**Symbolism: Geometry**

**Directions: Read the information below, list some things that you like that could be applied to yourself. If there is a shape that you like that you don’t see here, use it! Find out the meaning for it! Do a little research :)**

“...because of the pervasive historical presence of paganism within tribal arabia, Islam traditionally has taken a strong stand against any hint of its reemergence in islamic religious contexts. Human and animal images are thus not usually found in Islamic religious buildings - a strict reaction against the dangers of idol worship or icon worship, especially in houses of prayer. As an artistic alternative, the complexities of intricate vegetal scrolls (arabesques), geometric designs, and calligraphy as well as the repetitive use of architectural decorations such as archways and muqarnas (architectural detailing that resembles stalactites or honeycombs) create environments of sacred contemplation and union with God, especially within the mosque. The openness of interior spaces within Islamic mosques and even Muslim homes is also functional in nature. It promotes communal worship and social interaction while also eliminating any barrier between the individual and God.”

Source: Finlayson: Behind the Arabesque: Understanding Islamic Art and Architecture Published by BYU ScholarsArchive, 2001 72 BYU Studies, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3502&context=byusq>

The geometric designs in Islamic art are often built on combinations of repeated squares and circles, which may be overlapped and interlaced, as can arabesques (with which they are often combined), to form intricate and complex patterns, including a wide variety of tessellations. These may constitute the entire decoration, may form a framework for floral or calligraphic embellishments, or may retreat into the background around other motifs.

Authors such as Keith Critchlow[a] argue that **Islamic patterns are created to lead the viewer to an understanding of the underlying reality, rather than being mere decoration**, as writers interested only in pattern sometimes imply.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_geometric_patterns>

Arabesque definition: "Foliate ornament, used in the Islamic world, typically using leaves.[2] It usually consists of a single design which can be 'tiled' or seamlessly repeated as many times as desired.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabesque>

Shapes:

* Organic shapes are those that often represent things found in nature. These shapes are more free-flowing and less symmetrical. Organic shapes often represent things such as leaves, rocks, and clouds.
* Squares and rectangles are the default shape for most projects for a reason. This common shape creates a sense of equality and conformity. The familiar shape is seen as stable and trusting. The square further relates to the earth, with each of the four corners relating to the four points on a compass.
* Because a circle does not have a distinct beginning or end, they imply movement (such as a wheel). The shape is thought to have a feminine association and is connected to love, energy and power. Circles also suggest infiniteness and harmony.
* Triangles can have one of two quite opposite meanings. The shape can imply stability, power and energy when the shape rests on a solid base. But it results in feelings of conflict, tension and nervousness when the base is upside down or appears unstable.
* While most people will immediately connect a cross shape to religion, that is not the only meaning. Crosses also symbolize health, hope and balance. A cross shape can appear in the form of a “t” or “x” or combination of intersecting lines and spaces.
* Vertically-oriented crosses are thought of as strong, while horizontal options are more peaceful. The shape is mostly open, but can be connected to other shapes for a more closed feel.

Source: <https://designshack.net/articles/layouts/the-sometimes-hidden-meaning-of-shapes/>