

SHARED HERITAGE

# What do you want to communicate?

WHAT'S THIS?

This is about communication. Catalogues, wall texts or TAMAM – museums try to make information about their collections accessible to everyone. New knowledge preferably links to something already known. You should critically question your own position on a regular basis and allow room for other perspectives.



- 
-  TOTAL OF 80 MINUTES
  -  THE EXERCISE CONSISTS OF FOUR PARTS
  -  THREE PERSONS OR MORE
  -  MUSEUM, COEXISTENCE, IDENTITY
  -  SPATIAL ALLOCATION, BRAINSTORMING, OBJECT CONSIDERATION
-

# How do you categorise yourself?

## HOW IS IT DONE?

A long strip of masking tape or a long rope is laid out in the centre of the floor to form two areas. All participants get up and walk to the centre of the room. Now the group leader designates both areas of the room with pairs of opposites and invites the participants to each assign themselves to one half of the room or one concept. At the beginning, these conceptual pairs are simple, such as minor/adult, in training/employed or with children/childless. This gradually gets more complex: e.g. sociable/reserved, optimistic/pessimistic or liberal/conservative. Note: The group leader can use controversial conceptual pairs, such as German/not German to stimulate a discussion about these topics. However, it's important to proceed carefully here to avoid recreating prejudices! After each round, when the participants have taken their positions on one of the sides, the group leader asks each one: What do you think about the other side? What's your opinion of these classifications? How do you like being categorised?

## EVALUATION

The entire group comes back together. Everyone in turn can summarise in their own words how they perceived the categorisation and evaluation.



APPROX. 20 MINUTES



THREE PERSONS OR MORE



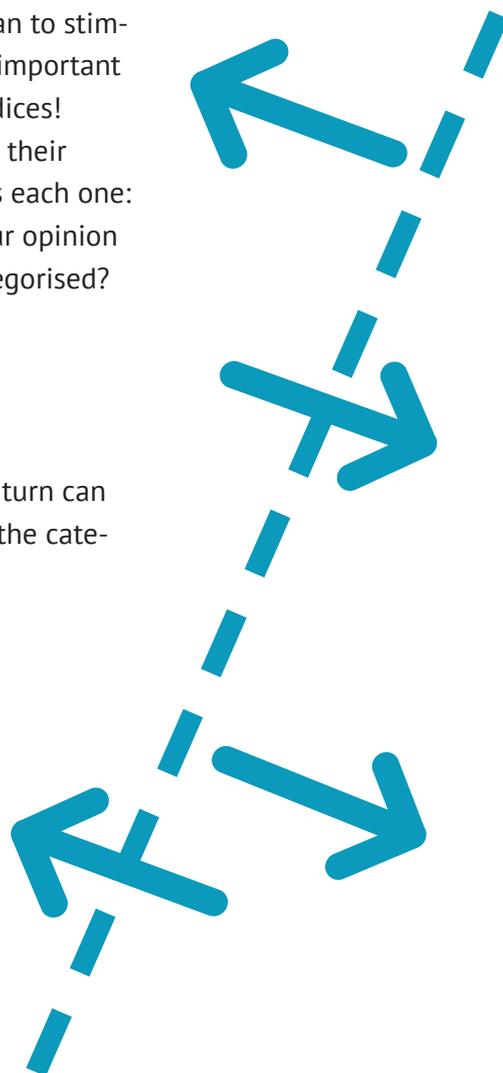
ADHESIVE TAPE OR  
A LONG ROPE

## GOAL

Finding personal access to the topic

Becoming aware that categorisation is human – but must be checked regularly

Recognising the limits of thinking inside boxes



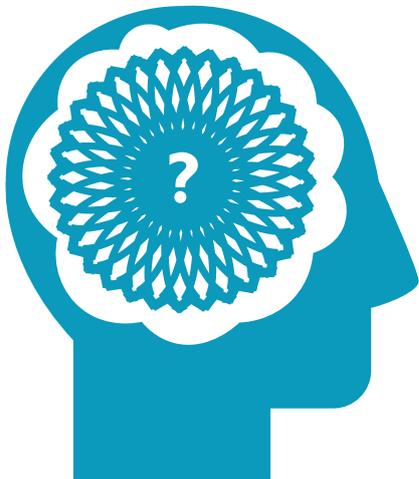
# What is Islamic art?

## WHAT COMES NEXT?

After you have experienced categorising and being categorised as something ordinary, turn towards the categorisation of objects in the museum.

## HOW IS IT DONE?

The group divides into groups of two or three people. Each small group receives action sheet A part 1 and action sheet A part 2. Action sheet A part 3 isn't handed out until later: after about 10 minutes, the group leader asks if everyone has made their decisions. Then everyone gets action sheet A part 3 with texts to compare.



## EVALUATION

After about 10 minutes, all small groups assemble back together in the large group and present their results and substantiations. In their presentations, the groups can refer to the arguments of their predecessors. The group leader moderates. At the end, open questions are written down transparently for everyone.

## GOAL

Discussions about perspectives and the misunderstandings they may cause

Realising that a discussion from different perspectives makes objects interesting



APPROX. 20 MINUTES



THREE PERSONS OR MORE



ACTION SHEET A  
(DISTRIBUTE DIFFERENT PARTS  
IN INTERVALS), PENS

# What does the object communicate?

## WHAT COMES NEXT?

The group divides into new groups of two or three people. Each small group gets action sheet B to work with.

## HOW IS IT DONE?

After about 10 minutes, all small groups assemble back together in the large group and present their results and substantiations. In their presentations, the groups can refer to the arguments of their predecessors. The group leader moderates. After the session is finished, the Damascus Niche info sheet is read out loud and discussed:

- How do you see the object now? What has changed? Does it fit into the collection?
- What do you think of the name of the collection now: Museum of Islamic Art?
- What could be the museum's name instead?
- What do you think about: Museum of art from countries shaped by Islam?

## GOAL

More in-depth questions about categorisations at museums.

Recognising that the historical correlation of museum objects is significant

Understanding what is needed for communication at museums



© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst / Christian Krug



APPROX. 20 MINUTES



THREE PERSONS OR MORE



ACTION SHEET B,  
DAMASCUS NICHE INFO  
SHEET, PAPER, PENS

# What do you want to communicate?

## THIS IS HOW IT COMES TOGETHER

In the course of this exercise, you dealt with categorising, being categorised and communicating in daily life and at the museum. Now everyone gets the chance to relate all three aspects of this exercise to each other again.

### GOAL

Shared reflection on the exercise

Discussion about the relationship between categorising, being categorised and communicating



## HOW IS IT DONE?

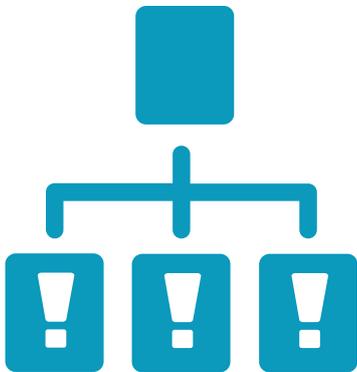


In a few sentences, the group leader summarises what has happened so far: today you thought about

- the possibilities and limits of categorisation in your own lives
- the categorisation of objects
- the categorisation and communication of an object at a museum

In conclusion, discuss some of the following questions:

- What comes before communication?
- What must be considered during the categorisation?
- What happens to people or objects when they are categorised?
- What is important to you in communicating objects?
- What do you think communications should look like at a museum?



APPROX. 20 MINUTES



THREE PERSONS OR MORE



NONE