Catalogue no. 79

Surah al Fatiha

Calligrapher: Mirza Kochuk Esfahani
Date: 1211 AH / 1797 AD
Style: Ghobar Shikasteh Nastaliq
Size: 7.7 x 3.9 cm
Accession number: 1998.2.95

Description

The folio displays Surah al Fatiha (number 1) in Shikasteh Nastaliq script, in miniature form. Such folios may have been used inside amulets but the difficulty of their execution made them desired and commissioned. The text is placed within cloud-shaped compartments against a gilt ground. The last lines of the text record the date and signature of the calligrapher Mirza Kochuk.

Shikasteh was rarely used to depict Qur'anic verses. This is because it was considered a broken script, in which the arrangement of the verses and its recitation did not adhere to strict rules. In this folio, for example, one extra word (nastaeen) was added to the surah only for aesthetic reasons. In the process of making this folio part of a Muraqqa', a large mount has been added, decorated in a magnificent manner, typical of the royal albums of Iran.
**Catalogue no 80**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wise sayings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calligrapher: Abd al Hamid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: 1195 AH / 1781 AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style: Persian in Shikasteh Nasta’liq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size: 13.8 x 9.6 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accession number: 1998.2.236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description**

The folio features a spiral composition which radiates from the centre. In a beautiful movement, this arrangement recalls the whirling dervishes, and the mystic concept of a circular movement that leads to the uplifting of the soul in the meditation process. The folio depicts the verses in cloud-shaped compartments, against a gold ground. It is the work of Abd al Hamid, composed in 1195 Rabie’ al Awal.
Catalogue no. 81

A decorative composition

Calligrapher: Mohammed Shafie Heravi al Hussein
Date: Rabi‘ul Akhir
1113 AH / 1702 AD
Style: Shikasteh Nasta‘‘ilq
Size: 17.6 x 8.5 cm
Accession number: 1998.2.69

Description

A superb composition of diagonal Shikasteh script placed within cloud-shaped compartments against a gilt ground with polychrome floral illumination. The calligrapher proudly signs and dates the folio towards the end.

The single folio is mounted on brown board with a blue frame adorned with polychrome flowers, and a sharafeh (tessellation border). The text refers to six couplets of poetry perhaps composed by Naziri Nishapuri in addition to religious practices, actions and laws.
A decorative single folio

Calligrapher: Unknown
Date: 1174 AH / 1761 AD
Style: Shikasteh Nasta’liq
Size: 10.8 x 17.0 cm
Accession number: 1998.2.84

Description

A single folio of black Shikasteh-styled text placed within cloud-shaped compartments against a decorated gold ground. The ground is adorned with black floral decoration popular during the 18th century in manuscript illuminations. The text recalls part of a manuscript that addresses a friend in Isfahan. The broken text was rendered in haste, resulting in the joining of several letters together forming a tughra composition. The tughra unit, which became popular during the 18th century, stresses the balanced combination of several words to create one unit of calligraphy, in many cases for decorative purposes.
**Wise sayings**

**Calligrapher:** Unknown  
**Date:** 19th century  
**Style:** Shikasteh Nasta’iṣiq  
**Size:** 10.7 x 15 cm  
**Accession number:** 1998.2.242

**Description**

This composition can be compared to several musicians each playing a tune; the sounds they produce come together to complement each other and strengthen the melody. They clash and they vibrate at a different pitch, and where they escalate the percussion resonates and the sound intensifies. The folio starts with the phrase: ‘Subhāna Allāh, Alahuṣma Sallam Allāhumma Muḥammad’ (God’s prayers on our Prophet Mohammed and his family members) following with God’s (almighty) instructions. The prayers, which appear diagonal on the folio, are then intersected with two lines of words. These words are the repetition of attributes of God and his name as Al Azim; the Great. “Sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam” or peace be upon Him, is repeated here and these prayers are repeated at religious gatherings.
A single folio of Persian poems

Calligrapher: Unknown
Date: c. 19th century
Style: Shikasteh Nasta’liq
Size: 20.2 x 13.3 cm
Accession number: 1998.2.231

Description

A single folio displays Persian poems written in black Shikasteh in curved lines all around the text box. The writings create a harmonious upward movement, changing the static appearance of the folio into a dynamic rhythm of melodious verses. In several locations the same word has been repeated to contribute to the rhythmic pulsation of the composition. The text includes the name of Syed Salim, perhaps a dignitary or a patron.
An example of Ghobar

Calligrapher: Unknown
Date: 18th / 19th century
Style: Shikasteh Nasta'liq in Ghobar
Size: 12.1 x 5.5 cm
Accession number: 1998.2.219

Description

The folio consists of seven lines of text written diagonally in the Ghobar style. The distances between the lines are not regular, a quality in a folio that indicates an amateur calligrapher, a rushed job, or the difficulty of the Ghobar style. The calligrapher was trained to follow perfect spacing through the use of the pressed mastar system, where the lines would appear on the folio as a result of pressing the folio against a template. At a mature stage in the calligrapher’s life he would have perfected the sense of spacing and would no longer need the mastar.

In the Ghobar Shikasteh style, the folio is small and light in texture, the calligraphor has to be extra careful or else it will tear apart. Most of these folios were intended as amulets and talismans. They would include protective "verses" or charms and would not be revealed. At an early stage this was the method by which letters were sent via pigeons.
Catalogue no. 86

Wise sayings

Calligrapher: Unknown
Date: 18th century
Style: Persian in Shikasteh
Size: 21.2 x 11.5 cm
Accession number: 1998.2.108

Description

The folio is divided into three sections, starting with a Masnavi couplet, then exhibiting several lines of script and the final section depicts a Shikasteh composition. The use of poetry and prose together was a common method in Iranian literature as it broke the monotonous repetition of verses and contributed to the story telling.

Text

Be silent about your good work
It is written in heaven
Until when will you compliment yourself against the jealousy of your foe
Until when will you promote yourself?
Since the essence of the action is apparent at its face value
If there is the possibility of a negative or shortcoming in it
It will be another matter from the existentialist concept, because the "essence of being" (written in Arabic) is the pure being which is pure goodness, so if there is "bad" it must come from another source
Any blessing of a good and complete deed is from the essence of God.

این نسیت افعال به‌خود یافته خمیش
ثبت کشان در فک
وصالی خود برغم حسد تا چی که
ترویج چنان مناخ کسب کنی که
چون صفت و افعالی که در ظاهر است
من حیث ب بحق ظاهر در آن ظاهرات پس آگر
احیاناً
در بعضی از آن شری یا نقطه واقع یافته از
جهت عمدی امری دیگر تواده پیدا که وجود
من حیث هو
وجود خیر محضت و از هر امری موجودی که شری
می‌شود بر ابتدای عدمی امر ووجودی دیگر است لیکن
پروانه
آن امر وجودی من حیث هو امر وجودی
هر نست که از قبل خیر است و کمال
پیش ز تعلب ذات یک متعلق
A single folio of the Gulistan Sa'di

Calligrapher: Mirza Hassan Kirmani
Date: 1066-1085 AH / 1658-1675 AD
Style: Ghobar Shikasteh
Size: 18.4 x 13.0 cm
Accession number: 1998.2.88

Description

The single folio is condensed with lines of small-sized Shikasteh script. Spread all over the folio, the words are written within cloud-shaped compartments against a gilt ground. The text is part of the Gulistan of Sa'di, a Persian classic written by Muslih' uddin Sa'di Shirazi in the middle of the 13th century AD, and relates to homoerotic stories of love and romance. The name Gulistan means the rose garden, and the book was divided into eight sections with an introduction. The single folio displays only a section of the Gulistan and a dedication to calligrapher Mirza Hassan Kirmani, a famous 17th century poet.
**Catalogue no. 88**

**A letter**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calligrapher:</th>
<th>Mirza Kochuk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>1217 AH / 1802 AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style:</td>
<td>Shikasteh Nasta'liq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size:</td>
<td>30.5cm x 20.5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accession number:</td>
<td>1998.2.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description**

A single folio with a central text box composed of 12 lines of black Shikasteh placed within cloud-shaped compartments against a gold ground. The text is divided into sections filling the text box from all directions. The central text area is a letter of appeal to a superior concerning a money transaction and the payment of 75 tomans. The supporting text refers to the manifestation of God.

The folio is adorned with a superb mounting board that displays exquisite golden floral leaves and flowers in a continuous scroll pattern. The addition of the board is of a later period of the 19th / early 20th century AD.
A single folio of poetry by Hafiz Shirazi

Calligrapher: Ali Asghar
Date: c.19th century
Style: Shikasteh Nasta’iṣiq
Size: 19.0 x 9.9 cm
Accession number: 1998.2.224

Description

A single folio of Hafiz’s poems written diagonally and upside down within cloud-shaped compartments against a gold ground. The text states that the manuscript was written the morning of Friday under the candlelight at dawn on the 7th Zulhijjah.

Hafiz, who lived in the 13th century AD, composed some five hundred ghazals, forty-two ruba’i, and a few Qasedeh. His compositions are a reflection of divine inspiration. He focused on writing poetry worthy of the beloved and at a later stage it became the love of God.
Catalogue no. 90

Wise sayings
Calligrapher: Unknown
Date: 1117 AH / 1706 AD
Style: Shikasteh
Size: 14 x 9.2 cm
Accession number: 1998.2.105

Description

The folio includes three rows of short verses with a strong diagonal composition. The left row and the right row represent a poem and a letter. The manner in which the calligrapher arranged the rows gives this folio its novelty. The verses express a rhyming, smooth and soft-toned letter.

Text

The Letter
Praise be to God
Today, Monday 10th of Rabi ul Awal 1117
I wanted to write you a few words and send them to you.
In the sight of the conflict and at a holy place, in the name of the 'Panjtan', I am sitting here in this corner sad and without food
From Sheikh Abou Sayeed, God bless him.

The Poem
Wherever my beloved is, my heart is there
My body is here but my spirit is there
Though I may be far
Thank God my impatient heart is there
Although I have no ways to reach her roof
I am happy for, alas, she is there
Do not search for any Muslim in that land
Where my unfaithfulness lies
Jami, do not write a poem unless it is your own poem
The beloved of my eloquent words is there

به هر منزل که جانان من آناست
تم اینجا و من جان من آناست
من امردوم بعدالله که باری
دل بیضر و سامان من آناست
مرا گر نیست جا بر طرف باش
خوشم کودر فقان من کجاست
در آن کشور مسلمانی مجود
که شرح ناسلامانی من آناست
مختاران جامی جز آنا گله خوش
که محیب سخندان من آناست

هوالله سبحانه تعظیم
امروز صبح که روز دوشنبه دهم
ربعه اواسط دو هفته پیش جناب عالی
نوشته ارسل داشته شود
در عصره تازع و ضیافت هموار
نقش پنجگانه می یابد
در کنجه مهم نشته
از شیخ ابو سعید علي الرحمه