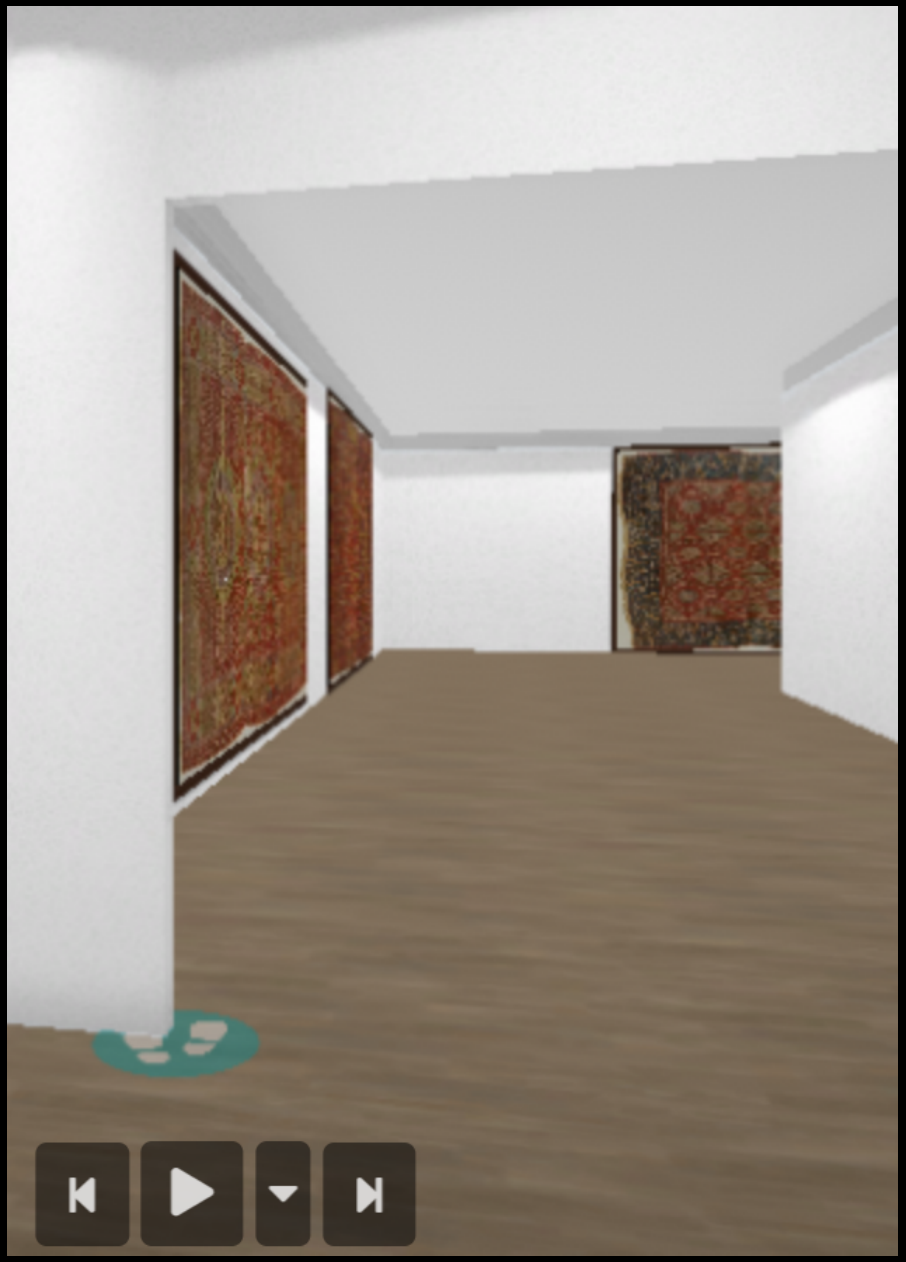


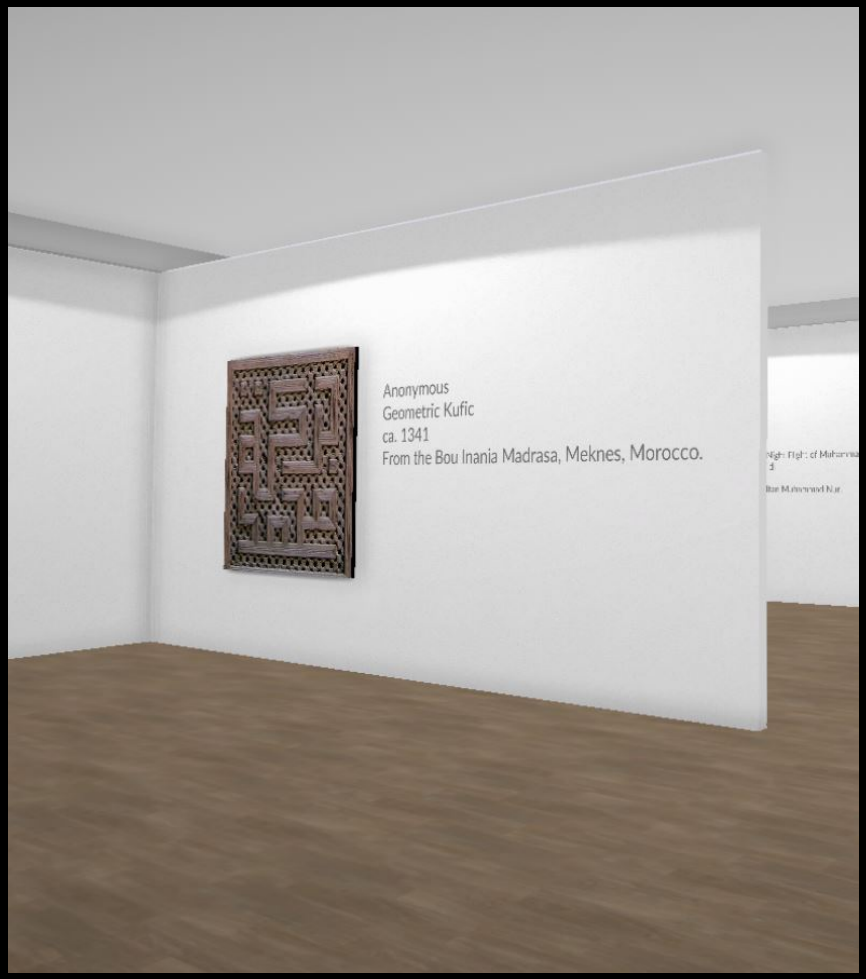


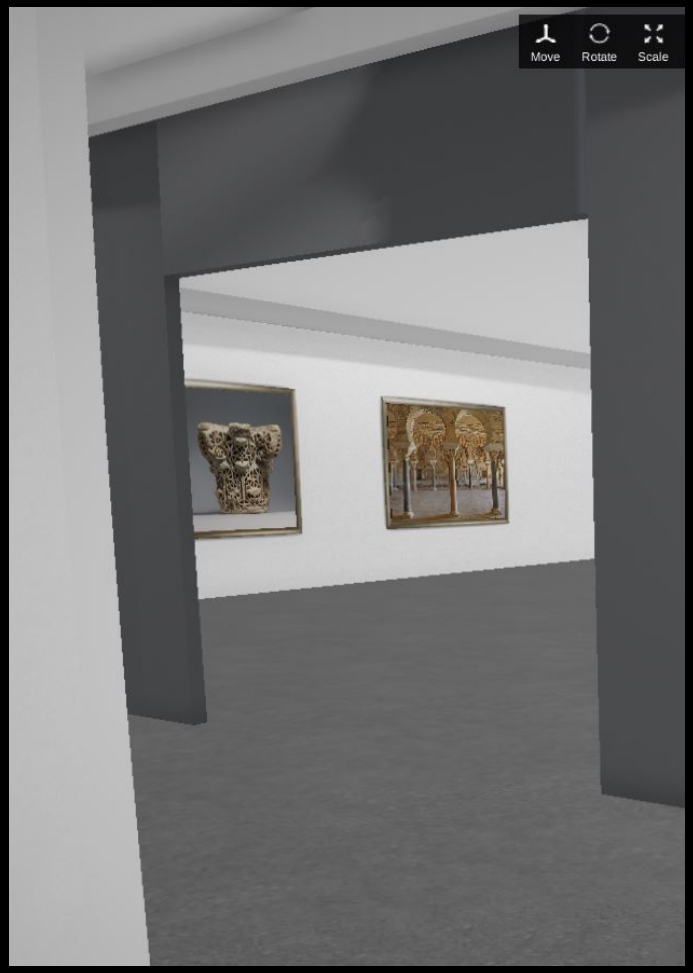
Digital Exhibitions on Artsteps

Elizabeth Lastra, The University of Hong Kong

Introduction to Islamic Art and Architecture
Spring 2019







Virtual Exhibition Project

- Curate an exhibition using the free online program Artsteps https://www.artsteps.com/
- Select a topic: theme, dynasty, time period, cultural encounter, artistic media, etc. within the scope of the course: the Islamic world, 7th to 17th century
- Conduct research
- Select 8-10 objects to illustrate topic / argument
- Design and build exhibition space through which to guide virtual viewer
- Write wall labels

Skills

(1) Example selection
(2) Organization
(3) Writing concisely



Islamic Chinoiserie by Stephanie Yang;
https://www.artsteps.com/view/5cc85f510bd7e53875641e29

Artsteps Demo
https://www.artsteps.com/

ISLAMIC ART IN CHINA TO 1600



EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Exhibition Catalogue: Islam in the Far East

Exhibition Link: https://www.artsteps.com/embed/5ccc6cc7fb14ed038cc6bae2f/560/315

Introductory:

During the Han dynasty, the emperors adopted an amicable stance when dealing with non-Chinese groups. Harmonious relationships were maintained among countries by offering generous gifts and fostering diplomatic marriage. Afterwards, Chinese diplomats, Zhang Qian was sent westwards to retrieve information about Central Asia and dispatch political envoys. This further opened up China to international trade. The exchange of materials and resources contributed to the creation of the Silk Road, as small markets established along the border with traders from East Asia to Europe. During the Tang Dynasty from the 7th to 10th century, there were frequent clashes with the Arabs due to mutual geographic interest and aggression. In AD 751, after the Tang army lost at the battle of Talas, they retreated from Central Asia and allowed Islam to enter China and increased the exchange of ideas and technologies from China to the Islamic empire through Central Asia and the Middle East. A lot of Muslim merchants resided in China at Chang'an, the Tang capital. At the meantime, other Muslim merchants also arrive in China via Indian Ocean trade routes and resided in the port cities, which create a vast Muslim community in China.

Meanwhile, the Mongolians were getting stronger and eventually conquered China and the Islamic empire in the 13th century. Mongol unification of Asia with policies such as the Pax Mongolica intensified cross-cultural influences by safeguarding merchants' safety along the Silk Road. After the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty in China, the Han-Chinese in charged Ming dynasty exemplifies the melange of Chinese and Muslim culture.

To illustrate the cross-cultural interaction between Islam and China, this exhibition includes works from the three specific eras of Islam presence in China namely, Quanzhou phase, the Mongol Yuan phase and the Nanjing phase. It is noteworthy to understand that the three phases overlaps in terms of times. The medium of these artworks ranges from metalworks to architecture to reconstruct a multifaceted Muslim living experience in China up till 1600.

Part 1. Quanzhou Phase

With the migration of Muslim via both sea and land route in Chang'an, the capital of Tang dynasty and other coastal cities that serve as important ports such as Quanzhou, they brought their own customs and religion into China. The flow of human capital from the Iran World to China proliferated during the Yuan dynasty later, where the Grand Canal was extended to the new capital in Beijing to foster trade, and tax on commercial exchanges was largely diminished. Merchants from Iran and West Asia were the key transporter of goods between China and Iran, and some of them stayed in China to form self-governing Muslim communities. Quanzhou was one of the most popular sites as it is located along the Maritime Silk Road and was the centre of several sea routes. By looking at their funerary objects, it is hoped that visitors can understand how the migrated Muslims practised Islamic cultural rituals far from their homeland.

Item 1: Muslim tombs of Lingshan, 13th century, Quanzhou



Far away from their homeland to seek for peace and wealth, the immigrated Muslim entered a phase where they still held onto their identity while assimilating with the local culture. This work shows how they accommodate their own religion in terms of the funerary rituals while also adopting Chinese element. According to the Arabic inscription on the major steel of the Lingshan cemetery in Quanzhou, the major Muslim burial site, there are two tombs that belonged to the third and fourth disciples of Muhammad who were sent to visit China to preach in the 7th century. This work is believed to be the tombs mentioned or perhaps, some migrated Muslims

To follow their religion faithfully, they were buried in a major Muslim cemetery in Quanzhou called Lingshan. The tomb covers here demonstrates Islamic influence in terms of funerary rituals. The two granite pagoda-shaped ridged tomb covers were placed adjacent to each other. With both Islamic geometric pattern and cylindrical form that do not resemble any other tombs of the Yuan Dynasty. The lotus flower and fret patterns carving on the side suggest Chinese influence. Lotus signifies purity, peace and good fortune in Chinese literature while the fret patterns are stylised thunder bolt, some even considered it as a form of Buddhist swastika to represent the Sun.

Item 2: Islamic gravestone of the Commander of the Foreigners, 13th century, Quanzhou



The historic mosques and tombs of Quanzhou serve as an epitome of Quanzhou Muslim's cultural identity. They embody the records of Muslim migration to China to take up new roles. This gravestone has both cursive, fancy Arabic and also Chinese inscriptions. The Arabic text is a quote from Qur'an (28:88), which states, "Everything will perish except his own face. To him belongs the Command, and to Him will ye be brought back." Meanwhile, the Chinese text states that the owner of the gravestone is "The commander of the Fan foreigners', and he died on the 1st of the Fourth lunar month. The indication of the date of death is unusual in Muslim funerary practices. Furthermore, the significance lies within the validation of the minority's status. It shows how Muslims took up official roles to oversee the self-governing Muslim community in China. Even though this gravestone is likely to be erected during the Yuan dynasty, the establishment of the needs to build a Muslim cemetery suggests the growing population of the Muslim community in Quanzhou.



Exhibition Catalogue
(example by Charlie Shen)

Sample projects from HKU Islamic Art

Stephanie Yang:
https://www.artsteps.com/view/5cc85f510bd7e53875641e29

Tinnix He:
https://www.artsteps.com/view/5cce719bfd388738c5c63a6a

Charlie Shen:
https://www.artsteps.com/embed/5ccdcc7fb14ed038ccbbae2f/560/315