

Object Summary



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Polychrome Cut-Mosaic Tile Panel (Copy of Masjid-i Shah Panel)

1938-1939

Iran (Isfahan)

Pahlavi

Ceramic, polychrome pigments

Overall: 240 x 132 in. (609.6 x 335.3cm)

This monumental tile mosaic panel is prominently positioned in the Central Courtyard of Shangri La. Swirling, leafy tendrils intertwine across dark blue ground while turquoise cartouches radiate from a large, white medallion. These cartouches are inscribed with verses from the Quran (9: 18). On the top center of the panel, a light green square has geometric kufic script reading, *دَاب كَرَابَم* — “may it be blessed” in Persian. Teardrop-shaped cartouches in the top right and left read: “bounty is God’s” (*بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ*) [right] and “might is God’s” (*بِقُوَّةِ اللَّهِ*) [left]. This mosaic tile panel was custom-made in 1938–9 by craftsmen in Iran. The panel was based on a pair of panels that flank the entrance portal of Masjid-i Shah (the Shah’s mosque) in Isfahan, Iran. Masjid-i Shah was constructed in 1612 to around 1630 CE by the Safavid ruler and patron of the arts, Shah

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'Abbas I. The interior and exterior of the mosque is completely covered with mosaic tile, the signature style of Safavid architecture. During the twentieth century, Masjid-i Shah and other important buildings of Isfahan were restored. Creating a tile mosaic is an intricate process. Monochrome-glazed tile slabs are first fired and then cut into small pieces. The pieces are fitted together upside-down, and plaster is poured over them to form a solid, secure backing. The recreated panel is very similar to the original with a few differences; two feet of the lower edge of the panels are missing, and there are slight color variations in the glazes.