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Defining Islamic Art: Practices and Digital Reconfigurations

Museums in the United States often serve as spaces for narratives of subject communities to be displayed. Yet, they are not immune to changing ideas of representation. This paper looks at two physical case studies of presenting Islamicate art, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Children's Museum of Manhattan, both located in New York City. It then turns to ArchNet, as a space where the boundaries of Islamic art are debated, and are dynamically organized through digital light tables. The paper ends with a discussion of how the Bukhary wing of the British Museum offers a third way of organizing Islamicate art in a different way than the New York museums do, and which represent more of the dynamic ethos of ArchNet.