

## A Technical Exploration of a 19th Century Qajar Artists' Album

In 1960 the Harvard Art Museums acquired a 19th century anonymous Persian album comprised of sketches, designs, finished drawings, manuscript pages, and miscellany. The album had never been closely studied, despite the fact that it is one of the richest resources of its kind known today from the Qajar period. The 57 folios hold 141 varied works on paper, arranged singly and in groups. Many of drawings were apparently used by artists to make objects in different media, such as lacquered pen boxes. This is evidenced by the fact that a significant number of the drawings bear signs of being used as models such as pricking.

This presentation will focus upon the papers in the album. The author was struck by their diversity and by the fact that most of the papers in this Qajar album are European. These papers provide much needed information about the album. They help group works and they provide information on dating, origins and assembler. A second area of interest for this presentation is the varied methods of transfer represented in the album, such as pricking, pouncing, rubbing and a transfer drawing technique. The album's numerous transfer types lead to explorations in the Materials Lab, a purpose-built hands-on space at the Harvard Art Museums where the students practiced pricking, pouncing and related forms of image transfer to better understand what they were looking at and how the drawings might have been used.

The Qajar album will be shown in two years in an exhibition at the Harvard Art Museums. It was, thus, the subject of a graduate seminar last spring that the author helped teach. The seminar was intensively object-based and examined the album from numerous perspectives. The author led two sessions, one on media and one on paper, and sat in on the rest of the course, weighing in on physical characteristics and material issues as needed. This proposal presentation for AIC will focus on what has been learned through careful study of the papers and the various transfer techniques as well as the critical nature of hands-on practice and teaching with real objects.

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