

Extend Your Learning: Some additional tidbits relating to this math walk stop

Keir Bowl

The infinite quality of the patterns in this bowl and many other pieces from this time period and region was to represent God and the universe, and encouraged deep thought of one's place in the universe. If you notice, the patterns, such as on this bowl, can keep carrying on and on, suggesting infinity.

Did you know that the basis of Algebra was found by Al Khwarizmi, in the early 9th century. That's a statue of him in his home city of Khiva in Uzbekistan!



Source: <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20150625-where-algebra-was-invented>

In fact, the word **Algebra** is derived from the Islamic word “Al-Jabra”, which is literally translated into “reunion of broken parts”.

So this whole focus on infinity and the universe that we see in the patterns in many of the works in the Keir Collection of Islamic Art makes a lot of sense given how much math and science was being developed in the Islamic world at the time!

Also, in this time period, Islamic artists avoided representing people in their artwork, so we see a lot of Islamic designs using those three design themes, or motifs, that we talk about in the video - calligraphy, vegetation, and geometric patterns instead. At the same time, using these motifs in so many different art forms was a way of connecting to their fascination with nature and math, and the incredible explosion of knowledge happening during this period.

Free download of mathematical art designs:

https://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/Islamic_Art_and_Geometric_Design_Activities_for_Learning