



## Fired up by Form: Tiles

Typically made to cover roofs, floors, walls or furniture, tiles can range from simple squares to complex mosaics. Ceramic roofing tiles were used at least 3000 years ago in Greece, and overlapping tiles have since been used in most cultures to keep out and channel rain. Tiling a floor or wall creates a more easily cleanable, and sometimes more decorative, surface.

Floor tiles must be flat, strong and thick, and to have a surface which wears attractively. Wall tiles can be lighter and more delicate. They lend themselves to patterns in two dimensions, some of which can extend to create an all-over wall design. Tile collectors often set old tiles in fireplace surrounds, or use them as trivets or as accents in larger surfaces. Tiles are a relatively modest ceramic form to collect, and they exhibit a dazzling variety of ceramic techniques.

Tin-glazed fritware tile panel (detail)  
Al-Adliyya Mosque, Aleppo, Syria  
probably Iznik, about 1565  
Photo: Nicholas Johnson, 2010