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Islamic Ornament

Eva Baer

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Like a garment wrapped around a body, Islamic ornament is both a supplement and a self-contained piece of art. Drawing on an endlessly rich arsenal of patterns and motifs–geometrical, vegetal, epigraphic, figural–Islamic artisans cover surfaces densely, filling space with an eye toward continuity and infinity. The results are visually stunning and philosophically complex, and adorn the architecture, objects, and paintings of the Islamic world.

The first comprehensive study on the history, function, and significance of ornament in **Islamic art**, Eva Baer's Islamic Ornament unravels the complexity of this artistic tradition as it developed over 900 years across the terrain of the Middle East and Central Asia. Baer offers the reader an illustrated historical survey, detailing the diverse patterns, motifs, and ornamental designs which compose Islamic ornament and the local traditions, foreign influences, and Islamic transformations which they reflect. At the heart of Baer's study are more fundamental questions about ornament and design, such as what limits, content, and purposes define the boundaries of ornament as an architectural and artistic concept. Baer pushes the reader to understand ornament as a language, as a vehicle by which Islamic artisans and artists expressed contemporary ideas and modified ancient ones.

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