

Okimono: Entwined Sambiki Saru (Wise Monkeys)

Japan, mid 19th c.

Monkeys are a popular subject for artists in Japan. These three represent the classic advice “See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.” *Okimono*s are small decorative carvings that derive from the older Japanese tradition of *netsuke*, small ornaments from which tools hang on the sash of a kimono.



Barong Ket

Bali, Indonesia, 20th c.

In Balinese Hinduism, this lion-like creature possesses incredible magical powers. It is a protective figure, helping maintain cosmological balance, and features in performances at temple festivals.



Wooden Movable Type

China, 20th c.

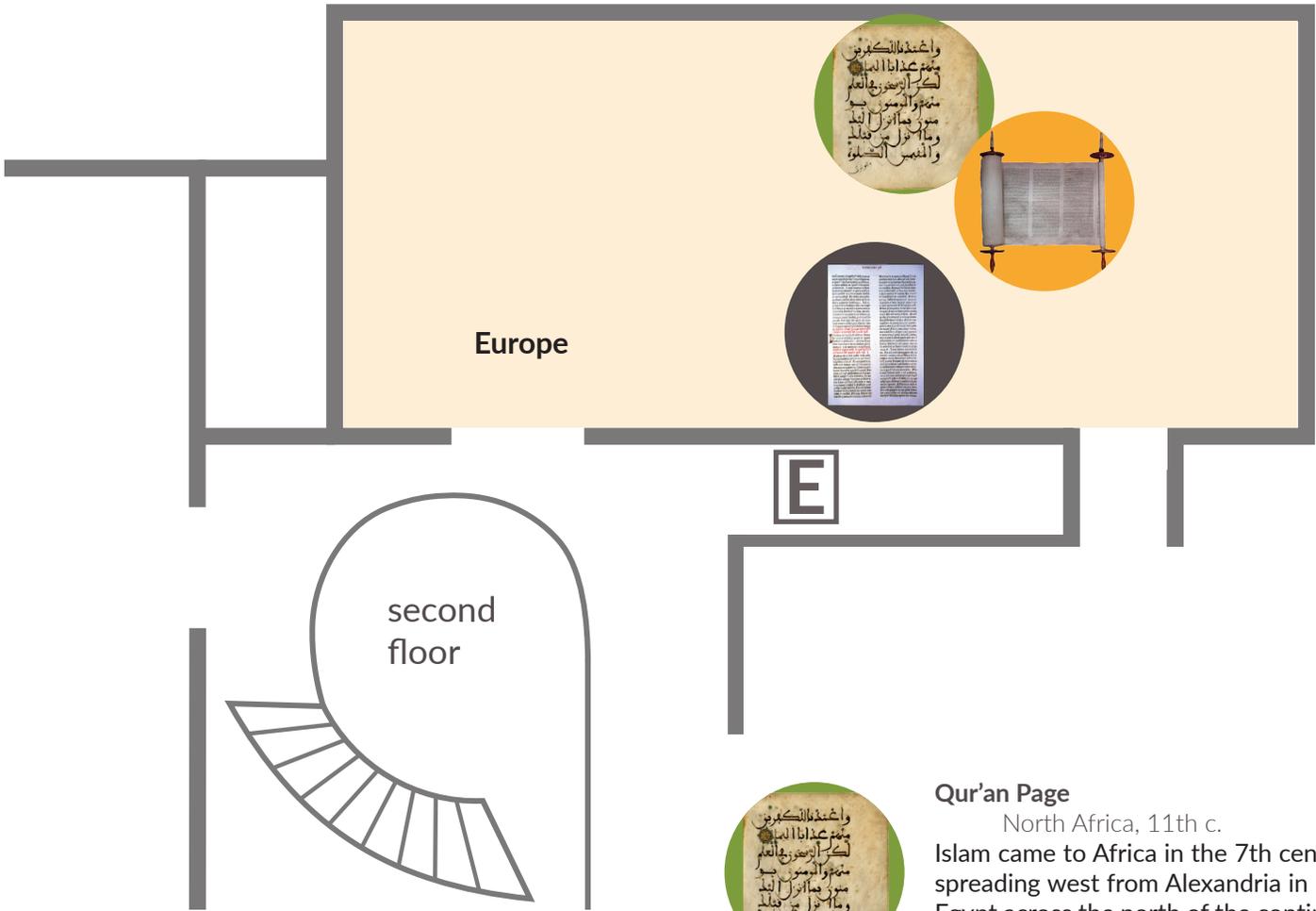
Movable type printing was invented in China in the 11th century (long before Europe) and included separate pieces for each of the thousands of characters used in the written language.



Iatmul Dancing or Ancestor Mask

Papua New Guinea, ca. 1970

In Oceania and Southeast Asia, ancestors play an important part in everyday and spiritual life. Masks and shields have been used with music and dance to celebrate the connections of living peoples with their ancestors and cultural heroes.



Europe

second floor

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Gutenberg Bible Leaf

Germany, ca. 1455

When moveable type appeared in Europe, a flood of publications followed the political and religious controversies of the era. This printing of the Bible was the first book published in Europe using the new technology. Some 180 copies were printed, of which 23 complete copies survive. The appearance of this book inaugurated the revolution of mass publication.



Torah Scroll

Italy, 16th c.

Like many artifacts in the Museum, this piece documents the movement and mixing of cultures. It is written in a script used by Jews in Spain and probably belonged to a congregation expelled from that country in 1492, when the monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella forced all Jews to convert or leave. Many Spanish Jews resettled in the Netherlands or in Italy.



Qur'an Page

North Africa, 11th c.

Islam came to Africa in the 7th century, spreading west from Alexandria in Egypt across the north of the continent, then in the next century down the east coast along historical multicultural trade routes. Very early in its history, this new religion was also carried far to the west in Spain and east to the Indus River valley. Within a century of its founding, Islam was flourishing on three continents.