The arabesque is certainly the most popular alternative to naturalistic floral compositions. Formed from a combination of stalks, scrolls, leaves and palmettes that grow from each other and develop in an endless, symmetrical arrangement, the arabesque became universally popular in Islamic art from the 5th / 11th century. The arabesque's adaptability and versatility lends itself to the decoration of artefacts and architectural structures alike, inviting contemplation of the unfathomable interconnections and interdependencies of God.

Name: Qur'an
Dynasty: Hegira 842–57 / AD 1438–53 Mamluk
Details: Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt
Justification: The arabesque is a very popular decorative motif used in the illumination of pages of many precious Qur’ans.

Name: Qur’an stand
Dynasty: Hegira mid-7th century / AD mid-13th century Seljuqs of Rum (Anatolian Seljuq)
Details: Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany
Justification: The arabesque designs and scrolls on this stand echo those found in Qur’anic manuscripts.

Name: Dish
Dynasty: Second half of hegira 9th century / AD 15th century Mamluk
Details: The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom
Justification: Here an astonishingly complex overall design combines arabesque motifs with scrolls and tiny floral details.
Name: Basin

Dynasty: About hegira 676 / AD 1277–8 Ayyubid

Details: Victoria and Albert Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification: On this basin the harmonious, large-scale arabesque frieze counterbalances the monumental quality of the marble.

Name: Decorative panel

Dynasty: Hegira 6th century / AD 12th century, perhaps around AH 550 / AD 1155 Fatimid

Details: Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification: The versatility of arabesque compositions made them perfect for the decoration of Islamic interiors.