

Seek & Find: Quest for Materials



اللوفر أبو ظبي

LOUVRE ABU DHABI

Hello, Art Explorer!

Are you ready for an adventure at Louvre Abu Dhabi?

Throughout history, people have used various materials to create objects, some taken directly from their natural surroundings.

Let's explore the galleries to find these eco-friendly, accessible, and natural materials used to create artefact and artworks.

Instructions:



Your goal is to find the objects using the visual details and riddles on the front of the card.



Once you've found them, turn the card over to learn about the natural materials the artist used to create these objects.



You can refer to the glossary card if you encounter tricky words during your visit.

Let's go!

Start in the Grand Vestibule

I'm a tiny temple,
As light as air,
Not for living,
But for prayer.

No bricks or stones,
Just a special space,
From Fiji I come,
With island grace.



Flip this card over to find out the answer!

Well done!

You've found the Portable temple from Fiji. It dates from before 1900.

Look closely at the roof of this wooden structure. It's made from special coconut **fibres**, which are considered sacred in Fiji.

People have been using this as a creative material for a long time. Notice how each fibre has been twisted and carefully woven to create this model temple. The fibres of the coconut shell are an excellent alternative to wood. Fijian people would make structures like these while telling stories about their ancestors.

Head to Chapter 1: The First Villages

In the chapter where
The first villages arise,
A unique treasure
Awaits your eyes.

Look for a statue,
Old and grand,
It has two heads
But no hands.

Flip this card over to find out the answer!



Well done!

You've found the Monumental statue with two heads.

Take a closer look at this 8,500-year-old **statue**. It was found at Ain Ghazal, an ancient archaeological site near modern-day Amman, Jordan. This statue was created using lime **plaster**, a natural material made by mixing lime, water, and sand.

The people of early civilisations, such as the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians, used lime plaster for construction and decorative purposes.

Explore Chapter 2: The First Great Powers

Here, where great powers arise,
A string of beads,
A historical prize.
A necklace found
South of the land.
Umm an-Nar culture,
Ancient and grand.



Flip this card over to find out the answer!

Well done!

You've found the Beaded necklaces.

Dating from around 5,000 years ago, these beaded necklaces were discovered in a tomb at Al Muwaihat archaeological site in the emirate of Ajman.

Before modern technology, people made jewellery by hand, using natural materials. In this case, the beads were crafted from chalk, a soft rock formed from tiny, fossilised seashells.

Move on to Chapter 3: Civilisations and Empires

I'm a mythical creature,
From times of old.
Body of a lion,
Wings that unfold.
Head of a human,
A mystery to behold,
In Greece or Italy
My story is told.



Flip this card over to find out the answer!

Well done!

You've found the Sphinx,
a mythological creature.

The Sphinx isn't any ordinary figure, as it is the original keeper of riddles. This statue was carved over 2,500 years ago from **limestone**, a type of rock made from shells and coral.

Limestone was a great choice for sculptures because it was easy to shape but strong enough to last thousands of years.

Let's go to Chapter 4: Universal Religions

Adorned with the beauty
Of Islamic art,
Arabic calligraphy,
A visual heart.

Vegetal motifs,
Nature's touch in stone,
A frieze that speaks in
A harmonious tone.

Once part of a structure so tall,
I now stand upright on a wall.



Flip this card over to find out the answer!

Well done!

You've found the Architectural frieze carved with Quranic verses.

Examine this sandstone **frieze** from northern India, which was originally a decorative component of a building. Arabic **calligraphy** and vegetal motifs – which frequently adorn Islamic art, artefacts, and architecture – are carved onto this panel.

Sandstone is a natural material made from tiny grains of sand that are compressed together with other minerals over time. We can thank Mother Nature for reusing and recycling materials to form something new that humans can use.

Carry on to Chapter 5: Silk Roads

Who am I – a treasure so old?
In my octagonal shape of eightfold,
Not just any box, but a special kind.
Within me, precious materials
You'll find.

Flip this card over to find out the answer!



Well done!

You've found the Octagonal box from the Tang Dynasty, China.

This Octagonal box is a historical artefact and around 1,300 years old. It is decorated with luxurious materials such as tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, and amber.

The materials came from different sources. For example, tortoiseshell comes from the shell of sea turtles, mother-of-pearl comes from the inside of a seashell, and golden amber comes from tree resin.

Head to Chapter 7: First Globalisation

Crafted in Florence,
By a master's hand,
A tabletop shines,
Both bright and grand.
Marble and stones,
All placed with care,
A Renaissance treasure
Beyond compare.



Flip this card over to find out the answer!

Well done!

You've found the Tabletop known as "Tavolino di Gioie" which translates to "Table of Joy".

The Medici family, rulers of Florence, loved collecting beautiful stones. They used them to create objects, like this special tabletop made around 1568.

It is composed of marble encrusted with semi-precious stones, such as lapis lazuli (a deep-blue stone), amethyst (a purple quartz), and carnelian (a reddish stone).

Each stone was sourced from various regions including Middle East, North Africa, and the Mediterranean. They each have unique properties, requiring different techniques for cutting and polishing.

Now on to Chapter 10: Multiple Modernities

I'm a wooden mask,
Crafted with care,
Often by a shaman's hand,
With feathers to wear.
Ancient and bold,
With tales of old,
In Yup'ik art,
my story is told.



Flip this card over to find out the answer!

Well done!

You've found the Shamanic ritual mask created by the Yup'ik people of Alaska between 1890 and 1910.

Did you notice animal features? What could they be? The mask represents a walrus with huge tusks topped with a carved fish to resemble a face.

This mask offers a glimpse into the rich traditions of the Yup'ik people. Crafted from wood, it incorporates natural **pigments**, plant fibres, and feathers, showcasing the people's connection to Mother Nature and the Yup'ik cultural and spiritual beliefs.

Exit the main galleries Head under the Dome

At your adventure's last stop,
A vase you'll see
A symbol of Earth's beauty,
Where art and nature agree.
Crafted from clay around the world
and the UAE,
It blends global wonders
In harmony.



Flip this card over to find out the answer!

Well done!

You've found the Earth of the World vase.

This tall vase, which sits on a bisque porcelain sculpture in the shape of a handful of clay, is unique because it explores themes of growth and nature. It is made from various-coloured clays, including terracotta, which has been used for thousands of years due to its durability.

These clays were sourced from different parts of the world, including the UAE, showcasing a global connection through its materials.

The artist Giuseppe Penone is known for his work that connects nature and art. Here he uses the vase as a symbol of growth and renewal.

Congratulations, Art Explorer!

You've journeyed through time and explored the natural materials and artworks from around the world at Louvre Abu Dhabi.

Activity

Be inspired!

Create your own artwork using natural materials from your surroundings.

Glossary

Calligraphy: The art of creating beautiful, decorative writing.

Fibres: Long, thin, thread-like structures that can be spun or bound together to make a stronger material.

Fossil shells: The remains of shells from sea creatures that lived a very long time ago.

Frieze: A decorative band (which might tell a story) found in a room, a whole building, or even a smaller object, such as a vase.

Limestone: A rock made mostly from the bones and shells of sea creatures that have turned into stone over millions of years. This type of stone is often used in building construction and for statues.

Pigment: A way of adding colour, usually made from natural materials such as insects or plants.

Plaster: Commonly used in ancient sculptures, this is a versatile material formed from gypsum, lime, or cement, which hardens when dried.

Statue: A large sculpture, usually made to commemorate an important person or event.



Grand Vestibule

Portable temple

Oceania, Fiji

Before 1900

Wood, woven coconut fibres

Louvre Abu Dhabi

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Photo – Thierry Ollivier



Chapter 1

Monumental statue with two heads

Jordan, Ain Ghazal

About 6500 BCE

Plaster, bitumen (eyes)

Department of Antiquities of Jordan

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Photo Jonathan Gibbons



Chapter 2

Beaded necklaces

Umm an-Nar Culture

United Arab Emirates, Ajman, Al Muweihat

3000 BCE

Chalk

Ajman National Museum

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Photo Sylvie Van Roey



Chapter 3

Sphinx, mythological creature

Greek civilisation

Greece or Italy

Ca. 600–500 BCE

Limestone

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Photo – Thierry Ollivier



Chapter 4

Architectural frieze carved with Quranic verses

Ghurid empire, Northern India, Rajasthan (?)

About 1200

Sandstone

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Photo – Thierry Ollivier



Chapter 5

Octagonal Box

China

700–800

Wood, tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, amber

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Photo – Thierry Ollivier



Chapter 7

Table top known as Tavolino di Gioie

Italy, Florence

Bernardino di Porfirio da Leccio (active 1557-1588)

after a drawing by Giorgio Vasari Marble encrusted
with semi-precious stones

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Photo - Musthafa Aboobacker – Seeing Things



Chapter 10

Shamanic ritual mask

Yup'ik culture, Alaska

Ca. 1890–1910

Wood, natural pigments, plant fibres, feathers

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Photo – Thierry Ollivier



Under the Dome

Earth of the World - Vase

Giuseppe Penone

France

2016 Terracotta

Louvre Abu Dhabi

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Photo – Greg Garay