

***Invitation to submit an Artist's brief : Abrahamic Women – MK Art Project
10 September 2021***

Artist's Brief – Abrahamic Women Milton Keynes

We would like this project to explore similarities in designs and patterns in the traditional artwork (such as illuminated manuscripts) of the three communities of Jewish, Christian and Muslim women in Milton Keynes.

Abrahamic Women of Milton Keynes group (AW-MK) is working with the Arts and Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes on a cultural inclusion and diversity bridging project, to build greater understanding between the MK arts and heritage sector and the diverse communities it serves. This will be one of six projects that will use identity to facilitate creative processes that link communities and cultural organisations to locals in and around Milton Keynes.

Abrahamic Women-Milton Keynes and the Arts and Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes are looking to appoint a professional female artist, with an interest in the three Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). The artist will showcase the group, using belief in one Creator as a starting point.

Working with MK women from the three faiths, the artist will create a high-quality community arts project using **illuminated manuscripts**¹ (such as ancient and modern religious texts) as a starting point.

Illuminated text features in the scriptures and sacred writings in all three Abrahamic faiths. They exist in a variety of styles, ancient and contemporary, colourful and monochrome, large and small. The illuminations decorate words in many languages: Arabic, Hebrew, English and Latin to name a few. In spite of the great variety, they are all beautiful pieces of art and expressions of religious faith.

We would draw attention to three specific elements of work in this area which could be the basis or inspiration for other ideas:

- We have in our group a Turkish artist who specialises in *Tezhip*, the Turkish form of illuminated text. This is a beautiful and intricate art form.
- The religious art of all three faiths makes use of geometric shapes and repeating patterns of shapes and symbols.² Images of humans and

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animals are not used in Islamic art, however patterns from nature such as leaves and flowers are common.

- *Aravrit*³ is a font, designed by an Israeli graphic artist. It is a combination of Arabic and Hebrew.

Building on the group's existing artistic skills (such as painting, drawing, calligraphy, textiles and tehzip) these skills will be used to create part of the final outcome. The artist will envision, devise and deliver an innovative and exciting piece of work that expresses our shared values and draws from the cultural heritage of each faith.

Taking into consideration that a major aim of this project is to build relationships between diverse communities and the arts and heritage sector, **the final creative piece must be accessible to a wide range of audiences.** This will provide a way for people to connect and engage with what is important to members of AW-MK, understanding their passions, interests and how cultural design expresses their day-to-day identities.

The end artistic product can cross over a variety of mediums and art forms that help tell the story, for example: design / spoken word / textiles / digital, etc.

It is our hope that, when the final creative piece has been made, AW-MK will also have some graphic design elements to use as logos and icons for future publicity about the group.

Produced by the Arts and Heritage Alliance MK, the artist will work with the AW MK, the producers and the local arts and heritage sector to find the most suitable space to display / promote the final creative piece.

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TO APPLY:

1. Please provide an Artist brief (two pages OR 10 PowerPoint slides OR a 5 minute video) with your initial ideas of how to take this project forward. The proposal should respond to the information outlined here and the following question: **Using illustrated manuscripts and the repeating patterns in religious art as a starting point, but not limited to such works, how can you use art to represent our shared beliefs?**
2. Include a CV and some samples of your work.
3. Include a breakdown of days and costs
4. Deadline: 5 pm, Friday, October 15th, 2021
5. Email: hello@aha-mk.org and mkmjwomen@gmail.com

We are looking for innovation, potential for teamwork, experience of community engagement, and accessibility. As your previous experience will also be taken into consideration, please include a CV and some samples of your work.

TIMELINE: January 2022 – June/July 2022

PAYMENT:

- £6,000 (inclusive of VAT), plus £500 for expenses
- Materials budget: £2,000

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Notes:

1. Below are examples of illuminated manuscripts from each of the Abrahamic faiths.
2. Below are examples of geometric shapes and repeating patterns in religious art.
3. Here is an example of Aravit.



Illuminated Manuscripts

Illuminated Haggadah (text used by Jews at Passover). The page on the left is from a medieval Haggadah and the one on the right is contemporary.



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Illuminated Christian Bible pages. The page on the left is from a medieval text and the one on the right is contemporary.



Illuminated Qur'an (Muslim text). The page on the left is from the 1800s and the one on the right is a contemporary example of Tehzip, a Turkish style of illumination.



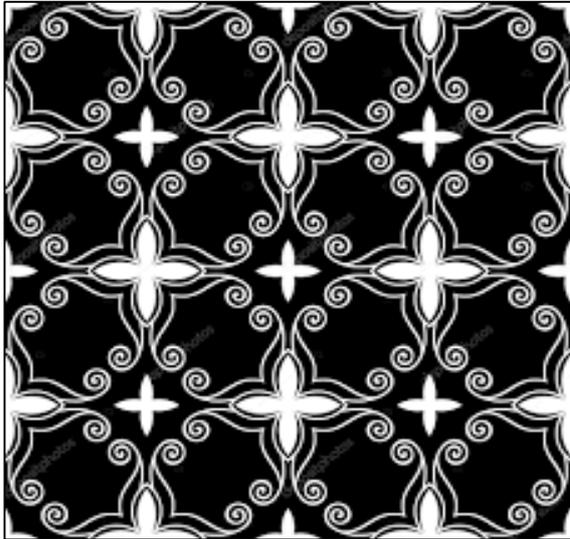
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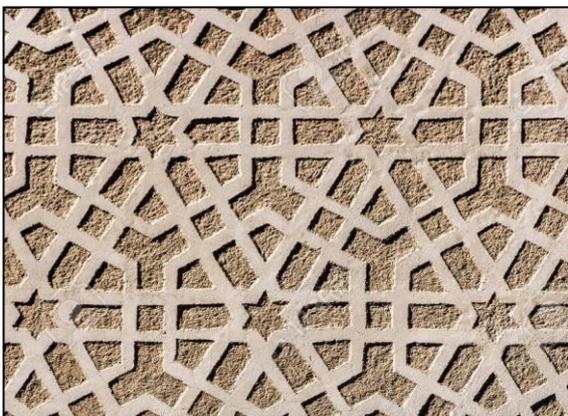
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Geometric and repeating patterns

Left: patterns from a Greek orthodox Church
Right: Celtic Crosses



Left: Traditional patterns on the façade of a historic Jewish quarter in Spain
Right: Example of geometric patterns in a synagogue stained-glass window



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Left: Traditional geometric Islamic patterns

Right: Example of modern Turkish Tehzip using repeating shapes and patterns

