



Collaboration and Creativity in Islamic Art

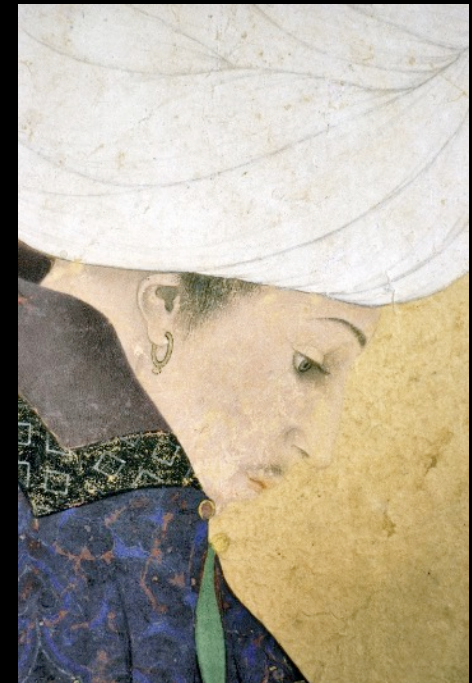
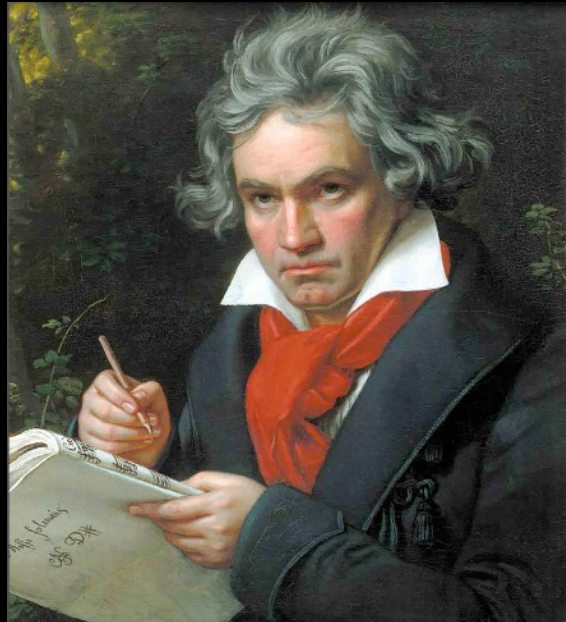
Annual John and Berthe Ford Lecture
in Asian Art

Walters Art Museum, April 14, 2013

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Introduction: The Appealing Myth of the Solitary Artist-Genius



Rome, Vatican, Ceiling of the Cappella Sistina by Michelangelo, c. 1508-1512
Vasari's Narrative, Michelangelo's Poems





Defining what we mean by “original”

London, Victoria and Albert Museum
Raphael Tapestry Cartoons

Rome, Vatican Museums
Raphael/van Aelst Tapestries



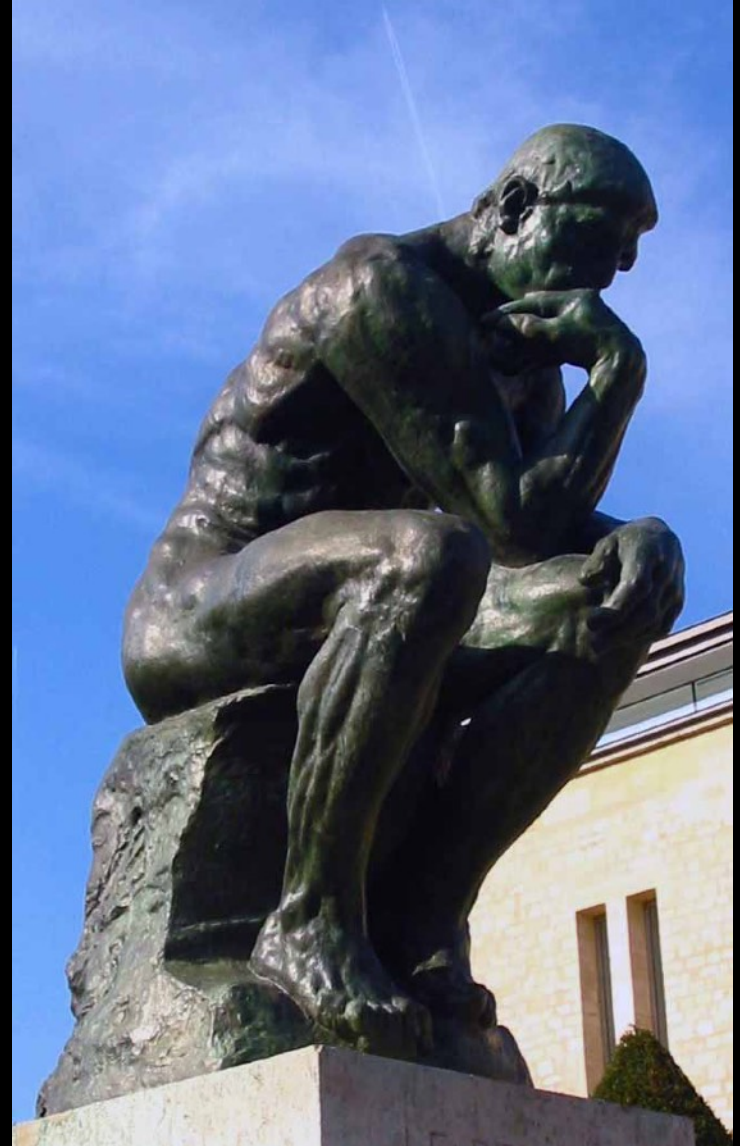
What is an “original” work of art?

A unique work of art conceived and physically created by a single named artist?

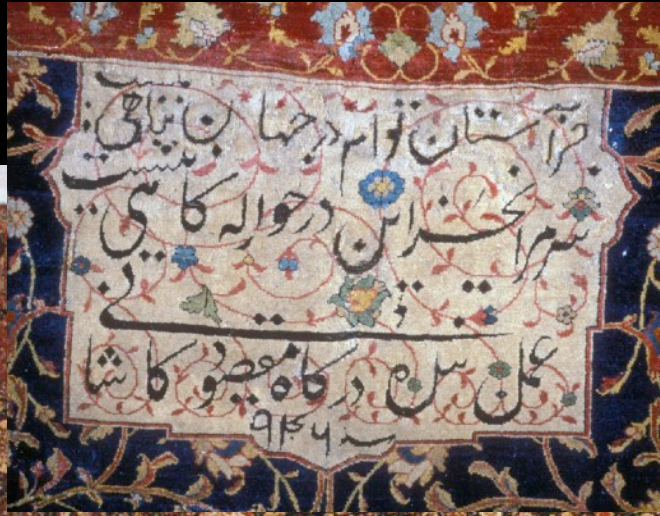


What is a “collaborative” work of art?

Two or more “artists” working on the same unique work? Two or more “artists” working on the same work in sequence, in different technical capacities? Or something else entirely?



Collaboration as a necessary technical requirement of the medium in Islamic art:
London, V&A Museum, one of a pair of “Ardebil” carpets, 1539
“The work of Maqsud of Kashan....”





The “Bobrinsky Bucket”
Herat, 1163
Hermitage, St. Petersburg

(Cast) by Muhammad ibn
‘abd al-Wahid

(Inlaid) by Mas’ud ibn
Ahmad al-Naqqash

The primacy of calligraphy in artist training and the dominance of the medium of ink on paper may lead to the “paperization” of other media, such as ceramics, and the emergence of paper-analogous techniques





Originality and collaboration in architectural decoration: Keluk ibn Abdallah,
Rum (Anatolia), second half of 13th century





The emergence in the Islamic world of paper-based architectural decoration









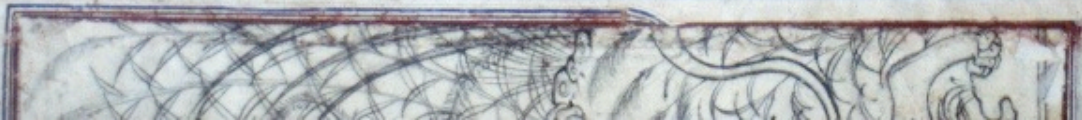


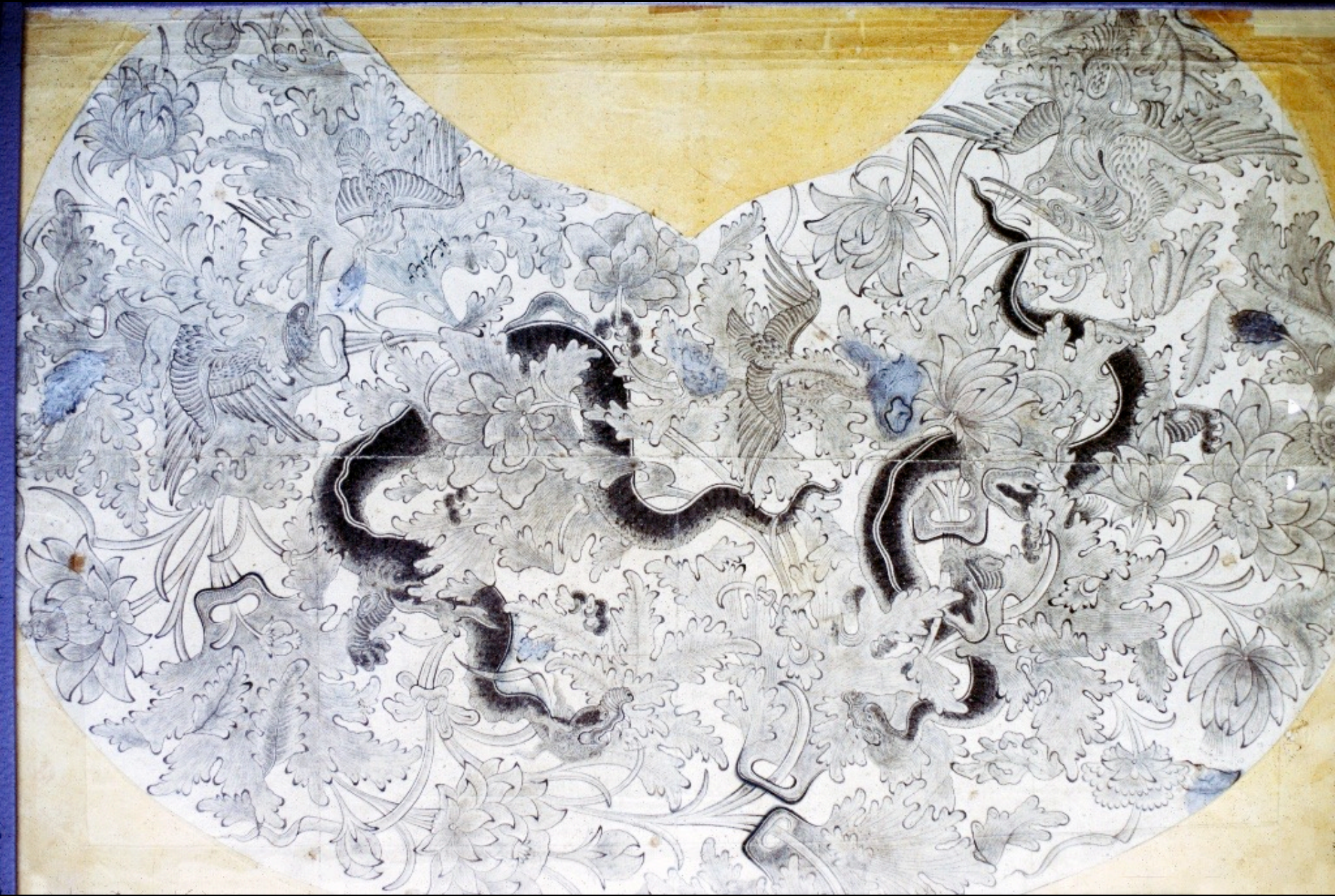
The relationship of *drawing* and *design on paper* (in every sense “originals”) to finished works in other media in Islamic art











Translation from one medium to another through a paper cartoon: an essential part of collaborative artistry in Islamic art





Cartoon and knot-plan in carpet weaving: degrees of creativity







The collaborative process of weaving: programming the drawloom





Collaboration and maximization of design possibilities in weaving: *colorways*





From miniature painting to textile in
Safavid persian art





Embroidery: “drawing” and ”painting” on textiles

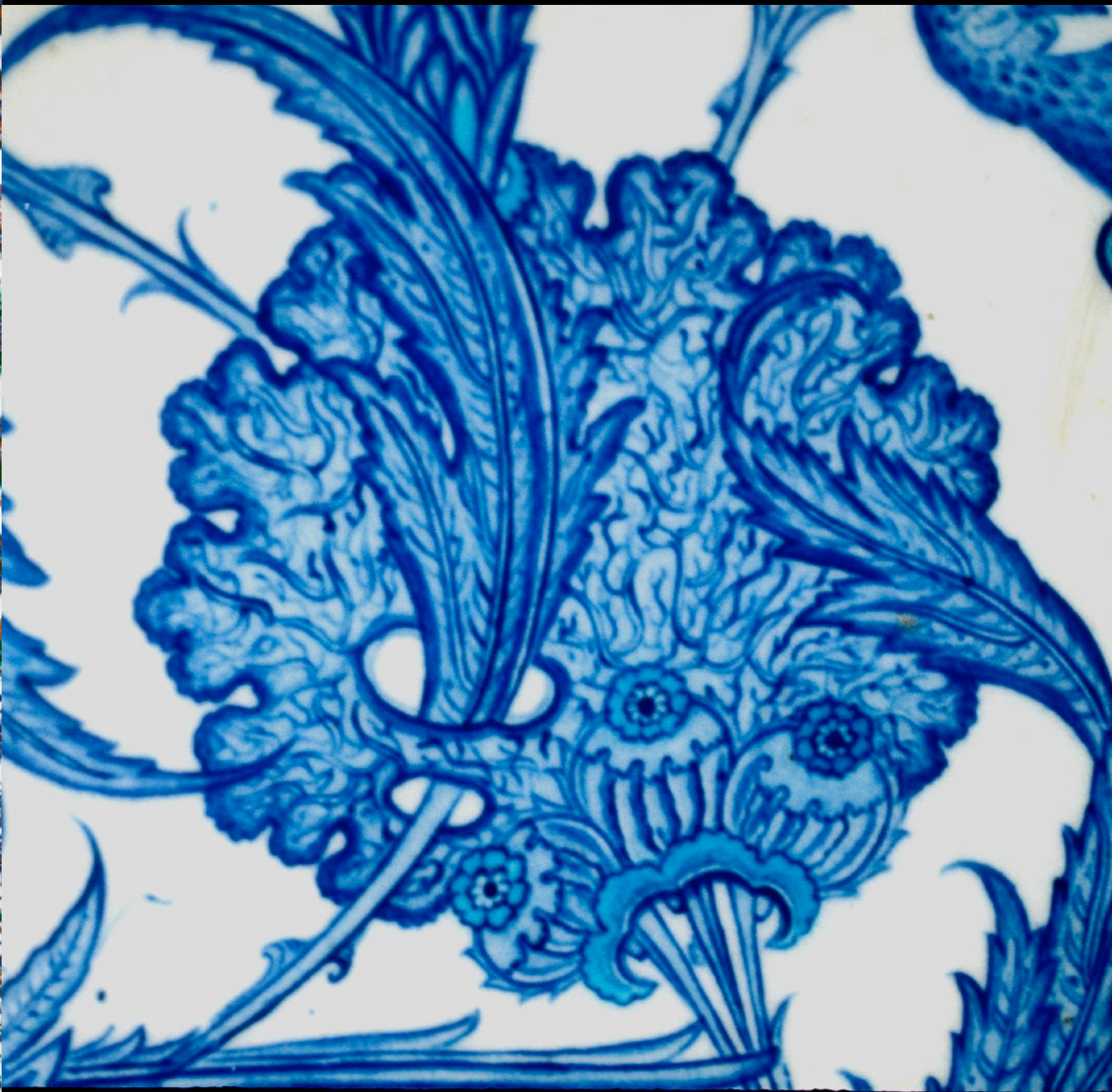




The ultimate “paperization” of collaborative ceramic art: Ottoman tile decoration



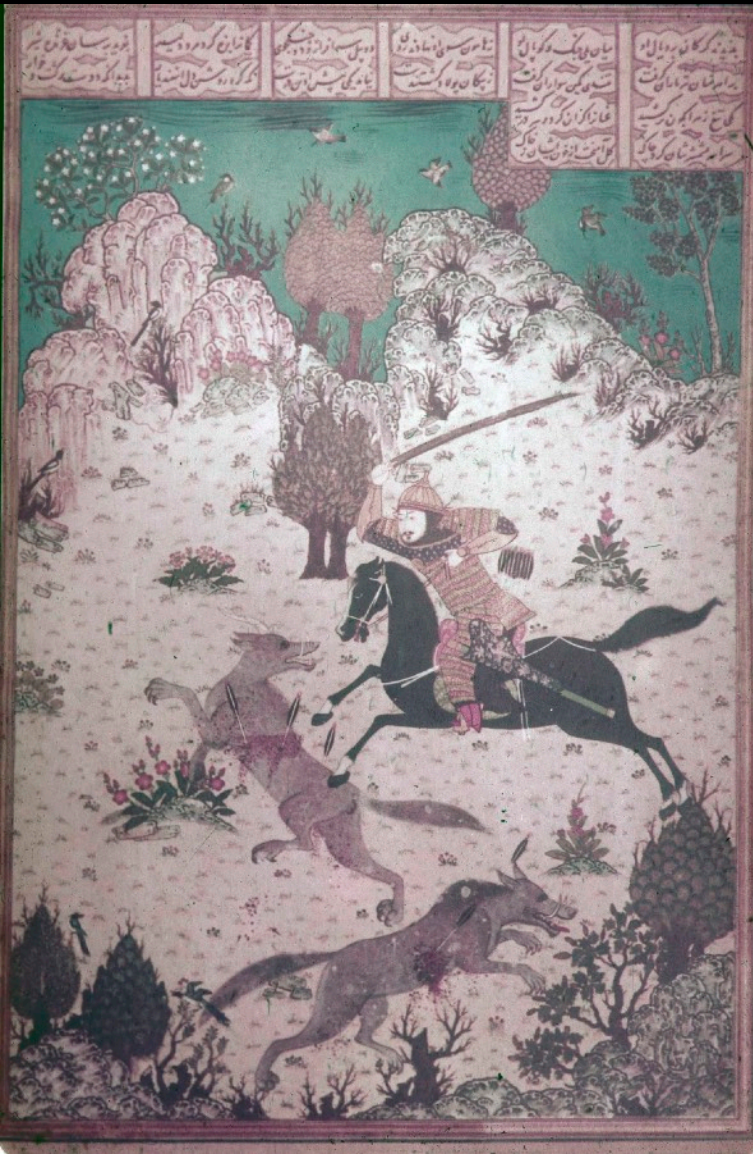


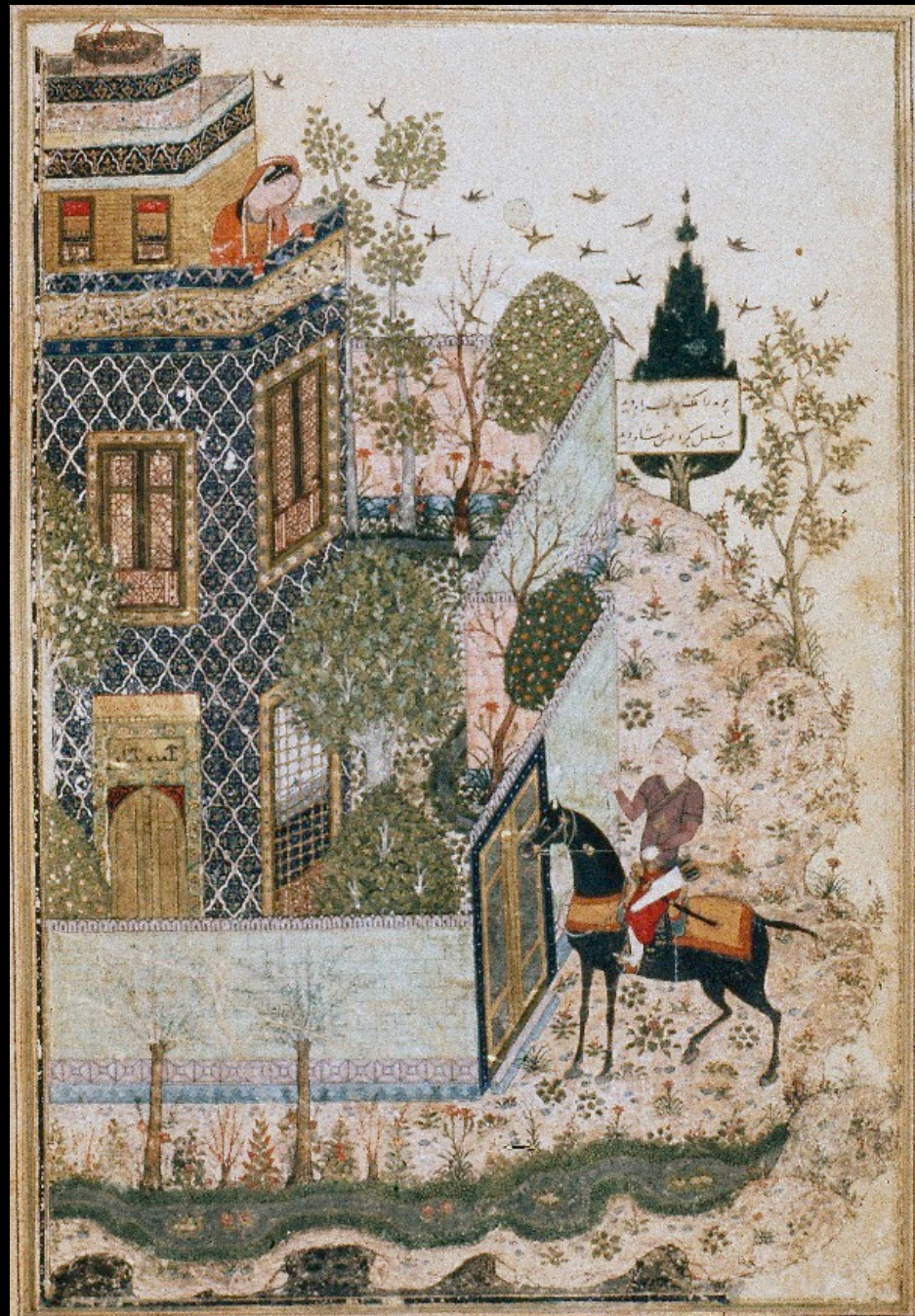


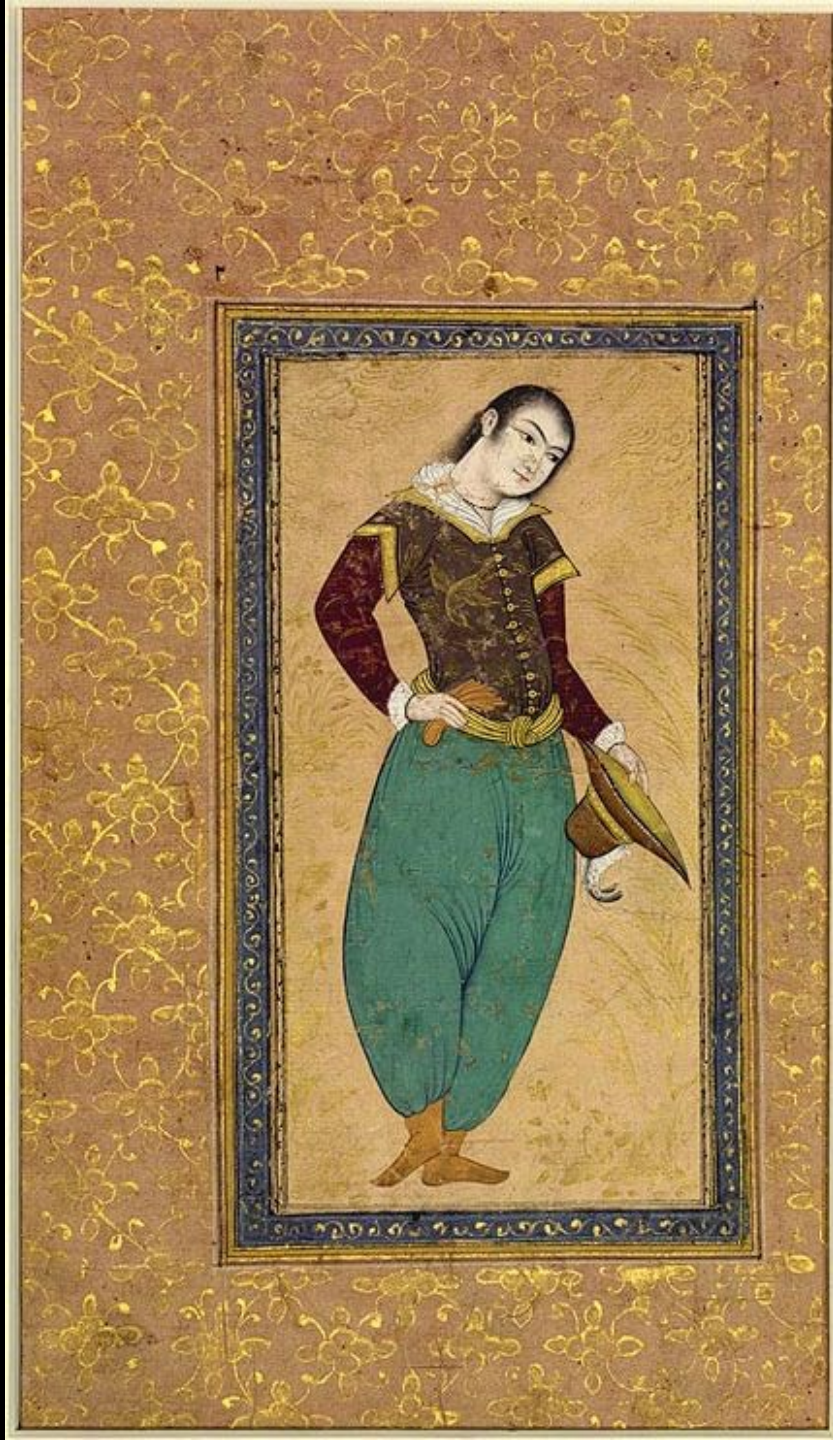


“Originality” in Islamic painting:

“...the greatest painters accepted compositions almost as impersonally as a great singer accepts the notes of a song.” (Eric Schroeder, 1940)









Two kinds of collaboration in Islamic painting practice:

Studio collaboration, between master, journeyman, and apprentice, involving process and technique

Artistic collaboration, made possible by the sequential order in which various parts of paintings were created





Collaborations determined by connoisseurship: the Tahmasp *Shah-nameh*



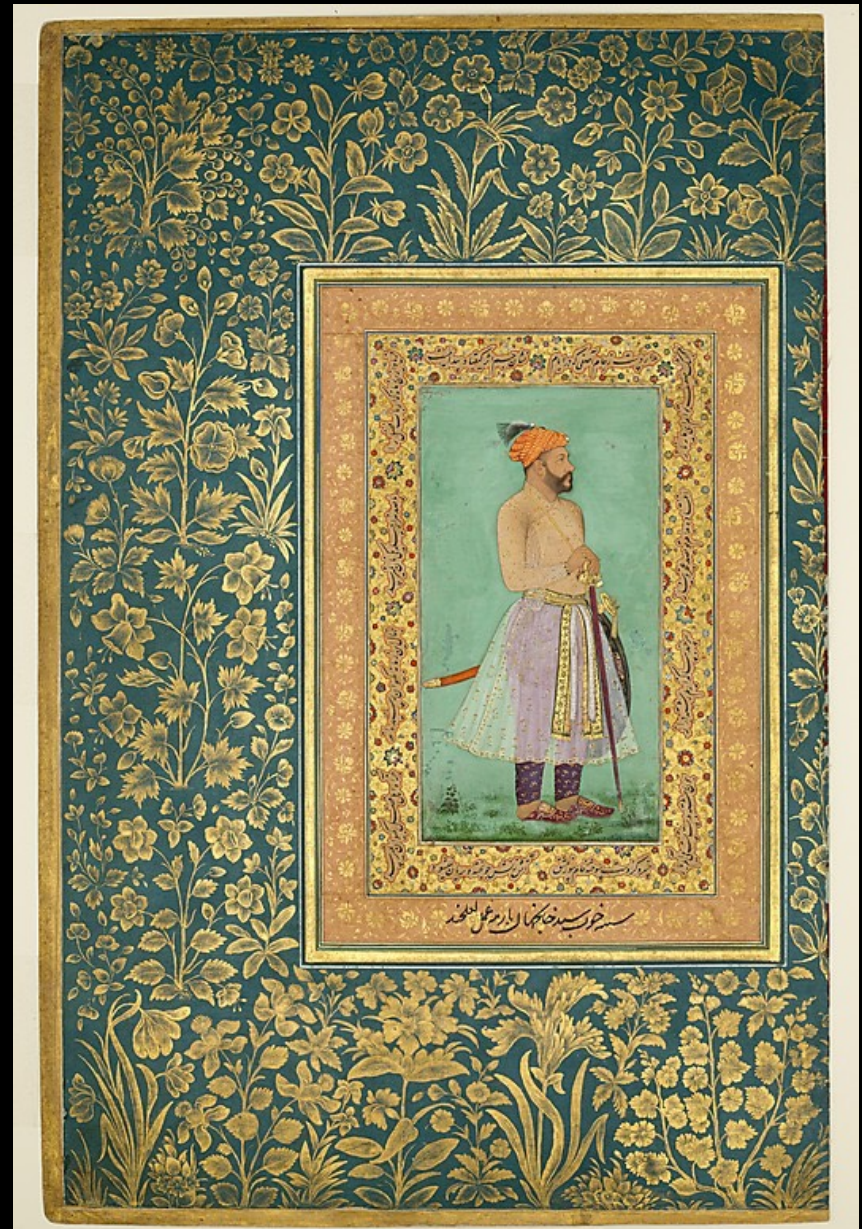
Collaborations determined by inscription: Mughal painting in India





و میرکانشان گفت **شعر** در طالع تو نگام کردم جان **ما** اقطاع تو صد هزار جان خواهد بود **ما** و جمله اتفاق که
و نهایت و مهابت و شوکت باشد و نو کا مشد به **شعر** بلندست این طالع و بخت او **ما** بخورشید

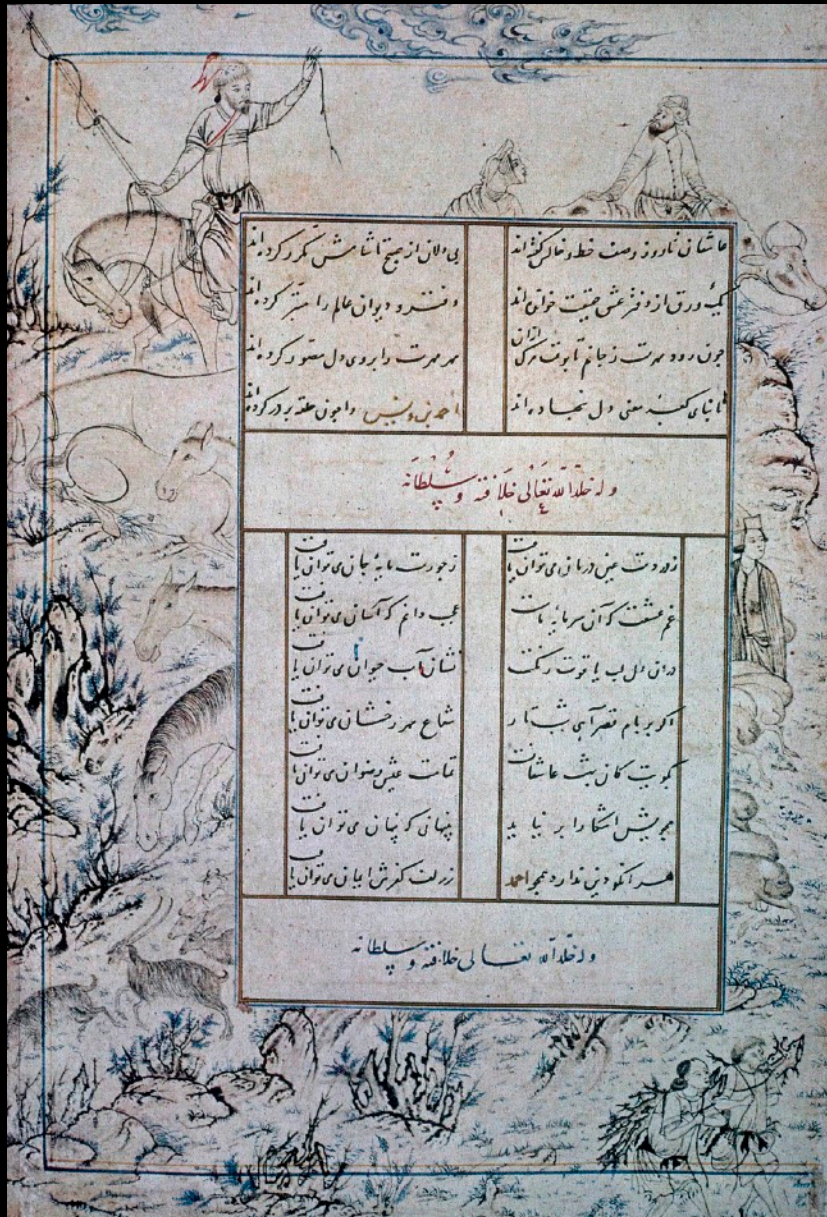
Collaboration among artists in Islamic albums (*muraqqa*)







Some of the greatest examples of Islamic drawing and painting are often “marginal”



Clearing the air about “originality” and “collaboration” in art:
the benefits of a simpler, healthier, and more gratifying way of looking.





Thanks to:

John and Berthe Ford

Meredith Sheehan

Jaclyn O. Leo

Jacqueline Copeland

Aliyah Reich