to draw. I added graffiti because I want to make my own shirt and pants inspired by graffiti and make a brand, so everyone can like what I make and do.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963



AYA EL RIFAI

Sister Connection

2025

Watercolour and acrylic on watercolour paper

This artwork is about the connection between sisters. It shows two girls painting together and they are sisters. The materials I used were mainly watercolour and a bit of acrylic. The artifact that inspired me was the palette because it looked cool, and I love to paint. My artwork connects to the theme, Joy: The Art of Connection, because two sisters are painting, meaning they have the same interest.



Inspired by Palette, AKM653



**SAYVA
BHAMRA**

Red Treasure

2025

Watercolour, paprika, and colour pencil

My artwork is a shell lying on a red sand beach with jellyfish swimming around it. I'm from India, and my mom told me about the red sand beaches there, and I've always wanted to visit India to see them. My love for swimming and just the ocean in general gave me inspiration. My art connects to the theme because I've always felt a connection to the water and ocean. Whenever my family goes on vacation near water, I feel so peaceful and relaxed.



Inspired by Shell, AKM665



CHATRESH REDDY YERRADODDI

A New Opening

2025

Oil pastel and colour pencil

My artwork shows that we pass new doors to get closer to achieving our goals. The double door was made mostly with colour pencils to incorporate intricate designs. Oil pastels were used to show the light coming out of the doors. The artifact that inspired me was a double door with similar patterns created in 892 in North Mazanderan, Iran.

My artwork connects to patterns found in many parts of the world and that we go through doors every day, and sometimes they lead to something new!



Inspired by Double Door, AKM707



**JANA
AL SAKKA**

Palace

2025

Colour pencil on illustration board

My artist statement represents my ability to connect with the artwork to draw inspiration from it for drawings and paintings.



Inspired by Dish, AKM737



EMIR ATAS

Power of Dragon

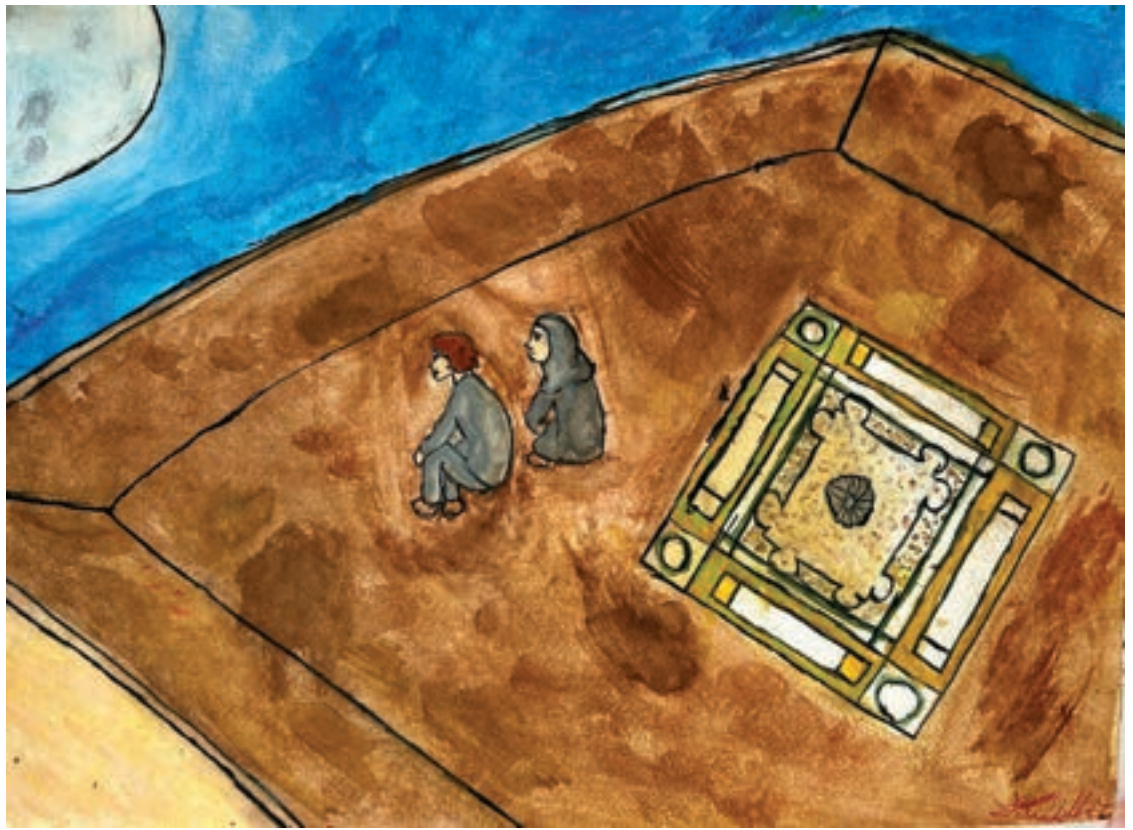
2025

Marker on illustration board

The subject of what I drew is a dagger. I drew a dagger and a dragon protecting it. The dragon protects the dagger to prevent anyone from taking that dagger.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963



**LILLYANN
QUYNN
WADDELL**

The Moon in the Courtyard

2025

Watercolour

My art is about the connection of people and the connection of loved ones. I used watercolour because it is my preferred medium: it is easy to layer, easy to use, and easy to blend. The artifacts that inspired me are Fountain and Moon, 2018. They inspired me when I saw and learned about them. I pictured two people sitting in a courtyard, with the fountain behind or beside them, and the moon above, gleaming a silver light below. My art connects to the theme, Joy: The Art of Connection, as the painting depicts two people sitting together at the fountain below the moon, enjoying each other's presence.



Inspired by Fountain, AKM960 and Moon, 2018 by Luke Jerram



HANA MALAK

The One and Only

2025

Acrylic and gold leaf on canvas

This art piece is dedicated to my god, Allah. I combined two artifacts to create this piece. The first is Dish, which was based on a Chinese model. I chose this artifact because the colour combination, the small details, and design are very well put together and attention-grabbing. The gold border in my art piece is inspired by another artifact, Shell. This artifact is so pretty to look at and consists of the smallest details possible.



Inspired by Dish, AKM588, and
Shell, AKM665



SHRISTI JAIN

The Head of the Simurgh

2025

Acrylic, felt, and feathers on cardboard

This art piece is based on the simurgh from one of the artifacts in the Museum called Isfandiyar Kills the Simurgh. The simurgh is a mythical creature who can wreak havoc among people or help travelers on their way. I wanted the animal to “come to life” in a 3D version by making it into a mask. When you first look at the mask, you can see a gold eight-pointed star on its head. To me the star resembles connection because it is all over this museum, especially on the windows of the courtyard, which create a beautiful rainbow when light shines in. On the mask there are feathers, which resemble the simurghs that were killed because when you shoot a bird their feathers disperse just like how they are dangling from the mask.



Inspired by Isfandiyar Kills the Simurgh, AKM103



SOPHIA LE

Portrait of Shah Raju II

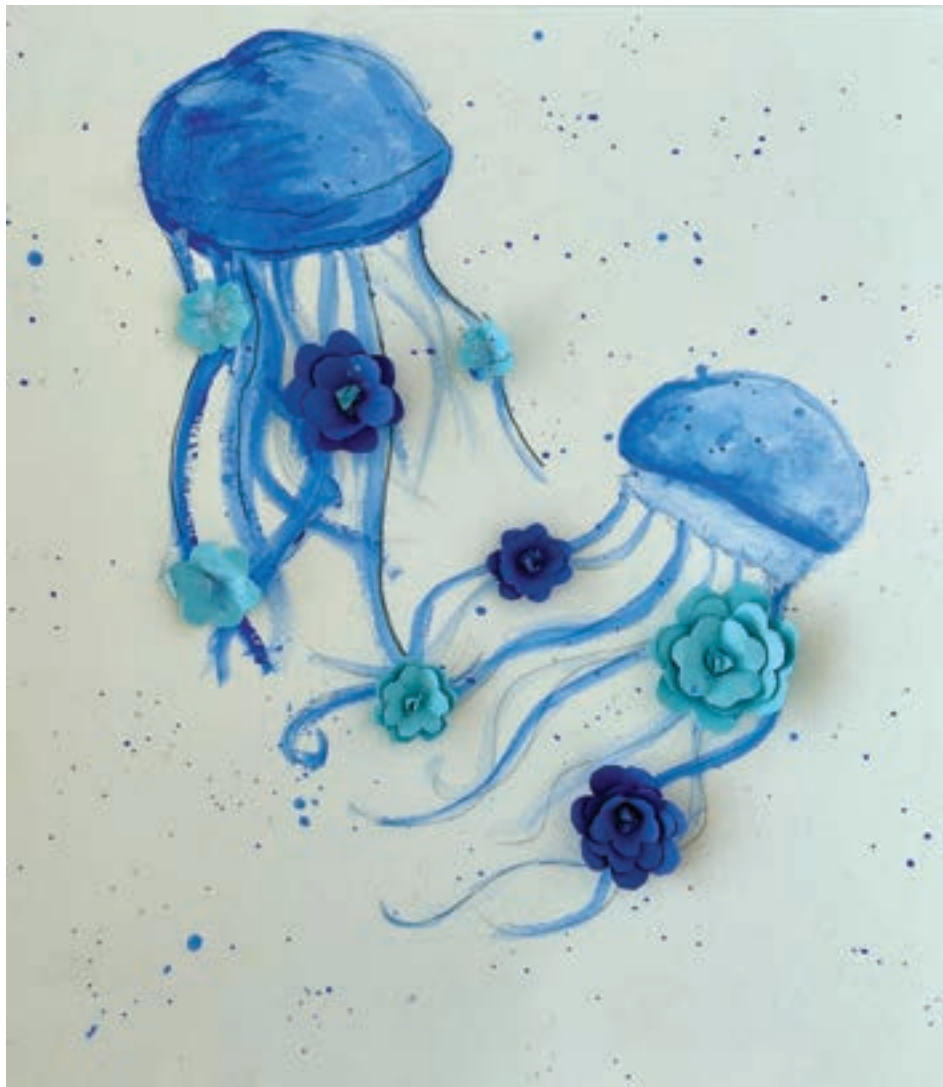
2025

Watercolour

In art, horses have long been considered valuable assets, and owning and riding them was often seen as a symbol of wealth and power. I chose this artifact because it is splendid and sophisticated. I used watercolour and pen to draw this art.



Inspired by Portrait of Shah Raju II, AKM922



**MONICA
TRUONG**

Bloomish (Bloom + Jellyfish)

2025

Watercolour and paper flowers on watercolour paper

This artwork was inspired by an artifact that I came across in the Aga Khan Museum. It's called Dish and it was inspired by Chinese porcelain. The blue details hooked me into the artifact and upon closer inspection I noticed there were lots of blue flowers. After some thought, I decided to mix both my favourite sea creature and the flowers together. Though my artwork doesn't have a deep meaning behind it, working on it brought me lots of joy.



Inspired by Dish, AKM588



**TEBA
NAZAR
FAKHRI**

Flame of Fear

2025

Colour pencil, oil pastel, and gold paint on illustration board

This artwork is inspired by a candlestick made in the 14th century and shows that there's much more to a person than their surface. I was inspired by the candle's unique shape and designs, truly one of a kind. Growing up, lighting a candle, and a candlestick in general, always brought me joy and calmness, no matter what the situation is.



Inspired by Candlestick, AKM736



JEYNA WRAY POWELL

Tombstone

2025

Watercolour on watercolour paper

I used watercolour. There is no important reason behind it; I just like how light watercolour is. The artifact that inspired me was the tombstone. I chose the tombstone because I feel like it's a reminder that the same will come for everyone and to live life to the fullest because you'll never know when your last day will be.



Inspired by Tombstone, AKM912



**VIVIAN
ZHIQIAN XU**

The Ruby-Eyed Rabbit

2025

Pencil and colour pencil on illustration board

The ruby on the dagger reminded me of a rabbit character I created a while ago that had crystals for eyes. Everything in my drawing has sharp edges to match the look of crystals (and because I like drawing with sharp edges).

My artwork is about the connection between nature and human greed. The rabbit is being hunted for its ruby eyes, and nobody really thinks about the rabbit without thinking about how they can profit from it.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963



**ROWDA
ISSA
DAHIR**

The Fountain of Life

2025

Acrylic and tissue paper on canvas

The Fountain of Life is about the connection and sustainability of the environment. If you think about it, everything depends on each other in a way. The grass needs flowers, and the flowers need grass; the fountain needs water, and water needs the fountain. It's all connected. Two artifacts inspired me to make this piece. A fountain from Egypt and a dish from Turkey. I chose to use acrylic paint and tissue paper on a white canvas, because they are materials that I am comfortable with and have used before.



Inspired by Fountain, AKM960



SUFIYAN SHAHNAWAZ SHAIKH

The Wise View

2025

Acrylic on canvas

A Wise View is a painting of the view of the sultan (the king in the painting) through a window in his library reading a battle guide by Sufiyan (on the book written in Arabic). The artwork was inspired by Life-size Paper Garment and my passion for reading. The garment inspired me to create this artwork as it resonated with power.

Inspired by Life-size Paper Garment by Isabelle de Borchgrave



**DESTINY
ROBINSON**

Untitled

2025

Watercolour on model magic



Inspired by Tiles from Qur'anic Friezes, AKM565, AKM796, AKM859



**HEIDI
HASSAN**

Untitled

2025

Colour pencil and oil pastel on illustration board



Inspired by Kilga, AKM817



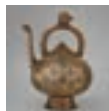
**SOPHIA
IDUSUYI**

The Golden Connection

2025

Watercolour

I chose the teapot for my art piece not only because of its beautiful design but also because of the memories it brought back. When I was younger, after me and my siblings finished playing outside in the snow we would come home and have a nice hot cup of tea. I wanted this art piece to show how something as simple as tea can bring people together, which is why this art piece is related to our topic of connection.



Inspired by Dragon-spouted Pitcher (ewer), AKM889



**JOHAN
CASTIBLANCO
RODRIGUEZ**

The Dagger of Night and Day

2025

Acrylic and ink on canvas

I had fun doing this project and I am very glad that the Museum invited me.
Thank you to everyone for this opportunity.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963



VICTORIA LE

Flowers by the Windowsill

2025

Pencil on paper

In this piece, I wanted to capture the deep, sentimental connection we share with objects that carry history. The bottle, though simple, holds centuries of stories within it. As the girl admires the flowers, I see it as a symbol of how we're all connected – past, present, and future. The bottle isn't just an artifact; it's a bridge that links generations, a reminder that we cherish it as those before us did, and that future generations will hold it with the same reverence, continuing this cycle of connection.



Inspired by Bottle, AKM661



ELLA GRANT

Persian Rug

2025

Colour pencil and yarn on watercolour paper

I was inspired by the artifact Panel of Four Tiles, which reminded me of the patterns on Persian rugs. I was inspired to blend elements from both the artifact and Persian rugs into my artwork. Growing up, my family always had Persian rugs, and I've always been amazed by how intricate they are since they are handmade. I've always felt that my art style being intricate had something to do with being half Persian, so I was excited to explore that more in this piece.

I incorporated patterns from the artifact while following the overall look of a Persian rug. I also added my own flair by making it bright and colourful as I feel drawn to these cheery colours, and I wanted to add an element of my personality to the piece as well.



Inspired by Panel of Four Tiles, AKM878



ANZA IRFAN

Echoes of FAITH

2025

Acrylic on canvas

This painting is a personal exploration of spirituality and self-reflection, where abstract forms meet divine language. Overlapping blue circles evoke infinite depth and the ceaseless flow of time and thought. At its heart, a surah from the Qur'an is rendered in elegant Arabic calligraphy, serving as a spiritual compass and reminder of divine guidance shaping my journey. The interplay between abstract blue motifs and meticulously crafted script invites viewers to meditate on the connections between art, faith, and the soul's inner workings. The different shades of blue, inspired by the Museum's tiles and a wine bowl, bridge traditional artistry with divine expression, connection, and visual beauty to spiritual depth.



Inspired by Wine Bowl, AKM925



**SOFIA
YAKOVENKO**

The Eternal Dance

2025

Watercolour and colour pencil on watercolour paper

Dance is a form of art, like the two bottles that inspired this piece. Both forms of art can be separated by centuries but have one thing in common – they are the expressions of artists thoughts, feelings, and passion. Art is eternal, as are people's passion, creativity, and hope.



Inspired by Bottle, AKM661, and
Bottle, AKM647



KIM NIHARA

Aim to the Moon

2025

Acrylic and gouache on illustration board

The astrolabe calculates star and planet positions and helps people with directions. In my art, the girl is standing on top of the moon with the astrolabe in her hand. When ancient people used this artifact, they looked at the sky and wondered what was out there. I think this curiosity brought us all the way here to our present day, where we are able to explore beyond our world. This piece also connects with me because of what my mom always says to me: "Don't aim for the roof, aim for the moon. At least you would end up on the roof. And if you aim for the roof, you wouldn't even get to the roof."



Inspired by Astrolabe, AKM611



**ALISA
YUN-ZHU
WANG**

Turn Back Time

2025

Watercolour

This work uses the Astronomical Compendium in the Aga Khan Museum as inspiration. This artifact has the function of a sundial, which reminds people of the good old days. The artifact is surrounded by the sun, moon, and stars, representing time. There are many stars on the characters, representing beautiful things.



Inspired by Astronomical Compendium, AKM625



**KOPPEL
D'SOUZA**

The Tranquility of Childhood

2025

Acrylic and oil-based pen on canvas

This piece, *The Tranquility of Childhood*, was inspired by a bowl that I saw in the Museum. This bowl had fish in the middle of it, and when the bowl was filled with water, ripples from the water made the fish appear to move. This reminded me of when I was younger, my family would take me to PetSmart and I would sit by a big pond inside the store and watch the koi swim. My childhood was by no means tranquil, but this piece captures the tranquility of that moment in my childhood.



Inspired by Bowl, AKM610



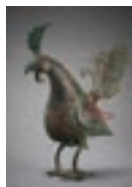
**ALLISON
SCHWENKER**

Fiery Phoenix

2025

Acrylic and colour pencil on canvas

The idea of making a phoenix came to mind when I saw a bird artifact called Incense Burner. It caught my eye when we first checked out the permanent collection. I'm able to connect with this art piece because of how it shows up in different ways in my personal life, with the use of the name or just the symbolism of a phoenix.



Inspired by Incense Burner, AKM602



AIDAN MICHALAKOS

Gimmie Gimmie Gimmie

2025

Pen and ink on illustration board

Making this was draining but rewarding. I used India ink, nib pens, and illustration board. Getting the pens to work was annoying. I'd either dip too little, and it wouldn't write, or I'd dip too much and get ink all over the place. Rats!



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963



**WINNIE
LIANG**

Hour Glass of the Past

2025

Wire, acrylic, and gems on illustration board

I used scythe for the dagger and fountain for the triangle top and bottom. This piece connects to the theme because it represents the time when a villain and hero fought, and the scythe is how the hero fought the villain and helped the village and people! The flowers mean love and peace after the villain and hero fought; the flower appeared after the villain was defeated. The gem stands for the hero who lived a life of royalty.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963, and Fountain, AKM960



VANI SHARMA

Udaan

2025

Acrylic on canvas

I was inspired by two artifacts. I loved the story of how the Panel of Tiles came to be and how they mixed different rocks to get the effect of porcelain but made it their own. I also like the perfume bottle as they are from the same place as myself and I saw old bottles like these in India as well. I added the peacock because it is something I have made every year, and it connects to my culture and religion while having its own Identity.



Inspired by Panel of Tiles, AKM580, and
Perfume or Snuff Bottle, AKM891



MAHNOOR FATIMA

Hidden Light

2025

Acrylic and fabric on illustration board

My artwork explores the connection between faith, beauty, and identity through layers of colour and texture. The vibrant flowers symbolize growth and resilience, while the translucent fabric represents the depth and mystery of spirituality. The Arabic calligraphy beneath serves as a reminder of devotion, partially hidden yet ever present. By combining painting and fabric, I aim to evoke a sense of reflection – how faith intertwines with everyday life, sometimes visible, sometimes subtle, but always present. This piece invites the viewer to look beyond the surface and find meaning in the layers of belief and expression.



Inspired by Perfume or Snuff Bottle, AKM891, and
Two Tiles with Iris Plants, from a Spandrel Panel, AKM590



MARIA TROFIMOVA

Drowning Fragility

2025

Gouache on illustration board

I was inspired by my artifact's blue colour, the design that resembled water, and the fragility of the vase itself, reminding me of my inner conflicts. The colour represents the coldness I've felt living in Canada. My life has always been connected to water in some way, whether it's training to be proficient in swimming or the trauma related to it. I've always felt this cold, suffocating feeling, and the vase encompasses it. We're connected in an abstract way.



Inspired by Bottle, AKM661



**MIRIAM
MIRZA**

Chicken at Peace

2025

Gouache, acrylic, colour pencil, and ink on illustration board

My multi-modal project uses a few different artifacts Oliphant; Moon, 2018; and Astrolabe. I included a chicken in my artwork because the oliphant has a bird leg, and it looks like a chicken leg, so I went with it. The moon was an extremely large and detailed artifact, so I felt drawn to it and needed to include it. The astrolabe is referenced with the constellations. The one with yellow stars is the Pisces constellation, indicating my zodiac sign. Lastly, the fountain seemed to be fitting since I have strong memories of struggling to build a fountain in an old assignment and I just felt strongly connected to it.



Inspired by Fountain, AKM960,
Astrolabe, AKM611, and
Oliphant, AKM809



**NAOMI
TANIMOWO**

The Book that Breathes

2025

Mixed Media

In this piece, I wanted to showcase the importance of stories. Stories are a way that connects us all by retaining knowledge, history, and legacies. I wanted to portray the idea of keeping stories alive in a more “literal” sense. Moon, 2018 inspired me because of how broad it was. I think the moon is one thing that all cultures celebrate in different ways, which is why I chose it for the topic of connection.

Inspired by Moon, 2018 by Luke Jerram



**MAKAYLA
HAMMETT**

Guiding Light

2025

Colour pencil and ink on illustration board

This artwork was made with colour pencils and ink. It was inspired by Candlestick in the permanent collection. I chose this piece because I loved the idea of the candlestick being used as a spiritual symbol of a divine presence and guidance away from evil. Similarly, this artwork represents the light of my family and friends leading me away from the darkness and hard times I may encounter.



Inspired by Candlestick, AKM962



**ISHIKA
VERMA**

Timeless Constellation

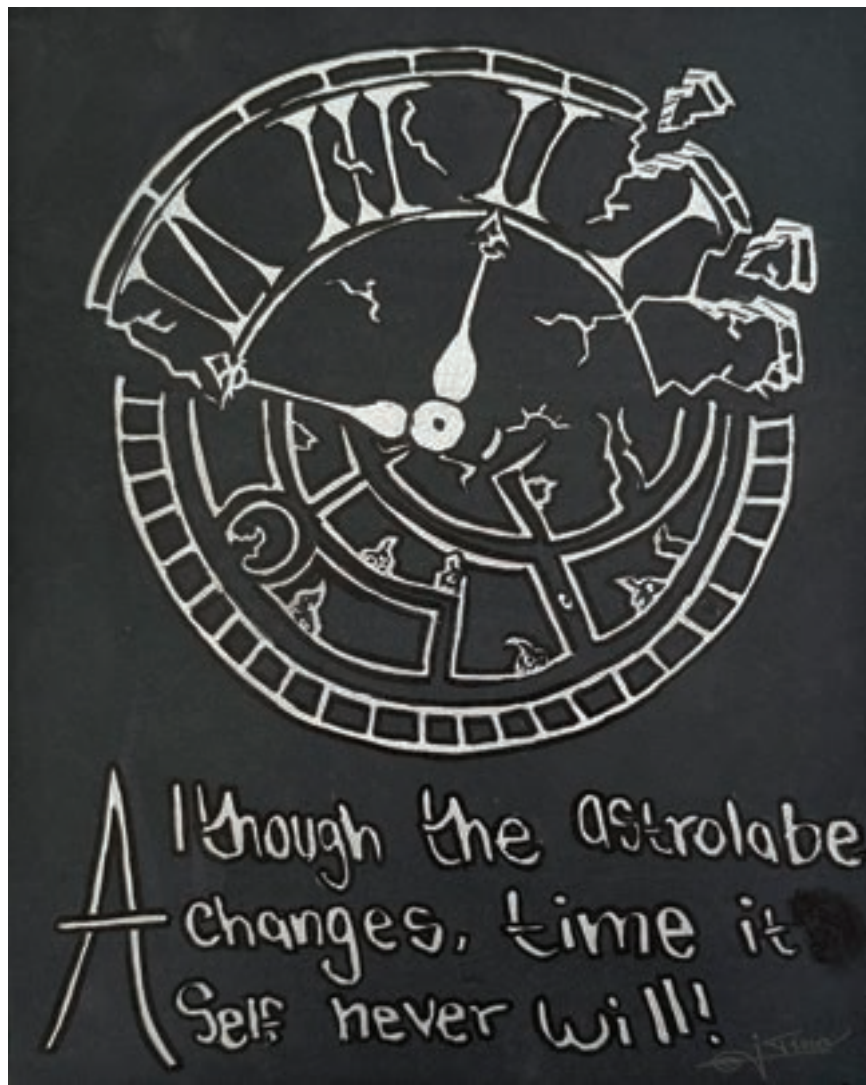
2025

Gouache and acrylic marker on canvas

For this piece, I was inspired by the astrolabe. It was the piece that spoke to me most in the Museum. This art piece displays the connection of stars in the constellations of the Big Dipper and Scorpius, which is my star sign. Outer space and astrology have been some of my biggest interests since childhood. I used golden elements to represent the shimmer of stars in the night sky.



Inspired by Astrolabe, AKM611



JUSTYCE FINO

Internal Time

2025

Markers on paper

My art piece shows a clock and an astrolabe, which is a navigation device that can tell time and direction. It was mostly used by sailors when on the water. When I first saw the artifact, I instantly thought of the fact that the world has evolved so much and everything is changing, but the one thing that doesn't change is time itself. So I connected the old with the new. I used basic colour markers since I have more of a black and white personality, but I'm extremely happy with the result.



Inspired by Astrolabe, AKM611



**BRITANNIA
NASH**

Lion Stand

2025

Acrylic on canvas

The reason I chose this artifact to be my inspiration is because I love animals and when I saw the lions, I had already decided that it was the chosen one.



Inspired by Candlestick, AKM884



**SHARVARI
SHEKDAR**

Chandani Raat

2025

Watercolour and poster colour on watercolour paper

This piece is inspired by tiles from the 19th century. The outfit is in the style of 19th century art with a modern twist. By using watercolour and gold, I implemented older techniques in my work. The god depicted, Krishna, along with his lover Radha, have a special place in my heart.



**HUNTER
GOULD
WHYTE**

Tales by the Firelight

2025

Pen and ink on illustration board

The intricate details of the artifact, 'Alam, inspired me to use black ink as the main medium. The alam resembles branches and a flame, causing me to think about my personal connection with campfires. Campfires are how I connect with my family, nature, and my creative thoughts.



Inspired by 'Alam (Standard), AKM620



**AZUCENA
MARITNEZ**

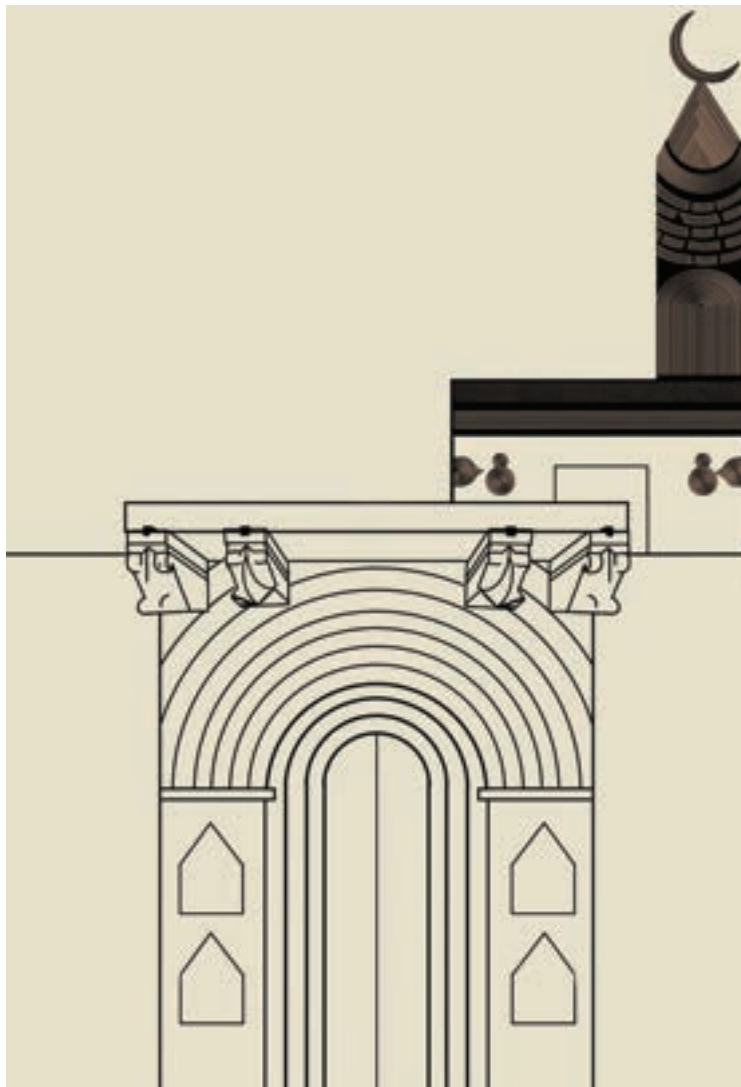
Not As It Seems

2025
Digital Art

When an item is compared to another, we take into consideration its looks. This piece represents both the pretty and the wilted of flowers. The wilted flowers glow, even in the worst conditions. The difference is one side is more wilted than the other. This represents the contrast in the dagger, how pretty the dagger's sheath is but how sharp and dangerous the blade of the weapon can be. Life and death are shown in my drawing—how beautiful the cycle of growth truly is.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar)
and Scabbard, AKM963, and
Shell, AKM665



**MARIAM
SHAMSUDDIN**

Gateway

2025
Digital Art

In my art, I would like to capture the feeling of being in front of gates that lead to an old village. I took different architectural items from the Museum to create a design for the front of the gates. I was also inspired by the line design from a ceramic tile that I found really pretty in terms of the blue designs. The reason why I chose this idea for my piece is because I have a longing for community. I've always wanted to have a village to look after and be part of, like a family.



Inspired by Tile, AKM570



**ZAHIN
MONDOL**

Call to Ramadan

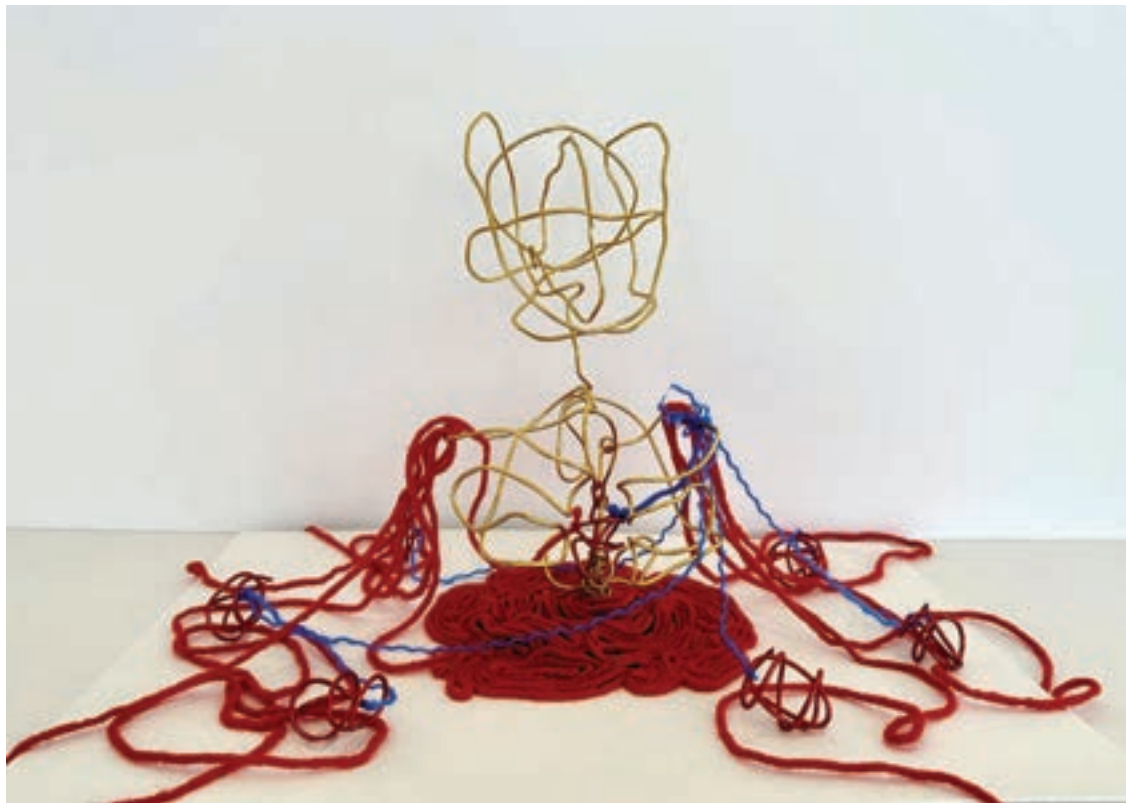
2025

Pencil on paper

My artwork references the tiles with Qur'anic verses, which inspired me because they connect to my religion. Tiles like these usually are placed in mosques, tombs, etc. This piece represents Ramadan approaching.



Inspired by Tiles from Qur'anic Friezes, AKM565, AKM796, AKM859



**BRIANA
ZHANG**

Through Blood

2025

Wire and yarn on illustration board

Through Blood is a gold-wire skeleton connected to red-wire hearts made by yarn. Manuscript of Tashrih-i Badan (Anatomy of the Body) inspired me because it made me realize that the human body works the same now as it did hundreds of years ago.

Although everyone is different, we are all made of blood and bone. I demonstrate this idea by connecting all the hearts with string. The yarn represents blood vessels, which shows how we are all human and that through coincidences, efforts, and every little choice made by our ancestors, we were brought into the world.

Inspired by Manuscript of Tashrih-i Badan (Anatomy of the Body)



IQRA SAEED

Between the Lines

2025

Watercolour, model magic, mirror, and acrylic

The artifact I chose is called the Manuscript of Gulshan-I Raz, translating to rose garden of mystery. This is a poem in rhymed couplets, so my piece represents connection through literature. Mirrors are also metaphorically viewed as the heart to the divine, so I added mirror pieces and a heart. The heart also represents a deep connection. I added a lot of gold as it was used a lot in the pages, and roses as they relate to the title. I tried to capture how words can transcend time, culture, and generations.



Inspired by The Manuscript of Gulshan-I Raz (The Rose Garden of Mysteries), AKM276



**SABIKA
AKBAR**

Unfinished Conversations

2025

Watercolour pencil and acrylic

Unfinished Conversations explores the fragile nature of human connection. There is tension between presence and absence, words spoken and those left unsaid.

Two figures face each other, linked by red thread. Though it binds them, it is tangled and broken at places, symbolizing how connection can be incomplete, strained, and imperfect. The dark fading background represents distance and fading memories, reinforcing how fragile connection can be.

Yet, even in its fractured state, the thread remains, a reminder that some bonds never fully disappear. This piece reflects how relationships are not just about words or presence but about unspoken ties that persist, even when conversations are left unfinished.



ZEHRA NOOR

Kaaba

2025

Paint and glue on illustration board

My artwork is a model of the Kaaba, which is in Saudi Arabia. It's a place where Muslims go and see the beauty of Kaaba and pray. Every Muslim wishes to go there, but not everyone gets to go. My artwork is made of black cardboard, clay, and white cardboard. I couldn't make the box perfectly, which was a challenging part for me. This artwork will help me with future artworks.



HANA OMOKAYODE DUROSINMI

Kashkul

2025

Acrylic on canvas

Quand j'ai vu le Kashkul, ça m'a directement plu. J'ai voulu reproduire.

When I saw the Kashkul, I immediately liked it. I wanted to reproduce it.



Inspired by Kashkul (Beggars' Bowl), AKM612



KEYSHAWN GAYLE

Distant Touch

2025

Acrylic on canvas

This piece is based on the Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard. Apparently, the dagger and scabbard were each made in two different parts of the world but found each other in the Ottoman Empire. There are religious and cultural scriptures engraved into the dagger, and I thought that was cool. The hands reaching out and going through each other in my art piece represent how the dagger and the sheath were made in two different parts of the world, yet they were made for each other. That's where the name and theme for my multi-modal art piece came from.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963



JANVI PATEL

Cosmic Bond

2025

Acrylic on illustration board

I chose Star Map to inspire my work because I like the simple colour scheme and the incorporation of zodiac signs. I was also inspired by the two people in the bottom left corner, which made me think of how people are together even when worlds apart. This art piece depicts Aries and Libra, two opposing zodiac signs. On the Aries side I incorporated the sharp and jagged shapes and designs I saw in the inspiration art piece, and on the Libra side I used soft and cloud-like shapes. Through this contrast I aim to capture the bittersweet nature of a love that defies fate.

Inspired by Star Map by Kour Pour



YOUSEF MUHAMMED

Love for Èbí

2025

Cardboard, pastel, ink, fabric, hot glue, and construction paper

Taking inspiration from the various weapons in the Aga Khan Museum and Islam's push for self-defense, I created Love for Èbí. My piece looks into the evolution of African armed forces, with the most modern depiction being of the Nigerian military.

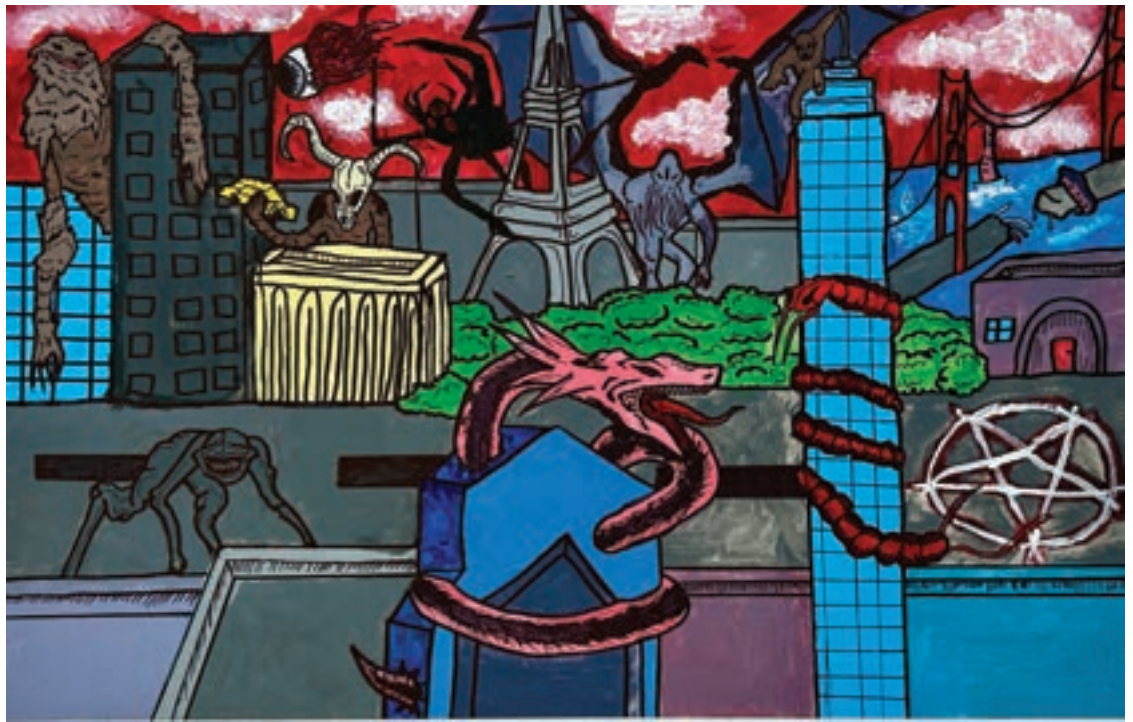
The image on the top left is a depiction from the Battle of Kadesh, the top right is a colourized depiction of an African soldier in the 1800s, and the bottom left is a Kanem-Bu warrior from the late 1800s. Using pastel emphasizes the love and burning passion the warriors had, as there is much pressure and heat used as part of the pastel process.

The shield design itself takes inspiration from Islamic geometric patterns and reminds me of the animal hides warriors would get from hunting. As someone who identifies as Nigerian-Muslim, I wanted to make a piece that shared that cultural part of me.

The heart shows the inspiration for the warriors, protecting those they love, specifically their family (Èbí means "family" in Yoruba, my family dialect).



Inspired by Kaman (Bow), AKM641



ALEKSANDR SALIAN

Beasts in Paris

2025

Acrylic on illustration board

My art aims to capture connections through various buildings from across the world. When browsing throughout the Museum I noticed the amount of countries that contribute to the collections. From Iran to China, Turkey, and even my home country Georgia, I felt as if the world was connected in one place. Connection to me is found through people, and how we can all be connected no matter how distant we find ourselves. My painting uses the concept of distance, various locations like NYC and Paris are brought together through my creative perception.



Inspired by Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard, AKM963



AMRIT KAUR

Silk and Stone

2025

Ink, satin, and gold acrylic

In this piece, I explore the deep-rooted bonds between cultures, highlighting the various ways they intertwine. The two figures, both of Chinese heritage, are linked by hair, seamlessly forming an Iranian tile. This symbolizes the unseen yet deep connections cultures share through art. The name Silk and Stone is a poetic nod to Chinese silk work and Iranian tile work, demonstrating a cultural exchange.



Inspired by Tile, AKM860



RICKESH MOTIE

Freedom Carver

2025

Model magic and watercolour

A dagger is often seen as a symbol of violence. With my art piece I wanted to showcase that something viewed one way can mean so much more. The piece that inspired me, *Dagger and Scabbard*, showcases a blade that symbolizes cutting down negative obstacles. My art piece takes something that's seen as harsh and violent but presents it as a symbol of freedom and moving past the obstacles in our lives. We can all cut the shape of our future.



Inspired by *Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard*, AKM963



SCYTHE JAYAMO- HANARAH

Dish

2025

Watercolour and gold leaf

My piece took inspiration from various patterns found in the Museum's vast collection as well as the amount of gold pieces. I found the beautiful intricate patterns mesmerizing and used watercolours' delicate style to recreate these prints. As for the gold coins laying on top of the plate, I aimed to capture the riches found throughout the time period with glistening gold foil. In total my art piece captures various beautiful aspects of historical pieces into one painting.



Inspired by Dish, AKM589



ROBERT MONUC DESCHENES

A Fountain

2025

Photography collage

My artwork, *A Fountain*, is inspired by two pieces. One I've forgotten the name of, and the other is *Fountain*. *A Fountain* consists of photos that come together to form an image. My main goal of this artwork is to give off the same calming, peaceful, and relaxing feeling that I experienced from the original fountain. I've decided to make the artwork faster with an already taken photo of the original artwork, *Fountain*. The reason why I chose photography is because I've always loved taking photos.



Inspired by *Fountain*, AKM960



RAIDAAH SANAJ

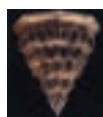
Gaze Through Walls

2025

Papier-mâché, thread

My multi-modal artwork embodies the power of art to bridge time, culture, and emotions by integrating various mediums. Through this piece, I explore the relationship between perception, thought, and emotion—what we see shapes our thoughts and connects us to different times.

The 14th-century wooden squinch panel symbolizes structural transitions, much like how art links different eras. The Tiraz Textile from Egypt informed my choice of border and base, referencing the intricate woven traditions that tie back to my heritage. The blue moon motif from the Museum is reflected in the eyes, symbolizing vision and enlightenment. The embroidered threads, meticulously arranged in a Muqarnas pattern, reference Islamic architecture, representing interconnectedness and the structured beauty of thought.



Inspired by Tiraz Textiles, 978.76.80, 978.76.87, Three Squinches (ceiling panels), AKM730, and Console in the Style of Muqarnas, AKM892



KATARINA SEERAM- RAMOS

Protector of the World

2025

Pencil and markers on paper

This artwork is inspired by Kashkul (Beggar's Bowl), especially the dragon from the end of the bowl. In different cultures a dragon is seen as a protector of people, inspiring the title Protector of the World. This was made with pencil and markers; there was a lot of shading and blending involved with this piece.



Inspired by Kashkul (Beggar's Bowl), AKM612



NABEEHA JAHAN

Untitled

2025

Model magic and paint on illustration board

My inspiration came from the Panel of Tiles from Syria made in 15th century. These tiles are decorated with scrolling vines around lotus flower palmettes painted with blue, which remind me of beautiful art styles used in the Islamic architectures in my home country Bangladesh. Having left Bangladesh two years ago, I often feel alone due to cultural and language differences. Yet, like the bold blue, the only colour used in this type of art, I find strength in standing out. This artwork is a tribute to my roots and resilience, a reminder that even in solitude, identity and heritage remain powerful.



Inspired by Panel of Tiles, AKM580



ZILBEN JOSHI

Dishy Dish

2025

Model magic and acrylic

The art piece I decided to create is a dish. It may seem simple, but it's something we all use when eating tasty food. Many dishes have beautiful designs that make them look nice. To me, a dish is like a piece of art, where food can be displayed in a way that makes it look even more appealing.

Inspired by Dish with a "Kaleidoscope" Design, 2024.2.1

OBJECT LIST

Aga Khan Museum

Ablution Basin

China, 1506–21
Porcelain
AKM722

'Alam (Standard)

Central India, 1600s
Steel
AKM620

Astronomical Compendium

Iran, 19th century
Gold; enamelled
AKM625

Basin

Iran, 12th–13th century
White bronze, cast spun
and engraved
AKM607

Bottle

Iran, 9th–10th century
Glass, colourless, polychrome
weathering; free blown, wheel-cut,
tooled, worked on the pontil
AKM647

Bottle

Iran, 11th–first half of 13th
century glass, transparent deep
blue, pattern moulded, blown in
the half-post technique;
applied thread decoration; tooled;
worked on the pontil
AKM658

Bottle

Iran, 12th–13th century
glass, bluish glass with green
tinge, white weathering;
mould blown, tooled, applied,
worked on the pontil
AKM661

Bowl

Egypt or Syria, 1293–1341
Brass; engraved and inlaid
with silver
AKM610

Candlestick

Egypt or Syria, first half of
14th century
Brass, formerly silver and
gold-inlaid, with remains
of black paste inlay
AKM736

Candlestick

Eastern Iran, 13th century
Embossed and repossé bronze
AKM884

Candlestick

Northern Iraq or Western Iran,
ca.1300–50
Brass; cast, engraved, and inlaid
with silver, gold, and black compound
AKM962

Coins

Iran, 1795–1797
Gold
AKM621

Dagger (jambiya or khanjar) and Scabbard

Faizallah Shushtari Isfahani
Iran or Turkey, ca.1700
Gold, jade and steel
AKM963

Dish

Iran, 17th century
Fritware, underglaze-painted
AKM588

Dish

Iran or Syria, 16th or 17th century
Stone paste painted under glaze
AKM589

Dish

Turkey, late 17th century
Fritware, underglazed and painted
AKM737

Double Door

Iran, 1487–1488/AH 892
Wood, carved
AKM707

Dragon-spouted Pitcher (ewer)

Iran, 17th century
Brass; cast, engraved and
inlaid with black compound
AKM889

Fountain

Egypt, 16th century and later
Marble and sandstone mosaic
AKM960

Incense Burner

Iran, 11th–13th century
Bronze, inlaid with copper
AKM602

Isfandiyar Kills the Simurgh Folio from the Shahnameh (Book of Kings) of Shah Ismail II Attributed to Siyavusah

Iran, 1576–77
Opaque watercolour, gold, silver
and ink on paper
AKM103

Kaman (Bow)

Iran, late 18th century
Wood, horn, and sinew;
painted and varnished
AKM641

Kashkul (Beggar's Bowl)

Iran, late 16th century
Brass
AKM612

Kilga

Egypt, 12th century
Carved marble
AKM817

Oliphant

Southern Italy; silver mounts
made in England, 11th to
later 12th century; c.1620
Carved ivory with silver mount
AKM809

Palette

Iraq, 10th century
Rock crystal, carved
AKM653

Panel of Four Tiles

Turkey, 1580
Fritware, underglazed
and painted
AKM878

Panel of Tiles

Syria, 15th century, framing
and gilding: second half of the
19th century
Fritware, underglaze-painted;
wood and gesso frame
AKM580

Perfume or Snuff Bottle

India, 17th or 18th century
Gold, inlaid with rubies
AKM891

Pharmacy Jars (Albarelli)

Syria, 15th century
Fritware, underglazed-painted
AKM567 and AKM568

Planispheric Astrolabe

Spain, 14th century
Bronze, engraved and inlaid
with silver
AKM611

Portrait of Shah Raju II Attributed to Rasu Khan

India, ca. 1670–80
Opaque watercolour on paper
AKM922

Section (juz') of a Qur'an Manuscript

Iraq, mid 14th century
Ink, opaque watercolour,
and gold on paper
AKM28

Shallow Dish

Iran or Afghanistan,
10th to 12th century
Glass, deep blue, thin brownish
weathering; mould-blown, tooled,
worked on the pontil
AKM660

Shell

India, 18th century
Incised mother-of-pearl
AKM665

The Manuscript of Gulshan-I Raz (The Rose Garden of Mysteries) By Shaykh Mahmud b. 'Abd-al-karim Shabistari

Iran, Shawwal-Dhu'l-Qa'da
1310 H/April-May 18933
Ink, opaque watercolour, and
gold on paper; lacquer binding
AKM276

Tile

Syria, first half of the 15th century
Fritware, underglaze-painted
AKM570

Tile

Egypt or Syria, 15th century
Fritware, underglaze-painted
AKM581

Tile

Turkey, 1560-1570
Fritware, underglazed and painted
AKM862

Tile

Iran, early 14th Century
Fritware, underglaze and
lustre-painted
AKM860

Tiles from Qur'anic Friezes

Iran, 1300
Fritware, lustre,
underglaze-painted
AKM565, AKM796, AKM859

Tombstone

Egypt or Tunasia, 1101
Carved marble
AKM912

Turquoise Bowl with Waterweed Motif

Iran, 13th century
Fritware, decorated in black

under a transparent turquoise glaze
AKM562

Two Tiles with Iris Plants, from a Spandrel Panel

Iran, ca.1660-70
Terracotta, painted with coloured glazes on
a white glaze, cuerda seca technique
AKM590

Wine Bowl

India, 1620-1630
Tinned copper; cast, engraved, and
inlaid with black compound
AKM925

Dish with a "Kaleidoscope" Design

Late 16th century
Fritware, polychrome painted under a
transparent glaze (Iznik ware)
Gift of Prince Ayn Aga Khan to the
Aga Khan Museum Collection
2024.2.1

Life-Size Paper Garment

Isabelle de Borchgrave
2012
Papier mâché and paint
On loan from a private collection.
LI2020.21.2

Manuscript of Tashrih-i Badan (Anatomy of the Body)

1600
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper
On loan from Osler Library of the History
of Medicine, McGill University Library, with
special permission from the Osler Library
Board of Curators, OL 7785/75.

Moon (Ed. 1/5)

Luke Jerram
2019
Internally lit nylon, ink-printed with
NASA imagery of the lunar surface
LI2019.13.1

Star Map

Kour Pour
2023
Acrylic on canvas over panel
Private Collection
LI2025.2.3

Tile

1850-1899
Fritware, moulded and underglaze painted
LI2015.19.1

Tiraz Textile

Damietta, Egypt, dated
411 AH/1020-21
Linen, silk, tapestry-woven
inscription
On Loan from the Royal Ontario
Museum, Toronto, Canada, 978.76.80

