



AGA KHAN MUSEUM



FAMILY TRAIL

BLOOM



ENTER INTO A WORLD OF LUSH AND BLOOMING FLOWERS AND PLANTS

Explore how artists have depicted vines, flowers, and trees in paintings and objects. Each of them, however small, has an important role to play – to beautify, to mark an end or a beginning, to reflect the natural world, to convey a message, or to fill an empty space with its petals and leafy scrolls.

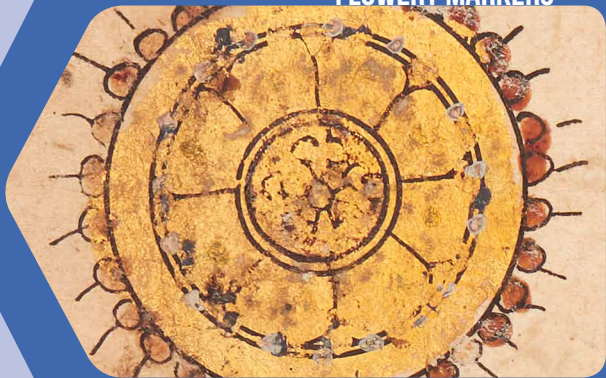
Follow the Bloom Family Trail and you can discover them all!

HINT: Turn to the colour coded section of the gallery floor plan on the last page for a clue to where you can find the objects. Have fun!

Credit: Above detail from a drawing of the tombstone of Shah Jahan, India, Agra, ca. 1820, opaque watercolour on paper, AKM971

FIND THIS OBJECT! FLOWERY MARKERS

HINT: You can find this beautiful rosette painted on a page.



Look closely!

You will find painted rosettes in many manuscripts of the Qur'an, the sacred book for Muslims. The artists often painted them in silver or gold and used them to decorate sentences or whole sections.



Did you know?

Rosettes are often designed to tell the readers when to pause in the sacred text, allowing them to take a breath and perhaps think about the meaning of the words they have just read or spoken.

Look for more examples of rosettes used in Qur'an manuscripts on display in the gallery. Do you see them in different shapes and sizes?

Credit: Detail from a folio from a Qur'an Manuscript, Iran, mid 12th century, ink and gold on paper, AKM223

FIND THIS WRITING! LEAFY LETTERS

HINT: It is carved in Arabic letters into a marble tombstone.



Look closely!

Can you see how the leaves seem to grow out of each letter?



Did you know?

This writing is called 'foliated Kufic'. It is an ornamental script that was used in North Africa and other regions of the Islamic world over 1000 years ago. Leaves, vines, and scrolls bloom from every stroke, as if the letters and words themselves are growing them to celebrate their messages of hope and renewal.

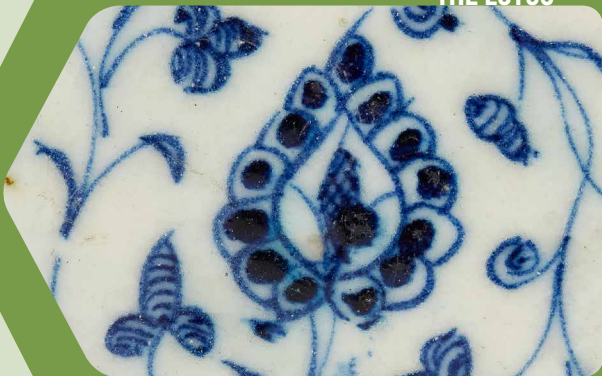
Why not try and decorate the letters of your name? Have fun experimenting with flowers, scrolls, petals and leafy forms, like this:

Credit: Detail from a tombstone, probably Tunisia,
1011, marble, carved, AKM912

patricia

HINT: It helps decorate a tile.

**FIND THIS FLOWER!
THE LOTUS**



Look closely!

A single lotus blooms in this tile, with leaves and scrolls swirling around it. And what about the shape of the tile itself – does it not look like a flower itself? Imagine, if you were to put many of these tiles together, they would resemble a big bouquet of lotus flowers – how beautiful!



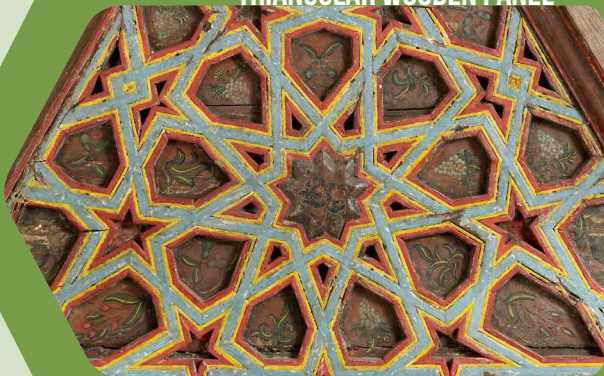
Did you know?

Lotus plants, like water lilies, grow in ponds and slow-moving rivers. They prefer warm climates. There are many other lotuses blooming in paintings and on objects in this gallery. Look for them around the gallery and see how many examples you can find. Why not take a snapshot of your favourite one and draw it at home later?

Credit: Detail of a tile, Egypt or Syria, 15th century, fritware, underglaze-painted, AKM581

FIND THIS OBJECT! TRIANGULAR WOODEN PANEL

HINT: Look up at the ceiling!



Look closely!

Can you see what is inside the geometric spaces? Take a photo with your phone and zoom into the picture to see the flowers, fruits, and leaves hiding there. How many different kinds can you find?



Did you know?

Star and polygon patterns, like the ones on this panel, can decorate almost any kind of material or surface. You can also find them in nature when you look closely at a flower, tree or plant. They are even more amazing when you look at them under a microscope!

How many patterns like this one can you find in the Aga Khan Museum? Don't forget to look in the paintings and also the Museum's courtyard!

Credit: Squinch (Ceiling Panel), Spain, 15th–16th century, wood, carved and painted, AKM730.

FIND THIS TULIP! SIGN OF SPRING

HINT: It helps decorate a colourful tile.



Look closely!

How many tulips can you see in each tile? How many tiles are there? How did the artist go about arranging each tile to make a flowery design?



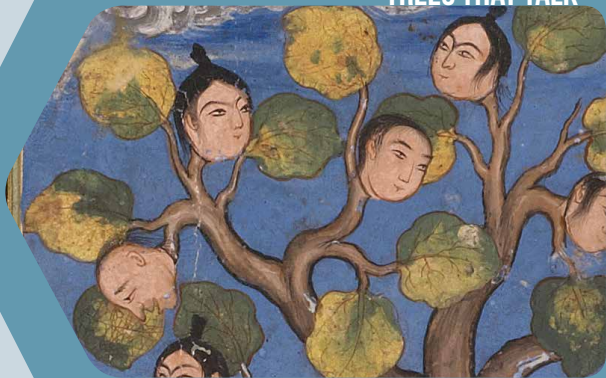
Did you know?

Tulips often have dramatic, pointy petals with bright colours. These cheerful blooms are planted in gardens to announce the coming spring. Do you see them in the gardens near where you live? Do you see them elsewhere in the gallery? Don't forget to look at the candlestick nearby.

Credit: Detail from a tile panel, Turkey, Iznik, 1580–90, fritware, underglaze-painted, AKM878

HINT: Look into the case that has a green flask in it!

FIND THIS PAINTING!
TREES THAT TALK



Look closely!

Can you see the tree? What do you think is strange about this tree? What is the strangest tree that you have ever seen?



Did you know?

This strange tree is called a 'waq-waq' tree. This name is given to a fantastic tree described in many stories from the Muslim world. Imagine - its fruit are said to include human and animal heads that can speak!

What do you think the tree would tell you if it could speak? And if you fancy another strange story, just look at the other painting in this showcase!

Credit: Detail from "Alexander the Great (Iskandar) Visits the Talking Tree of Waq-Waq", Iran, late 16th century, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, AKM219

HINT: It helps decorate the frames in a painted album.

**FIND THIS BEAUTIFUL FLOWER!
THE ROSE**



Look closely!

**Why is the ruler surrounded by roses and blossoms?
Do you think he is meant to be in a garden?**



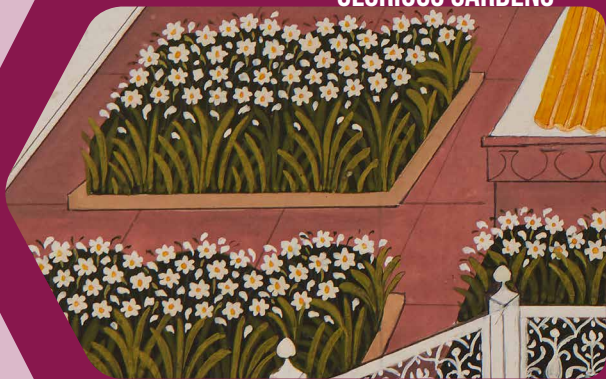
Did you know?

Roses are soft-petaled and fragrant. They are often used as symbols of beauty and perfection in poetry and art. Can you imagine, right now, smelling the fragrance of a rose? Which flower would you use if you wanted to describe someone or something beautiful?

Credit: Detail from a concertina album, Iran, Tehran, 1810–1819, opaque watercolour, ink, and gold on paper, AKM275

HINT: It is hidden in a painting that shows a palace garden.

FIND THIS FLOWER BED! GLORIOUS GARDENS



Look closely!

Most of the flowers are in garden rows. Where else do you see flowers depicted? List as many as you can find. Look way off in the distance. What do you think is happening there?



Did you know?

Flowers and trees like the ones in this painting are featured in large-scale ornamental gardens all over the world. The Aga Khan Park, which you can see as you walk towards the Museum, was inspired by such gardens, especially the so-called *char bagh*, a Persian and Mughal Indian garden design that is built around four rectangular pools or fountains.

Credit: Detail from "Entertainment in a Palace", India, Faizabad, ca. 1765–1770, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, AKM 921



AT-HOME ACTIVITY

Draw and colour your own beautiful flower garden!

You can choose to make it a picture, like the painting of the 'waq-waq' tree, OR

Why not design your own blooming tile – use a ten-centimetre square piece of paper for a square design or a hexagonal one if you were inspired by the tile with the lotus.

If you make multiples of your tile (four of the square or six of the hexagon), you can try them in different arrangements to make a repeating pattern.

Take a photo of your creation and share it with us to this address: learn@agakhanmuseum.org



A square



A hexagon

Use this colour-coded section of the gallery floor plan to find all the artworks in this brochure.

HINT: The background colour of each of the objects in this brochure matches the colour of one of the sections highlighted on the floor plan. Look for the object in that area of the gallery and have fun!



HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY!

Please visit us again to find out more about the arts of the Muslim world and the creativity of its artists.



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