

GREAT CRAFT PROJECTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

written & illustrated
by
William Reid

J. WESTON
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To the Teacher

A craft is a technique for making something—sometimes for its usefulness, sometimes for its attractive appearance, yet always for the pleasure of making. To study crafts means to learn about the people who make them and the cultures in which these people have worked. The objects they have made help us understand their practical needs (e.g., drinking gourds, carpets), their beliefs (e.g., amulets, crosses), their sense of self (e.g., pendants, necklaces), and their sense of fun (e.g., kites, shadow puppets). To explore those purposes by shaping the objects is the intent of this book, designed so that all students, not just art students, might enjoy the search. Handing out photocopies of these craft projects is distributing the recipes of a culture's traditions.

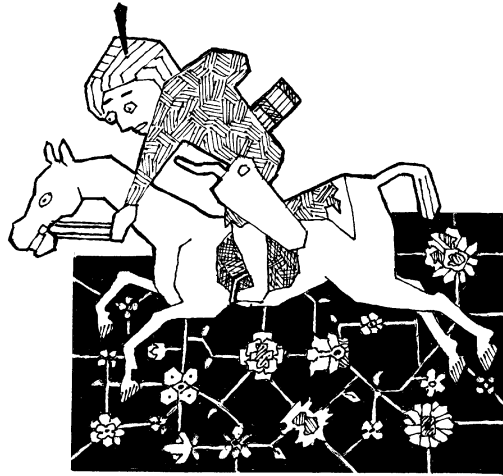
Because of the complexity of the originals, many of the crafts given here are simulations of an actual process, adapted to make the craft suitable for classroom use. With the exception of Mexican tin-can art, which is so typical of that country, metal crafts are simulated with the use of metal foil. Aluminum soft drink cans are easily cut with ordinary shears (and do not cut careless fingers, as do normal cans) and so can provide the material for those projects that call for heavy foil.

A number of projects require clay. This must be clay that dries hard without a kiln. You can choose clay that air-dries, clay that can be cooked in a household oven, or even clay that hardens when immersed in water. Papier-mâché, called for in several projects, is most fully described in the first section, Basic Craft Techniques. This versatile material can substitute in some clay projects as well.

The projects are not strict in their directions. Therefore, you can make modifications to meet class needs—a simpler approach for a younger class, a more complicated one for older students. Some of the crafts are relatively simple and can be handled by individual students. Others are more complex and you may prefer to assign groups of students to work together.

The illustrations provide examples of a culture's typical designs. Students can find more in those books that supplement their study of a culture, or you can encourage them to design their own motifs as inspired by those of a particular culture. The small maps scattered throughout indicate the areas where particular crafts are practiced.

As art ideas, these projects can stand on their own. However, their primary strength is to give a special dimension to the study of a culture region through hands-on learning. It is hands on paper, cloth, paste, paint, dripping wax, and sticky glue—messy, perhaps, but a lasting learning experience.



PART IV:
Middle East

IV. THE ARTS AND CRAFTS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

With the exception of Israel and scattered Christian communities in Lebanon and elsewhere, the peoples of the Middle East are Muslim. Of those Muslim nations, all are Arab with the exception of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Middle East crafts are at the same time exotic and familiar. Oriental carpets have long graced homes in other parts of the world. This craft provided the flooring for the tents of nomadic Arabs. Their intricate, abstract designs are a result of the Islamic prohibition against using human figures in art. Religion and tradition lie behind the crafts provided in this chapter.

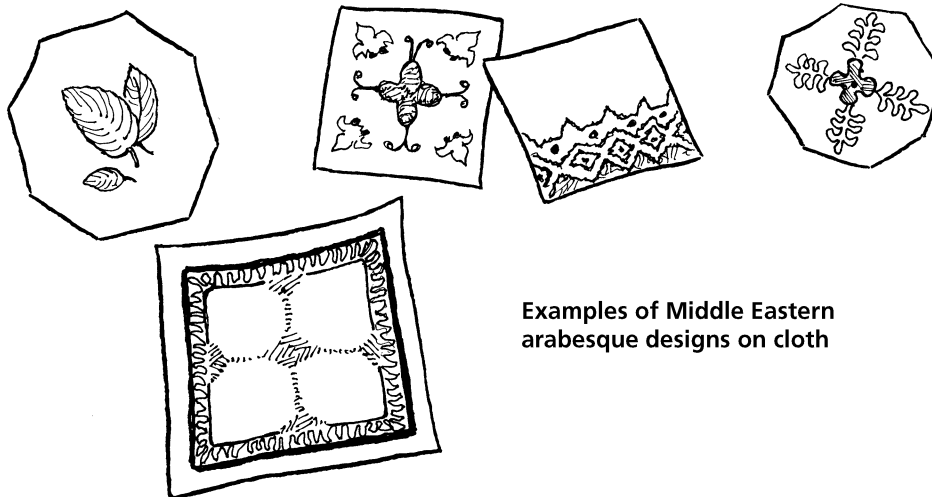
Project 17: Middle East: Textile Painting

Materials	
For this activity you will need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fabric color or acrylic paint
• cloth to decorate	

Painting arabesque designs on cloth is an ancient craft in the Middle East. Today machines print most cloth designs. However, craftsmen still practice the art for expensive cloth goods. Decorate napkins, place mats, or a tablecloth with one of the illustrated arabesques shown below or one of your own invention.



1. Plan on a sheet of paper an arabesque design of fine-lined floral or abstract patterns.
2. Select a white napkin for your decoration or hem a piece of white cloth to serve as a napkin or place mat.
3. Rub the back of your design plan with a soft pencil.
4. Pin the design plan to the cloth, pencil-rubbed side down.
5. Draw over the plan's lines, transferring them to the cloth.
6. Remove the plan and paint your design using the pencil lines transferred to the cloth as guides. Acrylic is easier to manage than fabric paint and will remain if washed carefully by hand.



Examples of Middle Eastern arabesque designs on cloth



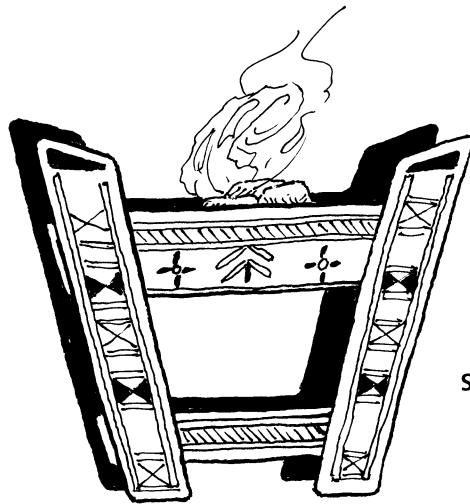
Project 18: Oman: Incense Burner

Materials
For this activity you will need:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clay • poster colors or acrylic paint

Following the midday meal, your host drops some hot coals from the fire into a clay incense burner. On top of the hot coals he sprinkles incense, then passes the burner around to his guests. You are in Oman, where the world's finest frankincense grows. From here, the hardened tree sap that burns as fragrant smoke was once traded throughout the ancient world.



1. Shape a shallow square bowl about four inches wide from the clay.
2. Shape a second square bowl about three inches wide.
3. Shape more clay into four flat strips one-quarter-inch-thick by one-inch-wide by six-inches-long ($\frac{1}{4}$ " \times 1" \times 6").
4. Assemble the pieces as shown in the illustration (*Step 4*), dampening the strips where they attach to the bowls.
5. Add other clay shapes to the burner as you wish.
6. When the clay has dried, decorate the burner with paint as illustrated (*Step 6*) or create your own arabesques.
7. Burn purchased incense in your clay Omani incense burner.



Steps 4 and 6



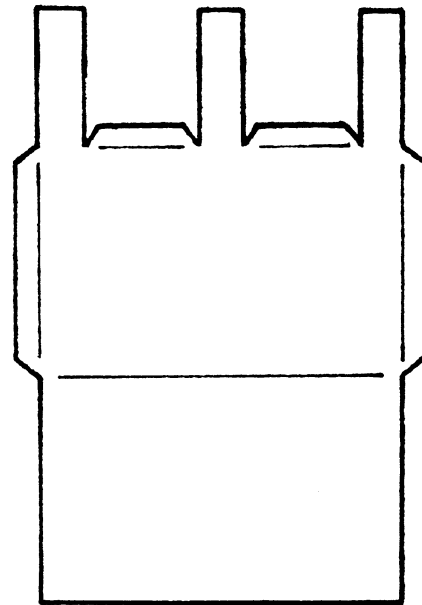
Project 19: Oman: Amulet

Materials	
For this activity you will need:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heavy metal foil • heavy cord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acrylic paint • scissors

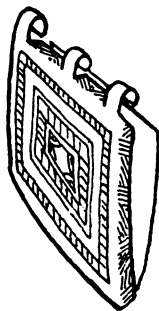
Many devout Muslims wear an amulet, a small metal case containing paper on which is written a passage from the Koran. This Muslim holy book contains the prayers, sermons, and teachings of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. Wearing an amulet demonstrates one's religious faith and is said to bring good luck.

An amulet is normally made of silver, but you can make one from heavy metal foil.

1. Cut out the illustrated pattern (*Step 1*). Then, with a felt pen, trace it on a piece of heavy metal foil.
2. Cut the amulet piece from the foil.
3. Paint the amulet with an arabesque using acrylic paint.
4. Insert a written saying inside the amulet as you bend the foil and glue the tabs to the back (*Step 4*).
5. Thread a cord through the loops to wear or display the amulet (*Step 5*).



Step 1



Step 4



Step 5



Project 20: Yemen: Jambiyya Dagger

Materials

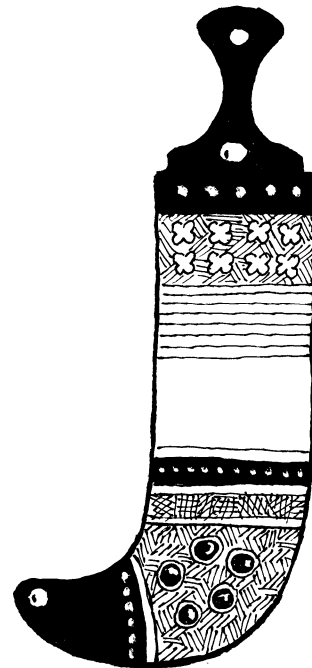
For this activity you will need:

- ½-inch-thick plywood
- colored pieces of cloth
- jigsaw
- paste jewels
- foil
- wire

The daggers, called *jambiyya*, tucked into the belts of Yemen men are less about aggression and more about status. The sheaths are richly decorated with jewels or filigree, indicating the wealth of the owner. More important, if a man wears it on the right side, everyone knows he is a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad. In the market, the busiest craftsmen are the makers of *jambiyyas*. Villagers of Yemen's mountains, the highest on the Arabian Peninsula, wear daggers held in wooden sheaths wrapped in green-dyed sheepskin. They are decorated like those in other parts of the country.



1. Using a jigsaw, cut the dagger-shaped sheath and hilt from a piece of ten-inch-long plywood following the illustrated example (*Step 1*).
2. Paint the hilt black.
3. Glue strips of colored cloth in bands around the sheath.
4. Decorate by wrapping around and/or gluing to the *jambiyya* costume jewelry, metal foil, and wire.



Step 1



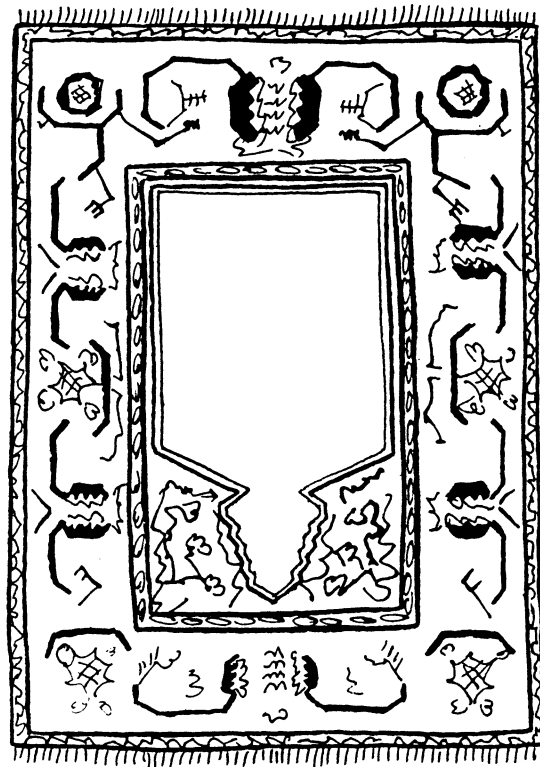
Project 21: Iran: Oriental Carpet Collage

Materials	
For this activity you will need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all-purpose white glue • thin poster board • hobby knife
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carpet scraps • piece of heavy burlap 	

Oriental carpets are made in many parts of the Near East, including Iran. As long ago as biblical times, carpets were made by the nomads of the region for furnishing their tents. They were rolled up for transport whenever the nomads moved on. When Islam became the dominant religion of the Near East, carpets were adapted to the new faith. Covered with arabesques, large carpets decorate mosques. Small rugs are used for prayer rugs. One end of a prayer rug dominates the other, as in the illustration below. A devout Muslim points that end in the direction of the holy city of Mecca, then kneels on the carpet to pray.



1. Collect scraps of carpet. Ask dealers who sell wall-to-wall carpeting for pieces left from cutting fitted carpets.
2. Design a carpet plan based on the scraps. If any of the scraps have a pattern, make use of it in your design.
3. Make a finished drawing of the design on poster board the same size as your planned carpet collage.
4. Cut the shapes from the poster board. These are the patterns.
5. Lay each pattern on a carpet scrap and draw around it with a felt-tipped pen and cut the shape from the carpet scrap.



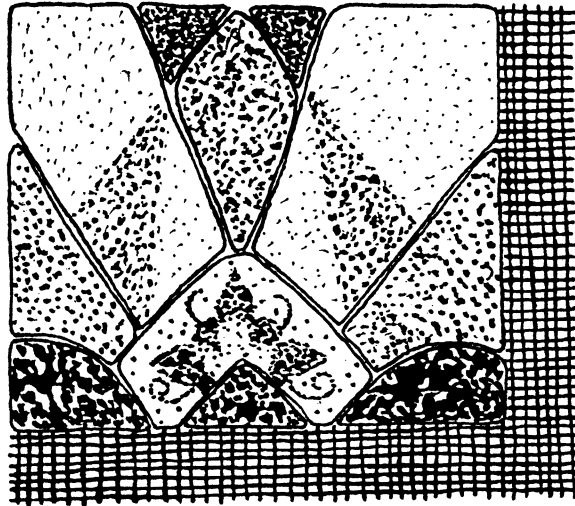
Example of Muslim prayer rug

(continued)



Project 21: Iran: Oriental Carpet Collage *(continued)*

6. Cut a piece of burlap slightly larger than the carpet design. This is the carpet backing. Lay it on newspaper to catch glue.
7. Glue the carpet pieces to the burlap working from the center outward (*Step 7*). Weight down the pieces with something heavy.
8. When the glue has dried, trim the edges of the burlap backing. Use your carpet collage as a floor mat.



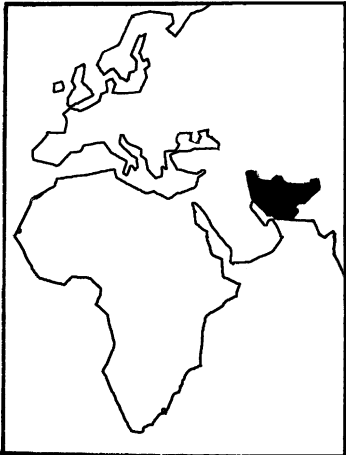
Step 7



Project 22: Iran: Kilim Carpet Hanging

Materials	
For this activity you will need:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cloth scraps • cotton canvas 12" × 18" or bigger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • white glue • rod • cord

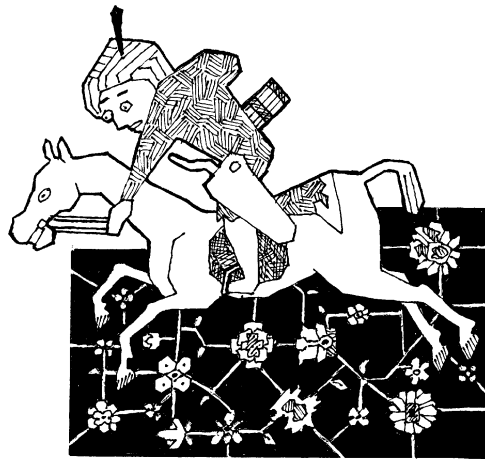
Iran is especially noted for its kilim carpets, rugs meant to hang on a wall, not to lie on the floor. Woven like tapestries, they are thinner and lighter than floor rugs. Kilims are noted for intricate, abstract designs. Some have pictured hunters in a field of geometric flowers like the illustration below, one of the few occasions when human figures appear in the crafts of a Muslim country.



1. Cut a rectangle of canvas, 12 × 18 inches or bigger.
2. Fold two inches over at the top and sew to make a channel through which a rod can be inserted for hanging.
3. Lay the material on newspaper and then tack to a drawing board.
4. Cut a number of cloth scraps into small shapes.
5. Arrange the cloth pieces on the material, working from the center outward to create a symmetrical design. Arrange for a varicolored border to run around the edge.
6. Move the pieces about until satisfied with the arrangement.
7. Glue the cloth scraps to the backing cloth piece by piece.
8. When it is dry, remove the collage from the drawing board.
9. Insert a wooden rod (two inches longer than the width of the collage) in the cloth channel at the top (*Step 9*). Tie a cord at the ends and hang for display.



Step 9



Example of kilim design



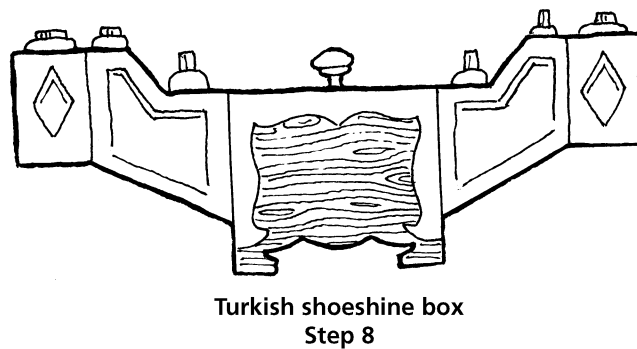
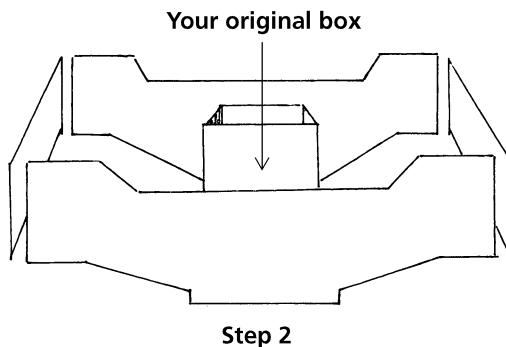
Project 23: Turkey: Shoeshine Box

Materials	
For this activity you will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wooden box • 1/8" -thick plywood • gold-colored foil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hammer and nails • hinges • jigsaw

The *boyaci*, Turkish shoeshine boys or men, sit in busy parts of towns waiting to polish the shoes of passers-by. The client stands in front of the boyaci (who sits on a low stool) and puts one foot, then the other, on the shoeshine box to have his shoes brushed and polished. Made of brass-covered wood, the box contains the jars of wax and polish and the brushes that the boyaci needs to do his job.



1. Find or build a small wooden box.
2. From the plywood, cut the shapes for the front and back of the box as they appear in the exploded view (*Step 2*). Cut also the rectangular pieces for the sides.
3. Nail these to the front and back of the box.
4. Nail sides to enclose the box.
5. Nail shelves inside the side compartments for holding bottles.
6. Hinge a wooden top to the main box in the center.
7. Cover with gold-colored foil.
8. Decorate more as you wish, gluing glass jewelry or beads, or drawing designs on the box, guided by the Turkish shoeshine box below (*Step 8*).
9. Use as a utility box for nails or screws, art supplies, or toilet articles.



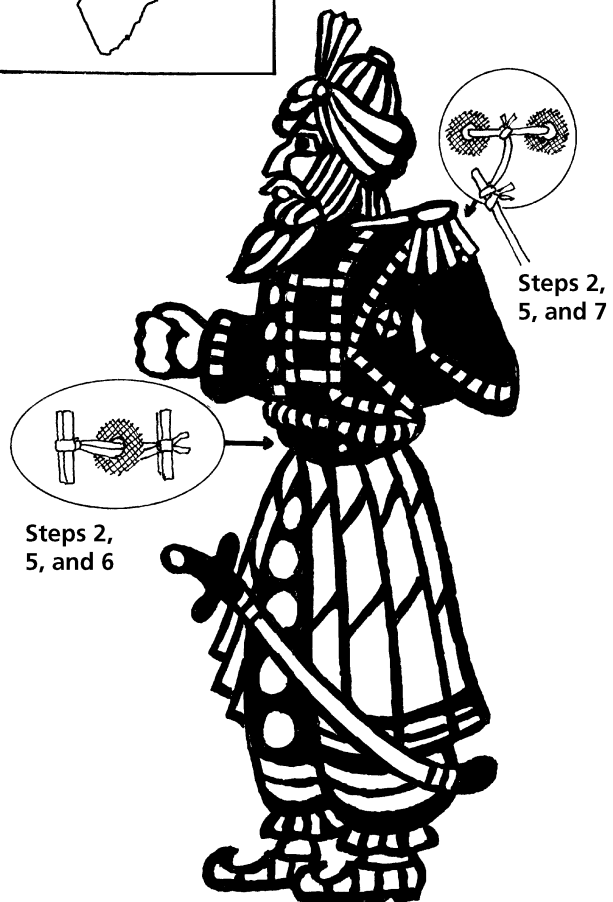
Project 24: Turkey: Shadow Puppets

Materials	
For this activity you will need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hobby knife • tracing paper • watercolor paint • glue • notebook reinforcements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poster board • string • match sticks • 10" stick 	

Folk legend tells how a builder on a mosque held up construction by telling his colleagues stories. Fed up, the sultan angrily ordered him beheaded, but with many stories to tell, the builder's execution was delayed indefinitely. Today Turkish puppeteers perform those stories with shadow puppets made of cardboard and colored semi-transparent paper. The theater is a paper-covered frame with lights arranged to cast shadows and color on the screen while the puppeteer stands behind the lights.



1. From poster board, cut two puppet parts, the head and torso with arms for one, the legs for the other. Together they make a puppet about twelve inches high. Make the sultan illustrated at right or design your own.
2. Cut inner holes with a hobby knife, one where torso joins the legs, two at the shoulder.
3. Glue strong tracing paper to the puppet.
4. Color the paper puppet with transparent watercolor.
5. Reinforce the holes where the torso is to be joined to the legs and the two holes at the shoulder with circular notebook paper reinforcements.
6. Make joints with match sticks and short string as shown (*Step 6*).
7. Tie a string from the shoulder holes to the end of a stick (*Step 7*). Move the stick and the puppet jumps and flops about.



Shadow puppet of a sultan

