

GRADES ONE TO THREE

LEARNING FROM PAINTINGS 1



Figure 8:
Young Men Carried Off by a Simorgh
Possibly folio from a dispersed
Khamseh (Quintet)
of Amir Khosrow (d. 1325)
Attributed to Basawan India
ca. 1590
Opaque watercolour
and gold on paper
38.6 x 25.1 cm
AKM140

The fantastic painting in Figure 8 depicts an equally fantastic subject: a giant mythical bird known as a *simorgh* carries two men gripped tightly in her beak while another clings to her talons. The illustration is possibly from a tale in the poetry collection *Haft Paykar* (Seven Beauties) of the Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi (d. 1209). In this epic poem, the seven wives of the mythical king Bahram Gur live in different-coloured pavilions. The king visits each one during a different day of the week. Each princess tells a different story. Here, the Indian princess tells the tale of a hero who is rescued by hanging on to a *simorgh*, which brings him to a paradise-like land.

Did You Know?

Although quite similar to the phoenix, the *simorgh* is different from other mythical beasts. Unlike dragons, which are usually depicted as male, ferocious, and threatening, the *simorgh* is female and often helps human beings.

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS AND KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

VISUAL ART

OME Expectation	Key Understanding
<p>Identify the elements of design. Understand how these elements work and learn to use them in creative work.</p> <p>Identify contrast (Grade One), repetition (Grade Two), and variety (Grade Three) as principles of design that are used with the elements of design to make art. Learn to use them in creative work.</p> <p>Understand (Grades Two and Three) how perspective works in a painting and learn how to use it as a principle of design.</p>	<p>Developing Creativity, Communicating: Works of art communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas, and an understanding of the elements and principles of design supports both the creation and analysis of works of art.</p>
<p>Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of art forms, styles, and techniques from the past and present, as well as their social and/or community contexts.</p>	<p>Understanding Culture, Making Connections: There are different ways to portray depth and focus in paintings. Muslim artists in the past have portrayed perspective differently than artists in Europe have done in landscape painting.</p>



LANGUAGE

OME Expectation	Key Understanding
Read and demonstrate an understanding of how a story is told in pictorial form (all three grades).	Paintings can tell stories.
Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts.	Paintings convey specific messages that you can read by looking critically.

LEARNING THROUGH INQUIRY AND LEARNING BY DOING: PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

Visual Arts: Discovering elements and principles of design in a work of art

- Colour: How has the artist used colour in the work in Figure 8? Look at where the lighter and darker colours are. Try colouring in squares of the colours you see in the painting with the darkest at the top and the lightest at the bottom. Now turn the page around so the order is reversed. Why do you think the artist arranged the colours the way you see them?
- Contrast: What is big and what is small in the painting in Figure 8? Why?
- Patterns: Find three different patterns in the painting in Figure 8. How many patterns can you find?
- Variety: Find three different kinds of fish in the painting in Figure 8. How many kinds of fish can you find?
- Emphasis: What is a focal point? Where do you think the focal point is in the painting in Figure 8?

Language

- What do you think is happening in the painting in Figure 8? Look carefully at the picture. What do you think a *simorgh* is?
- If you could give the painting in Figure 8 your own title, what would you call it?
- Do you think this is a true story?



LEARNING FROM PAINTINGS 2



Figure 9:
*Episode from the Story of Haftvad
and the Worm*
Folio 521v from a *Shah-Nameh*
(Book of Kings)
produced for Shah Tahmasp I
Signed by Dust Mohammad
Tabriz, Iran, ca. 1540
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold,
and silver on paper
45 x 30 cm
AKM164

The story of Haftvad and the worm is told in the *Shah-Nameh*, the Iranian epic of legendary kings. It details the changing fortunes of a poor man after his daughter found a magical worm in her apple while she was spinning cotton. She kept the worm in her spindle case, feeding it with apples, and in return it granted her the ability to spin ever-greater quantities of cotton. Eventually she told her parents of the marvellous creature, and the whole family's fortunes improved as they looked after the worm, building larger and larger enclosures for it as it grew to an enormous size. Haftvad and his seven sons quickly increased their local power and wealth and eventually threatened the ruler, Ardashir, who remained the ruler by killing the worm. In disguise he and his men poured boiling bronze down the creature's throat, destroying the worm and Haftvad's good fortune with it.



The painting in Figure 9 shows the daughter of Haftvad and her companions working at spinning yarn outdoors at bottom left: Haftvad’s daughter (in red) holds up the apple from which the story will grow. Behind, a walled town, decorated in jewel-like splendour, appears to grow before our eyes.

Did You Know?

The painting in Figure 9 is full of information about daily life in 16th-century Iran. A man sells bread in a shop; men gather wood and bring it to the town for sale; sages read and write in a tower; women converse inside a room; and a muezzin performs the call to prayer. The buildings feature a massive dome, a minaret, a city gate with towers, windows with *mashrabiyya* (latticed screens), and walls of plain and patterned brickwork.

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS AND KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

VISUAL ART

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<p>Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of art forms, styles, and techniques from the past and present, and their social and/or community contexts.</p>	<p>Understanding Culture, Making Connections: There are different ways to portray depth and focus in paintings. Muslim artists in the past have portrayed perspective differently than artists in Europe have done in landscape painting.</p>

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SOCIAL STUDIES

OME Expectation	Key Understanding
People and Environments: The Local Community (Grade One): Describe the different aspects of a community.	People live in different ways in different regions (Grade One).
Identify and locate various physical features of communities around the world (Grade Two).	The world is made up of different regions, each of which has distinct characteristics (Grade Two).

LEARNING THROUGH INQUIRY AND LEARNING BY DOING: PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Which people are in a town and which are in the countryside?
- People are busy doing many things. Find five different activities. How many can you find? How are their activities like the ones you do in your community? How are they different? Why do you think they are different? (e.g. differences in climate, available technologies, etc.).



LEARNING FROM THREE-DIMENSIONAL OBJECTS 1

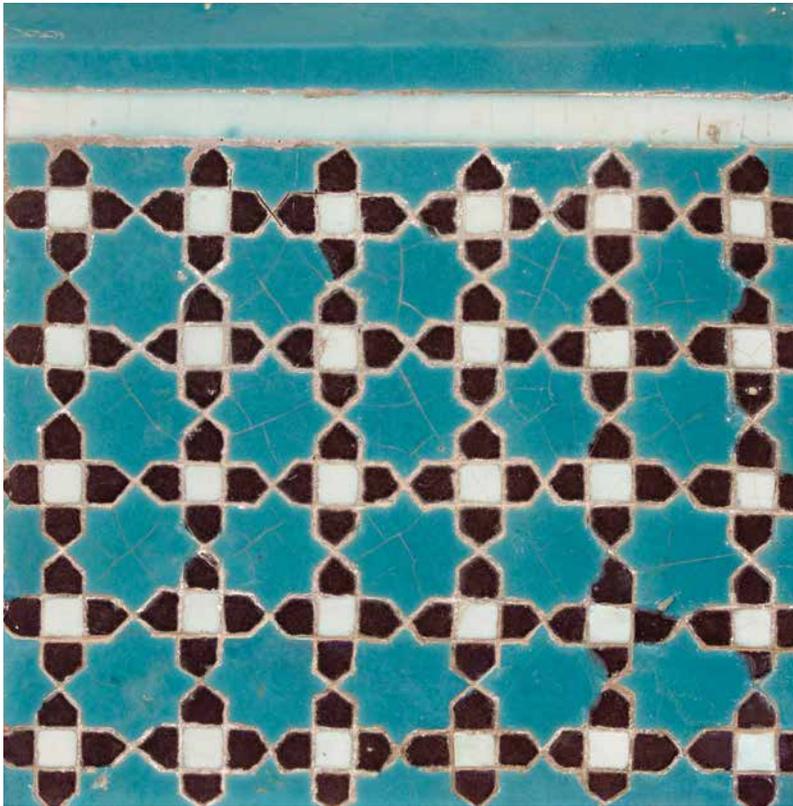


Figure 10:
Architectural Tile
Central Asia, 19th century
Fritware, *cuerda seca* and glazed
32 x 32 cm
AKM577

The tile in Figure 10 uses squares, pentagons, and octagons in a limited number of vibrant colours to achieve its bold effect. Instead of making the shapes individually and putting them together, the craftsmen who made this tile were trained in the *cuerda seca* (translated as “dry cord”) technique. Artists who wanted to make multicoloured tiles invented this type of glazing in the 15th century; earlier, they had used tiny individual pieces of tiles in different colours to make tile mosaics. *Cuerda seca* required several steps: the body of the tile was air-dried, after which the tile makers used a greasy or waxy substance to draw the lines, which would separate one colour of glaze from another – here, between the white squares, purple polygons and blue ground. The areas were painted with their coloured liquid glazes, which the greasy lines prevented from running into each other. During the firing, the substance burned off as the glazes fused to the ceramic body. As seen here, the final effect is colourful and shiny.

Did You Know?

The blue glaze used for centuries to colour ceramics in Europe and Asia was made from the mineral cobalt oxide, which was mined only in Iran and the Caucasus until sources in Europe became available in the 19th century. It was very expensive and highly prized.

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS AND KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

VISUAL ART

OME Expectation	Key Understanding
Identify the elements of design. Understand how these elements work and learn to use them in creative work. Identify contrast (Grade One), repetition (Grade Two), and variety (Grade Three) as principles of design that are used with the elements of design to make art. Learn to use them in creative work.	Developing Creativity, Communicating: Works of art communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas, and an understanding of the elements and principles of design supports both the creation and analysis of works of art.

MATHEMATICS

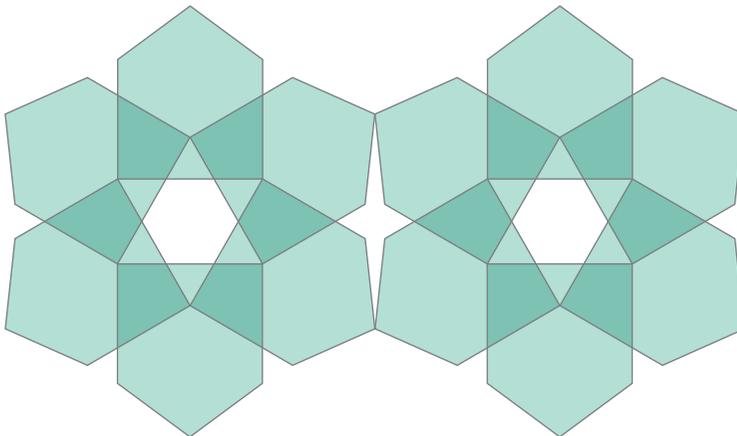
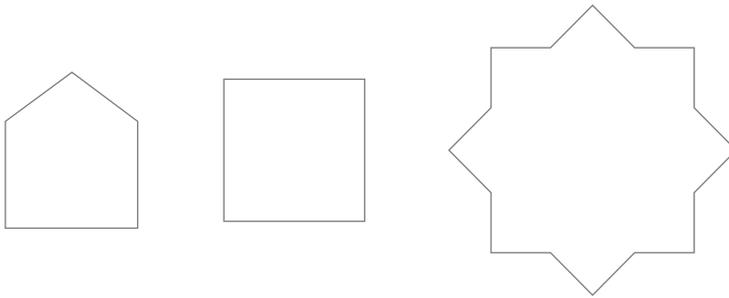
OME Expectation	Key Understanding
Geometry and Spatial Sense: Identify two-dimensional geometric shapes and make representations of them. Data Management and Probability: Organize objects into categories.	Geometric shapes can be combined and coloured in many different ways.
Patterning and Algebra: Identify, describe, extend, and create repeating patterns.	When you repeat multiple shapes exactly, you get a pattern that could go on forever.
Patterning and Algebra: Identify growing and shrinking patterns.	You apply a pattern rule to a pattern to make it grow or shrink.



LEARNING THROUGH INQUIRY AND LEARNING BY DOING: PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

Mathematics

- Geometry and Spatial Sense: How many shapes can you find in the tile in Figure 10?
- Geometry and Spatial Sense and Patterning and Algebra:
 - Paper method: Draw and cut out the individual shapes in multiples of ten and rearrange them to make another pattern. Make bigger and smaller shapes if you like. Use different colours to make patterns that look different from the original.
 - Computer method: Use *Geometer's Sketchpad* to create multiples of the three shapes and combine them. Make a pattern with only one or two of the three shapes. You can enlarge or shrink any shape. What new shapes have you made? What shapes have you made in the spaces between the shapes?



Figures 11a and 11b:
New patterns
made with the pentagonal shape.

- Data Management and Probability: Arrange the cut-out shapes according to colour. How many piles do you have? Put the results of your findings on a chart.

Visual Art

- Creating and Presenting: What do you think is positive (foreground) and what is negative (background) space in the tile pattern? Are these qualities decided by colour, by size, or by some other metric? Describe the shapes in the tile in terms of the negative and positive design that has been created.



LEARNING FROM THREE-DIMENSIONAL OBJECTS 2



Figure 12:
Aquamanile (Jug)
Kashan, Iran, ca. 1200
Fritware, glazed
Height 14 cm, length 10 cm
AKM793

The water jug, or aquamanile, in Figure 12 takes the form of a sturdy little bull with an alert posture and upright head. Its horns curve down, necessary for their stability during shaping and firing, and its snout has been turned into a spout. A hole in the middle of its back, used to fill it with water, is joined to its head by a handle.

This aquamanile was probably made in Kashan, Iran, which was famous as a ceramic production centre. The potters of Kashan were able to work in several styles, and single-colour glazed wares in blue or turquoise were among the most popular. The potters almost certainly used a mould for the main body, though they finished it by hand; the horns and handle required careful attention.

Two black birds, probably peacocks, decorate each side of this turquoise blue vessel, while black leaves occur intermittently on its body. One implies a blaze on the chest of the bull, while more black paint emphasizes its horns and snout.

Did You Know?

The ceramic body used for the jug in Figure 12 contains a large percentage of ground quartz, also called “frit.” The stiffness of fritware is less suitable than softer earthenware for techniques like wheel-based throwing but better for moulding into the shape of a standing animal like this bull.

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS AND KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

VISUAL ART

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

OME Expectation	Key Understanding
<p>Structures and Mechanisms: Investigate structures that are built for a specific purpose to see how their design and materials suit the purpose (Grade One).</p>	<p>The materials and structure of an object determine its purpose (Grade One).</p>
<p>Structures and Mechanisms: Assess the importance of form, function, strength, and stability in structures through time (Grade Three).</p>	<p>A structure has both form and function (Grade Three).</p>
<p>Matter and Energy: Assess the impact of changes in state of solids and liquids on individuals and society (Grade Two).</p>	<p>Materials that exist as liquids and solids have specific properties (Grades Two and Three).</p>



LEARNING THROUGH INQUIRY AND LEARNING BY DOING: PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

Science

- Structures and Mechanisms: Relating Science and Technology to Society and the Environment:
How did the artist make the bull in Figure 12 to stand up?
- Why do you think he has an opening in his back and snout?
- Matter and Energy: Relating Science and Technology to Society and the Environment:
What do you think this bull is made of? What has happened to make the bull change its state from soft to hard?
- Earth and Space Systems: Basic Concepts: Tell how this feels (malleable clay), then tell how this feels (fired clay).

Visual Art

- Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts: Choose a four-legged animal from a work of art in the Museum as a model for your ceramic jug. How will you use the self-hardening clay to create the hollow structure of the vessel? You will need to attach a handle and spout for pouring as well as create a strong base to give stability to your pottery.



LEARNING FROM THE PERFORMING ARTS

(Visit the Aga Khan Museum website for information on performances, especially for schools, by artists such as Abbos Kosimov.)



Figure 13:
Uzbek musician Abbos Kosimov plays the *doyra* at an Aga Khan Music Initiative concert at Paris's Cité de la Musique.

Photo © Sebastian Schutyser/Aga Khan Music Initiative

Abbos Kosimov is recognized globally as a master of *doyra* and an ambassador of Uzbek culture. He was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, to a highly musical family. As a youth, Kosimov learned to play the *doyra*, an Uzbek percussion instrument, and in 1988 he graduated from the College of Culture and Music. Kosimov's performance, pictured in Figure 13, was part of a multi-day presentation of music, vocal, and dance traditions of the Silk Route, including court traditions and customs of nomadic and sedentary dwellers of the region.

Kosimov has established his own school, where he teaches the youth of his country to play *doyra*. At present there are more than 100 students at the school. When asked about *doyra*, Kosimov says: "Uzbek culture and national identity is deeply rooted in its music and dance traditions. As such, *doyra* has grown with the country over time and evolved to play a deeper role in reflecting Uzbek history, religion, heritage, and cultural traditions... *Doyra* is my life and I cannot live without it."

Did You Know?

The *doyra* is a percussion instrument, originally from Uzbekistan, which is played with sticks. It is sometimes heated over a fire to increase its resonant sound.



CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS AND KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

DANCE, DRAMA, AND MUSIC

OME Expectation	Key Understanding
<p>Dance: Describe and discuss dances, showing an understanding of the elements of dance, with particular emphasis on body and space (Grades One and Two) and time and energy (Grade Three).</p> <p>Drama: Demonstrate an awareness of a variety of roles and themes in drama, showing an understanding of the elements of drama (all three grades).</p> <p>Music: Describe and discuss a musical piece, showing an understanding of the elements of music (all three grades).</p>	<p>Understanding Culture, Making Connections: People all around the world express their cultural ideas by creating and performing dances and dramas, and by creating and playing music.</p>
<p>Music: Sing and/or play accompaniments from a wide variety of cultures, styles, and historical periods (Grade Two).</p>	<p>Understanding Culture, Making Connections: Dances, dramas, and music can be different in different places in the world.</p>

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

OME Expectation	Key Understanding
<p>Dance and Mathematics: Use your body in a dance to show symmetrical shapes.</p>	<p>Symmetry is the same principle, whether it is in mathematics, works of art, or the human body.</p>
<p>Music, Visual Art, and Science: Demonstrate an understanding that sounds can be represented by symbols (Grade One).</p>	<p>Pattern is something that you can see in pictures, actions, colours, sounds, numbers, and letters (Grade One).</p>
<p>Drama and Language: Demonstrate an awareness of drama as the acting out of stories.</p>	<p>A drama tells a story that can also be told orally, or can be written down.</p>

LEARNING THROUGH INQUIRY AND LEARNING BY DOING: PROMPTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Music: What was your favourite piece in the concert? Which instrument did you like the best? What did you like about it?
- Music: Sing or play an instrument, accompanied by body percussion or found sounds; sing or play a rhythmic or melodic ostinato (a continually repeated musical phrase or rhythm).
- Music, Visual Art, and Science (sounds represented by symbols in music; scientific symbols): Make a drawing with one colour that shows a fast beat you just heard in the concert; make a drawing with another colour that shows a slow beat. How do you show the fastness or slowness? (size, interval, colour).

