

Zillij tile: The Moroccan mosaic tile

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April 26, 2008 - [PRLog](#) -- The art of Zellige flourished at the Hispano-Moresque period (Azulejo). It then appeared in Morocco in the 10th century using nuances of white and brown colours.

Moroccan clay tile

The art remained very limited in use until the Merinid dynasty who gave it more importance around the 14th century. Blue, red, green and yellow colours were introduced in the 17th century. The old enamels with the natural colours were used until the beginning of the 20th century and the colors had probably not evolved much since the period of Merinids. The cities of Fes and Meknes remain the centers of this art.

Zillij mosaic tile also known as Zellidj, Zillij, Zellij, zellige is an important element Moorish and Moroccan architecture and decorating. The word tile is derived from the French word tuile, which is, in turn, derived from the Latin word tegula, meaning a roof tile composed of baked clay. The process of production begins by mixing clay and water and kneading them by hands and feet until they reach a high level of flexibility and homogeneity. Then, the mixture is cut into squares of 1 cm thickness each. The squares get dried up under the sun before they are put in a special oven for their first phase baking. The tiles are placed in different levels according to the degree of temperature required to attain a particular color. The white tile is often placed in the bottom followed by the blue, yellow, and the green on the top. The second phase starts when we remove the tiles from the oven and separate them by their colors; once we are done with this process, we start drawing the patterns of the intended design directly on tiles; this is done by 'rasham' followed by the cutting process which is performed by 'naqqash' who carefully separate the drawn pattern by a sharpened hammer. Last but not least, 'khallas' or finisher finishes the work by cutting the tiles' edges assuring that they meet all requirements for production. With the help of our design team, the zillij master draws the design layout on the ground and places each furnah or piece of tile in its exact place in the overall pattern. Interestingly enough, the placement of tiles is done upside down, which makes it even more difficult to absorb.

Zillij usually used to cover walls, floors and columns of kitchens, bathrooms, fireplace, patio, courtyard, fountain, living and dining rooms and many other spaces. These spaces do not only include residences, but also restaurants, hotels, resorts, spas, swimming pool, theatres, golf country clubs, and many other commercial projects. Zillij tiles takes different motifs (geometric, floral and chiseled) in a organic and traditionally glazed colors. Each motif and color remains a symbol and has a special significance in the iconography of the Islamic/Moorish art. Zillij mosaic tiles goes well with either traditional mediteranean style or even modern contemporary style depending on the combination of colors and pattern that can be made in endless possibilities.

Apart from the floors and walls, zillij can be used to produce beautiful tables and fountains with a wide variety of motifs and colors. The fountains can either be central or part of a wall. It is usually placed on the wall opposite the main entrance, immediately facing the visitor, as the focus of the zillij decoration. The fountain is a very important element of the Moorish house because water is an epitome of life in the ancient Moorish culture for so many centuries in Al Hambra, Spain. In hot weather, the water from courtyard pools and fountains cools down the surroundings and the running water works as relaxing and appealing visual elements. Water does not only reflect architecture and multiply decorative themes, but it can also serve as a means of emphasizing the visual axes.

Benefits of Zillij (Tiles)

Creative benefits

- * Feature historic, cultural, artistic, and architectural themes.
- * Create unique atmosphere by combining various designs, colors, shapes, and textures.

Economic and Technical benefits

- * Structurally, tile is one of the strongest mechanical finishes, interior and exterior.
- * It is fire-resistant and it does not burn at any temperature or produce toxic fumes.
- * Its colors are permanent, unaffected by UV rays or fading from sun exposure.
- * It is non-conductive and it will not produce an electric shock. It is ideal in sensitive computer installations in corporate settings or home offices.
- * It offers high insulation values; it acts as natural cooling element in the summer and retains ambient heat in cold weather.
- * Organic and natural color pigments
- * Zillij tiles are green and environmental friendly

Environmental & Health benefits

- * Slip resistance for improved safety on interior and exterior surfaces.
- * It is made from a 100% plentiful and natural raw material that, when removed from a site, is not harmful to the landfills.
- * It reduces allergies and improves indoor air quality

Saint Tropez Boutique one of the largest manufacturer of fine zillij mosaic tiles and Moroccan tiles in Morocco, just launched a new line of zillij tiles that is pre-assembled and front mounted zillij mosaic tiles into 12" x 12" sheets or 12" x 6" zillij borders using adhesive glue that holds the mosaic tiles well and allow anyone to install the zillij tiles without the need to any special experience or skills. The Pre-assembled zillij tiles by Saint Tropez Boutique are DIY and are very easy to install same way if you are installing marble or glass mosaics by using ceramic tiles thin-set and grout. eventhough the zillij tiles comes pre-assembled, they are still handmade, hand-cut, hand-mounted. The art of mosaic in Morocco, called "Zillij," dates back many centuries. Handmade, hand-glazed and hand-cut terra cotta tile and mosaics are crafted using traditional and regional clays and glaze pigments. Zillij tile is timeless and works beautifully in traditional and contemporary interiors.

For more information on Zillij tiles and Moroccan mosaic tiles feel free to contact:

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Website: www.sainttropezboutique.us

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