

Touring Highlights from The Courtauld Gallery's Collection of Islamic Metalwork

An opportunity to create a unique display and learning programme around this world class collection

Introduction

The Courtauld Gallery's important collection of Islamic inlaid brassware contains some of the finest examples of this intricate and refined craft. This fantastic opportunity will allow institutions to loan and develop their own unique display and learning programme around these beautiful objects, with support from a range of experts. A generous package is also offered in relation to object preparation, transport, packing and courier costs.

This opportunity is delivered through a partnership between The Courtauld and the Subject Specialist Network (SSN) for Islamic Art and Material Culture (hosted by Birmingham Museums) and made possible with Art Fund support.

Overview of the collection

This significant collection is comprised of Islamic metalwork ranging in date from the 13th to the 16th centuries. It was formed by one of the great Victorian art collectors, Thomas Gambier Parry (1816-1888), to complement his acquisitions of precious medieval and early Renaissance paintings and decorative arts. Many of the best pieces in the collection have been on permanent display in The Courtauld Gallery since their bequest in 1966. But the metalwork has rarely left London, and never has such a large group of metalwork objects been brought together to be shown outside The Courtauld.

The most spectacular piece in the collection is the Courtauld Bag, made in Mosul (present day northern Iraq) for a noble lady of the Persian-Mongol court, around 1300 -1330. It is one of the most splendid pieces of Islamic metalwork in the world, and its shape and function make it a unique object.



Bag
Mosul, Northern Iraq
1300-1330
The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

In 2014, this metal bag was the centrepiece of The Courtauld Gallery's exhibition 'Court and Craft: A Masterpiece from Northern Iraq' (for further info see: <http://courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/what-on/exhibitions-displays/archive/court-and-craft-a-masterpiece-from-northern-iraq>).

Other highlights of this collection are the bucket made by Zain al-Din – among the few known craftsmen of the period, and the exquisite bowl-shaped box signed by a craftsman known as Master Mahmud al-Kurdi. The Courtauld's box is the only known example with a dual-language signature, in both Arabic and Roman script, suggesting it was intended for a European market.



Mahmud al-Kurdi
Bowl-shaped box with cover of engraved brass inlaid with silver
North-West Iran or Turkey
Around 1500
The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London



Zain al-Din
Bucket of engraved brass with silver inlay, the decoration
continuing over the base
North-West Iran or Turkey
Around 1500
The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

The metalwork collection incorporates examples of vessels, candlesticks, presentation dishes and a variety of other exceptional pieces made in present-day Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Iran and Iraq, as well as Italy. Such was the renown of this technique in Europe during the Renaissance that Venetian craftsmen attempted to vie with the beauty and magnificence of Islamic metalwork by creating imitation pieces. It is proposed that a couple of these are included in the selection of **Ten highlights** offered for the tour.

See the full list below of Highlights selected for the tour.

Tour dates

Due to a period of temporary closure for a major redevelopment project, [Courtauld Connects](#), highlights from this celebrated collection are available to tour to up to three host venue institutions in

the UK between autumn 2019 and early 2021. It is anticipated that the duration of display at each venue will be around 4 months with additional time factored in for install and de- install processes.

There are three opportunities for three different venues. Please indicate in the application which of the four slots (options 1-4) your organisation can accommodate. Please indicate as many slots as appropriate; if you are able to accommodate all four, please say so, as this will help us in our planning of the tour.

OPTION 1: end Oct 2019 – Feb 2020

OPTION 2: end Feb – end May 2020

OPTION 3: early June –Oct 2020

OPTION 4: October 2020 – January 2021

Audiences

Dependent on each individual exhibition design, this display and associated learning programme would appeal to a wide range of audiences and be particularly important in diversifying those audiences. The subject matter is often particularly appealing to Muslim audiences and / or those from the Middle East, including refugees and asylum seekers (supporting ACE Goal 2).

Support package

Packing, Transport and Courier Costs

Thanks to support from the Art Fund, The Courtauld and the SSN for Islamic Art and Material Culture, a generous package to cover aspects of the project is included in this offer at no cost to the host venue:

- object preparation
- conservation and cleaning of the objects
- packing & transport costs
- courier expenses
- Object mounts, case furniture, label holders
- One secure display case for the Metal Bag (object number: O.1966.GP.209, see appendix)
- Support from the Courtauld's registrarial team and waiving of all loan administration costs

Exhibition and Associated Learning Programme

With support from The Courtauld and the SSN for Islamic Art and Material Culture, host venues will have the opportunity to develop their own exhibition either of this metalwork collection in isolation, or in association with objects from their own collection. A related learning programme of events and outreach will also be supported through this programme. That support will include:

- A research package to provide a starting point for institutions to develop interpretation for their exhibition
- Support from a Courtauld curator and representative from the SSN for Islamic Art and Material Culture to develop the exhibition
- Support from The Courtauld's Head of Public Programmes to develop a learning programme
- A public lecture delivered by the specialist in Islamic Art from The Courtauld Institute of Art

Host venue contribution and requirements

We expect each host venue to contribute to the programme in the following ways: cover costs for the development, design and printing of graphic content and interpretation in consultation with The Courtauld Gallery, the SSN for Islamic Art and Material Culture and The Art Fund

- Provide technical support for the installation and deinstallation of the exhibition and cover associated costs (with the exception of courier expenses, see above)
- Cover any costs associated with the exhibition at their venue, including: press views, private views and hospitality, advertising and the production of publicity material, education programmes (excluding the public lecture delivered by the specialist in Islamic Art), insurance, staffing and security
- Supply secure display cases (except for that stated above, for the Metal bag)
- Apply for Government Indemnity Scheme, and provide a UKRG facilities report.

If required, the SSN and The Courtauld will provide support for any applications for additional funding to other organisations.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please include a covering letter outlining:

- Introduction to your organisation and any prior experience you might have of exhibiting Islamic Art and /or engaging diverse audience through your collections
- Proposal of how you would present these highlights from The Courtauld's collection at your institution
- Outline of how your institution would benefit from the loan of this particular group of objects

Please also include a full facilities report which indicates your eligibility for the Government Indemnity Scheme and specifications of the cases you would use to display The Courtauld's metalwork collection.

Please indicate **all** the slots that would be most suitable for your institution (options 1-4 above).

Applications close at 5pm on 1st December 2018. We will aim to contact applicants within one month with the outcome.

Contacts

For further information contact: islamicartnetwork@gmail.com

Art Fund_



Birmingham
Museums



HIGHLIGHTS TOUR FULL LIST OF OBJECTS



Mosul, Northern Iraq, 1300-1330

Metal Bag
15.2 cm h
22 (l) x 13.5 cm (depth)
O.1966.GP.209



Zain al-Din, North-West Iran or Turkey, around 1500

Bucket of engraved brass with silver inlay, the decoration continuing over the base
About 23 (diam) x 11 cm h (handle down)
O.1966.GP.198



Syria (Damascus?) around 1500

Bowl-shaped box with cover of engraved brass with silver inlay, with blank shield
12.8 (diam) x 6.5 cm (h)
O.1966.GP.200



Mahmud al-Kurdi, North-West Iran or Turkey, around 1500

Bowl-shaped box with cover of engraved brass inlaid with silver
15.8 (diam) x 7.6 cm (h)
O.1966.GP.204



Syria, probably late 13th century

Incense burner of pierced and engraved brass inlaid with silver, with images of the planets within roundels

5.3 cm (diam)

O.1966.GP.207



Egypt, 1320-1341

Bowl of engraved brass inlaid with silver; decorated with inscriptions of titles interspersed with roundels containing alternately birds and interlaced plants with central whirling rosettes

30.7 (diam) x 16.5 cm (h)

O.1966.GP.212



Egypt, 1375-1425

Bowl of brass, originally inlaid with silver, engraved with floral decoration and four panels of poetic inscriptions

14 (diam) x 7.6 cm

O.1966.GP.201



Italy (Venice?) 16th century

Dish of engraved high-tin bronze inlaid with silver, in the centre a coat of arms

45.9 cm (diam)

O.1966.GP.202



Italy (Venice) 16th

Pair of candlesticks of engraved brass, with later reworking
15.9 cm (h)
O.1966.GP.218



Eastern Anatolian (Konya?), Turkey, late 13th century

Candlestick of cast bronze engraved and inlaid with silver
19.4 cm (diam at base) x 20.4 cm (h)
O.1966.GP.208