# IRAN Handicrafts & Traditional Arts

(Concise Version)

2023

# In the Name of GOD

# IRAN Handicrafts
# &
# Traditional Arts

IRAN Ministry of Cultural Heritage,
Tourism and Handicrafts

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(Concise Version)

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*The book's content is fully translated and edited by Azadeh Nikouei*

# Preface

Handicrafts in Iran include a wide variety of crafts and traditional arts that involve making products while complying with ritual and religious canons, focusing on creativity, taste, and local aesthetics using available raw materials. The production process, individually or in groups, is mainly done by hand, using special tools. Since discovering and listing all the majors is hardly feasible due to existing identical fields, which are called with numerous locally different names, 18 main groups and 299 subdivisions have been identified until 2023 by the Department of Handicrafts and Traditional Arts at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts (MCTH).

*Sanāye'-e Dastī-ye Felezzī*

# Metal Handicrafts

Creating metal objects in Iran has a rich history, which shows its high importance. Raw materials for this leading group are iron, steel, copper, brass, bronze, gold, silver, and other alloys. The main products are sugar nips pliers, scissors, knives, different dishes, 'Alam (processional standard), etc. In the following, the most renowned categories are described.

## Qalam-zanī

Qalam-zani is one of the metalwork decoration techniques in which the desired pattern is chased by using a hammer and various chisels on a metal surface (supported by a thick layer of tar).

## Qofl-sāzī

It refers to the making all types of locks and padlocks by hand, including zoomorphic and cryptic padlocks.

## Zīvarālāt-e Sonnatī

Traditional jewelry includes objects which are designed to be worn or decorate clothes. They have aesthetic values and, in some cases, are used as amulets.

## Malīleh-sāzī

Malileh-sazi is a craft in which gold or silver metal is turned into thin and fine wires, and then the prepared wires are shaped and patterned in a mold using fine pliers and are used to decorate all types of ornaments and objects. The main centers are Zanjan and Esfahan.

## Kūfteh-garī | Talākūbī

It indicates the act of inlaying a metal on another one by hammering, so the hammered metal is inlaid into the base metal and becomes a part of it.

## Chalangarī

Chalangari is the art of blacksmithing mainly portable objects which used to be common among ethnic societies and also gypsies. Yazd, Qazvin and South Khorasan provinces are attributed centers.

## Hakkākī-ye Felez

Metal engraving is the art of etching on a metal surface to form a pattern using chisels and a hammer. The products are swords, trays, different sorts of boxes, and so forth.

## Mesgarī

Mesgari refers to producing copper objects by hammering which is common in Yazd, Isfahen, Zanjan, and Kerman provinces. The products are pots, pans, kettles, and so on.

## Moshabbak-e Felez

Moshabbak means a pierced surface. Piercing metal panel is done by fret saw. The main motifs are inscriptions and interlacing foliages and arabesques.

It should be noted that other majors in the group are zomūd-garī, Afzār-sāzī, zerehbāfī, davāt-garī, kham-kārī-e felezzāt, Varsho-sāzī, Jondeh-kārī, sākht-e ahjām-e fūlādī-e sonnatī, zarīh-sāzī and alāmat-sāzī.

*Mīnākārī*

# Enameling

The history of enameling goes back to ancient eras. During the process of minakari, the base object is coated twice, first with a white enamel glaze to form the background, and then other colors are applied to the base metal. After each phase, the object is fired in the kiln.

## Minā-ye naqāshī

In this type, the object is first coated with white enamel powder at first. Then the design is added using a fine brush and enamel in various colors.

## Minā-ye khāne-bandī

The decoration is formed by adding compartments to the metal object by soldering or affixing silver or gold as wires placed on their edges. Then, the compartments are colored with enamel powder and the object is finally fired in the kiln.

## Minā-ye Sobbī

Mina-ye Sobbi is an enameling on gold and silver in which the ground or the motifs are coated with black vitreous enamel. The main patterns and motifs are derived from the environment and also ritual and religious values of the Sabean community. Ahvaz is the main center for this major.

It should be noted that other majors in the group are Minā-ye morassa´ and Minā-ye moshabbak.

*Kāshī-ye sonnatī, sofāl va serāmīk*

# Traditional tiles, pottery & ceramics

Traditional tiles are thin and square or rectangular objects made of baked clay and decorated by being glazed with different techniques.

Pottery refers to making objects, significantly different types of containers of clay, which need to be hardened by heating to a high temperature.

Ceramics covers a broad spectrum of inorganic non-metal substances, including pottery.

## Kāshī-ye Zarrīnfām

It refers to glazed square or star-shaped tiles with a brown-golden color which is resulting from reduced copper, silver and iron oxides. Today the main centers are Natanz, Mashhad, Kashan, Semnan and Tehran.

## Kāshī-ye Haft-rang

These tiles are also square, and a number of them make a single panel. the word haft-rang means seven colors and indicates the colorful characteristic of the tile. Isfahan and Shiraz are the main centers, in the country.

## Sofāl-e Naqshbarjasteh

It indicates the art of incising patterns and inscriptions into the leather-hard clay body, which can be a flat surface or an object, by using special carving tools. The major is common throughout Iran.

## Sofāl-e Lo'ābdār

Many pottery products are glazed due to being waterproof and more attractive. Lalejin, Meybod, Tabriz, Isfahan, Tehran, Karaj, Semnan and Rasht, are renowned for this product.

## Kāshī-ye Mo'arraq

Mosaic tiles are small pieces of tile that are cut according to the pattern by using a diamond glass cutter, then placed side by side to form a whole.

It should be noted that other majors in the group are sākht-e lo'āb, Naqāshī-ye rūlo'ābī, Naqāshī-ye zīrlolo'ābī, Kāshī-ye Mināeī, Kāshī-ye Mo'aqeli and Tarāsh-e kāshī.