Decorative Arts in the Middle East
Art Project Plan

Project: Iznik Plate Design

Suggested Time: Two to three classroom periods

Materials Needed: Drawing paper, compass, pencils (brushes and tempera paint OR colored markers)

Objective: Students will gain an understanding of Iznik ceramic wares by designing a floral plate. Throughout the process, they will explore the impact of cultural influences, gain an understanding of Iznik ceramic design, and express themselves creatively.

Key Vocabulary:
Arabesque – abstract designs based on forked leaves, interlaced vines and scrolls
Interlaced – to cross on another as if woven together
Motif – the smallest unit of a pattern
Peripheral – located away from the center, the outer edge
Geometric – characterized by straight lines, triangles, circles, squares or other similar geometric forms

Introduction:
In the 15th, 16th and early 17th centuries, Iznik, Turkey was the center for ceramic production. The products were prized throughout the Middle East and Europe. Iznik wares were inspired by the blue-and-white Ming Dynasty porcelain from China. One thing this means, is that the Turks transmitted Far Eastern aesthetics in ceramics to the West. Initially, Iznik ceramicists followed Chinese models closely, in both the blue-and-white palette and decorative motifs. However, in the mid 16th century, Ottoman potters added naturalistic renderings of indigenous flowers, such as tulips, carnations, hyacinths, bluebells, etc. Bright tomato reds, deep blackish purples, shades of blue and green also entered the scene. General characteristics of Iznik ceramics are: Floral Motifs, Geometric Patterns and Symmetrical Compositions.

Activity:
Today we are going to begin to design our own ceramic plates.
- Students will draw several thumbnail sketches of flowers
- Students will draw a floral and curvilinear design on drawing paper in a circular form
- Students will paint their design withtempera paints or color in with markers
Visual Aids:
- Iznik ceramic plates on this page
- Photographs or illustrations of flowers

Summary:
- Students will display completed artwork for class critique.
- Students will evaluate design for use of curvilinear, arabesque or floral motifs, and choice of colors.

Plate with diaper pattern, early 16th c.
Plate with 3 bunches of grapes, early 16th c.
Plate with peacock, mid-16th c.

Teachers: Please contact Angela Williams, CSAMES Outreach Coordinator, at aswillms@illinois.edu, for the answer key to the Arts Crossword Puzzle.