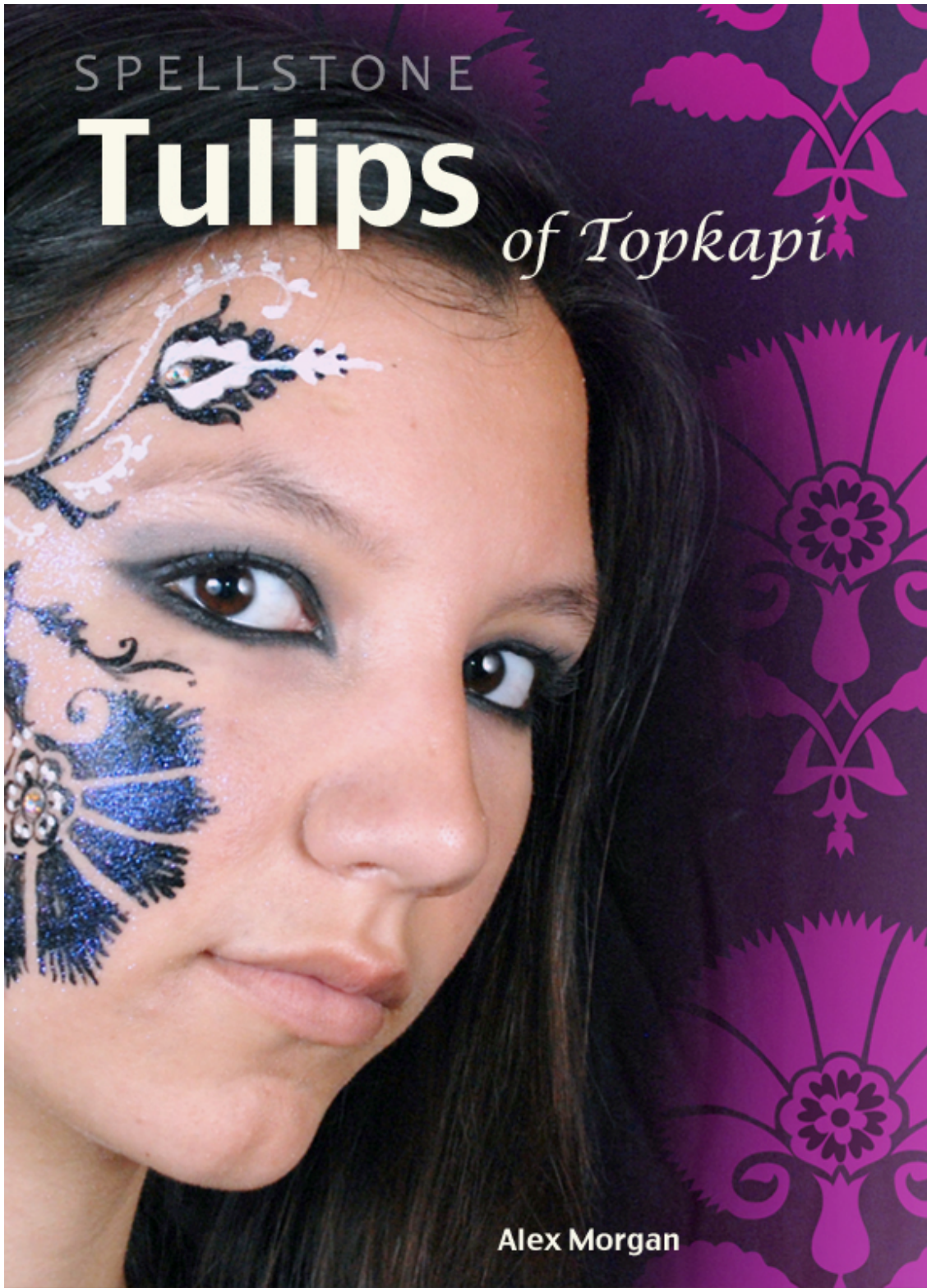


SPELLSTONE

Tulips

of Topkapi



Alex Morgan

Alexandra Linda Morgan

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Spellstone Tulips of Topkapi
Patterns from the Ottoman Empire

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **Tulips of Topkapi**, these designs are based on the art and ornament of the Ottoman Empire. Topkapi is the palace of the Sultan in Istanbul, the primary seat of power for the Ottoman Empire.

The Art of the Ottoman Empire is typified by discord and exuberance. It is a world inhabited by strange flowers and plants. Tulips and carnations grow together from the same stem; they clamber upwards supported on massive trunks or gossamer thin stalks that could not possibly bear the weight of such abundant blooms. This book reflects the Ottoman obsession with flowers.

TULIPS

This book is named for the tulips in the gardens of Topkapi. Their abundant appearance in Ottoman art is reflected in the book. The tulip is a wild flower that grows throughout Asia.

The Ottoman nobility had a long romance with the tulip, from the reign of Suleyman to the peak of its popularity in the reign of Sultan Ahmed III. Ahmed III presided over the Tulip Age (1703 – 1730) and he filled the Topkapi gardens with row upon row of them. In April each year the Sultan hosted a tulip festival, lasting two nights and timed to coincide with the full moon. For this festival Ahmed illuminated the gardens with candles on the backs of tortoises, mobile lanterns that would wander in and out of the tulips. The second night of the tulip festival was reserved for the women of the harem, and is said to have culminated in a treasure hunt for jewels hidden among the flowers [see pattern page 19, 20].

Throughout this book I have used gold and jewels to reflect the opulence of life at Topkapi. The use of gold also reflects the silk and gold threads of embroidered textiles.



Tortoise carrying a candle

I have included a few fragments of translated verse in this book both as inspiration for patterns and as part of the artwork itself. Poetry was an influential Ottoman art form, in which both men and women participated. A female Ottoman poet, Mihri Hatun [page 30], achieved high recognition. The other featured poet is Lamii [page 29]. He is usually named one of the greatest Turkish poets, the text comes from a poem called Autumn.













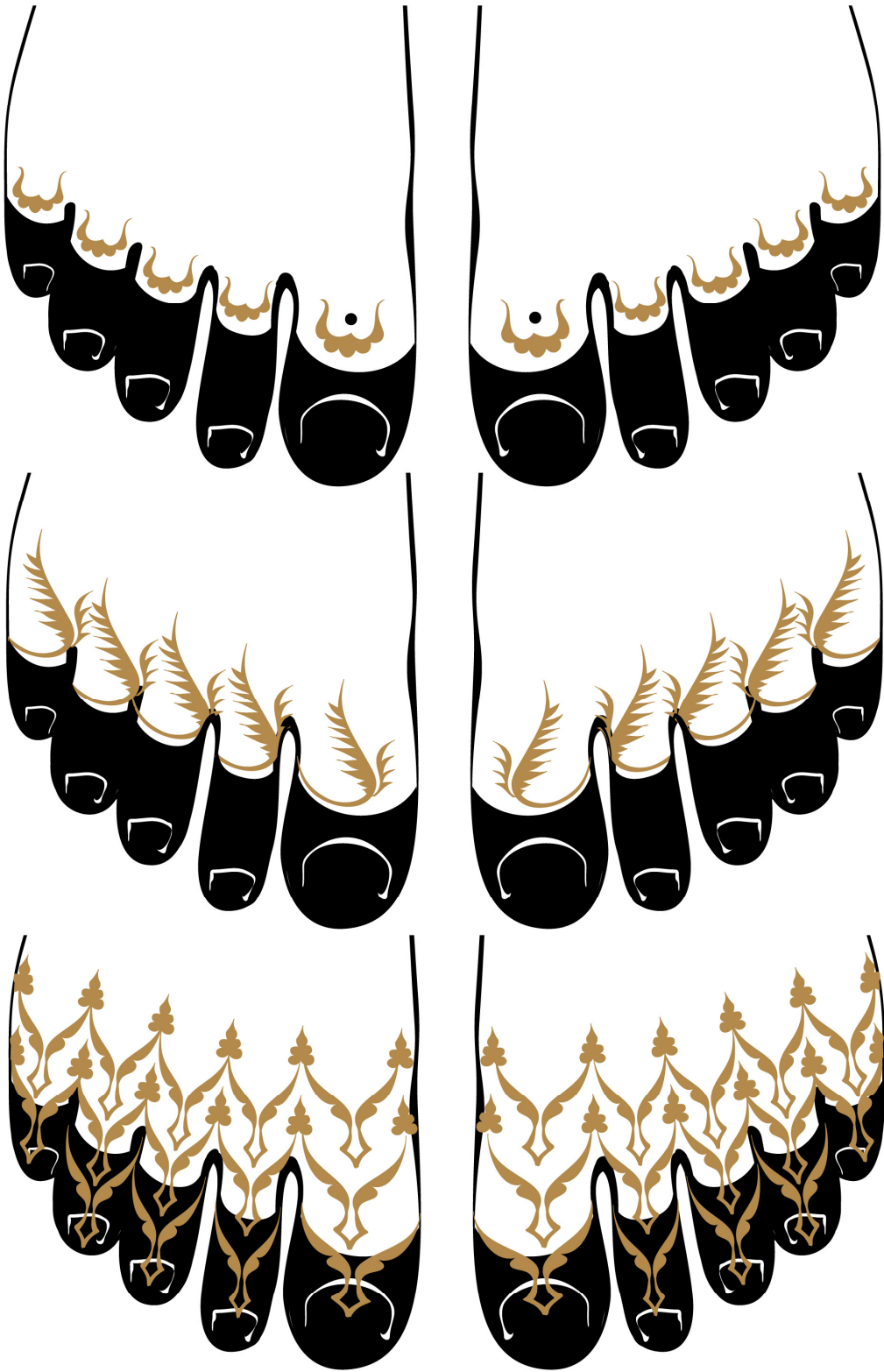




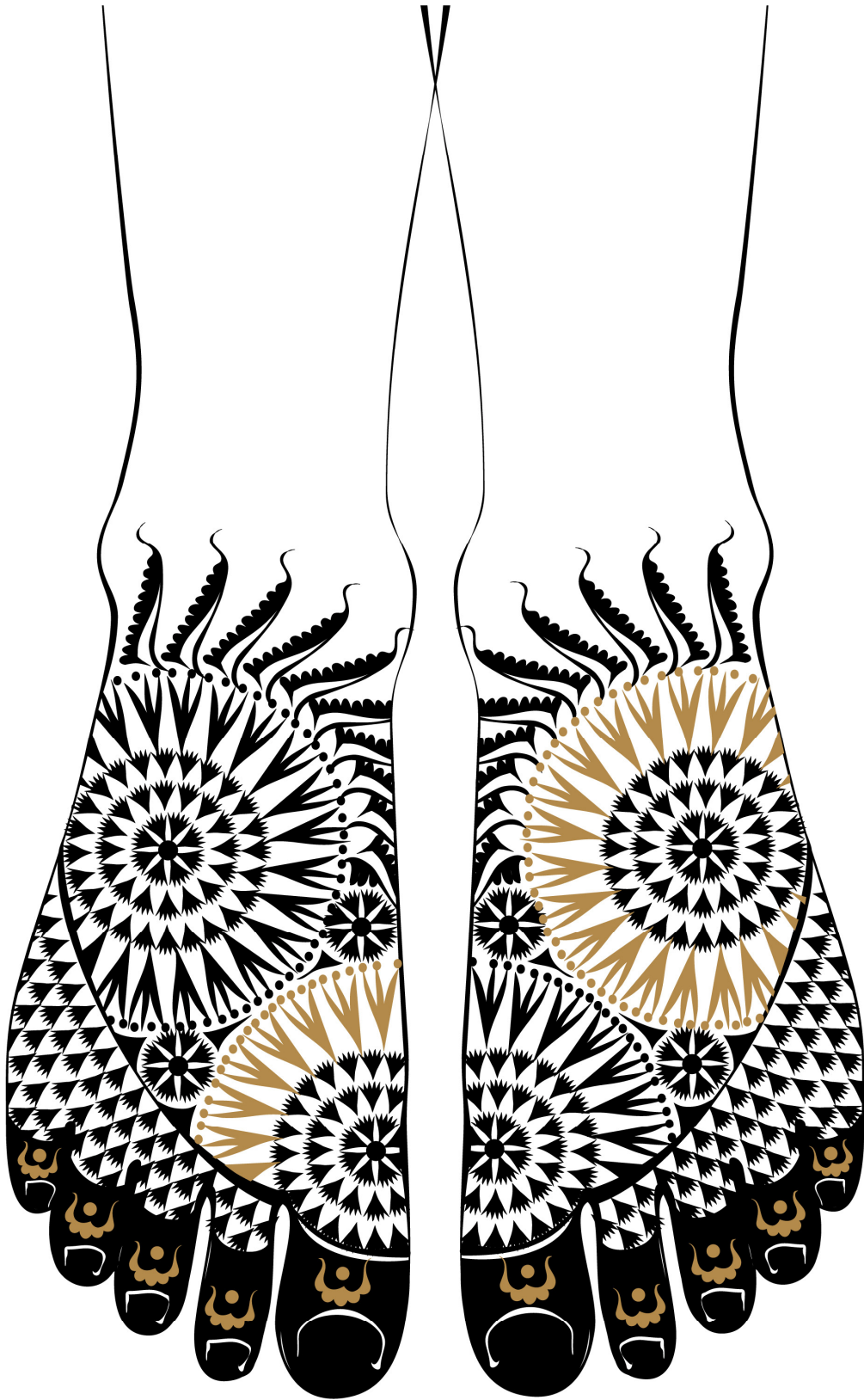






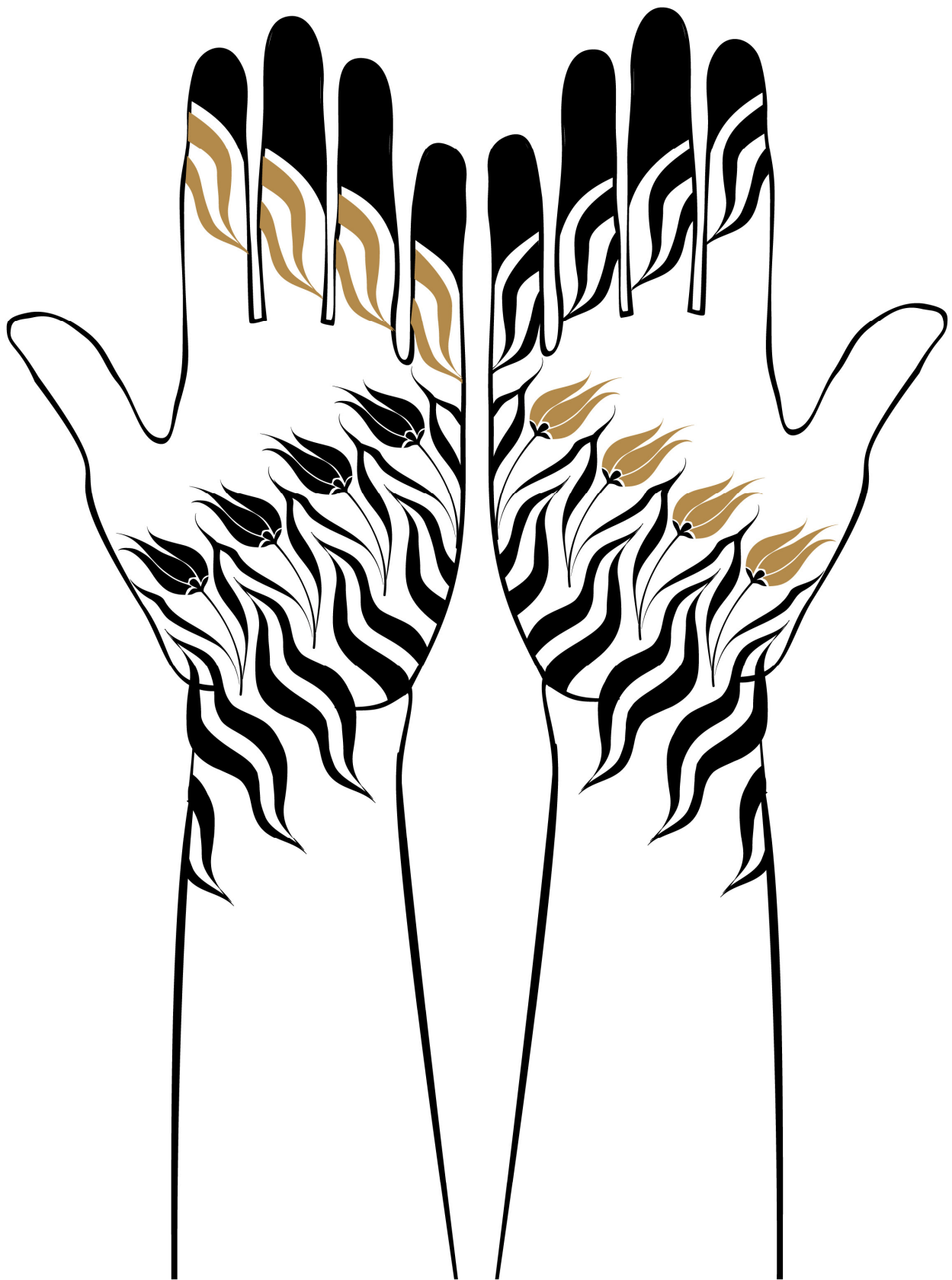










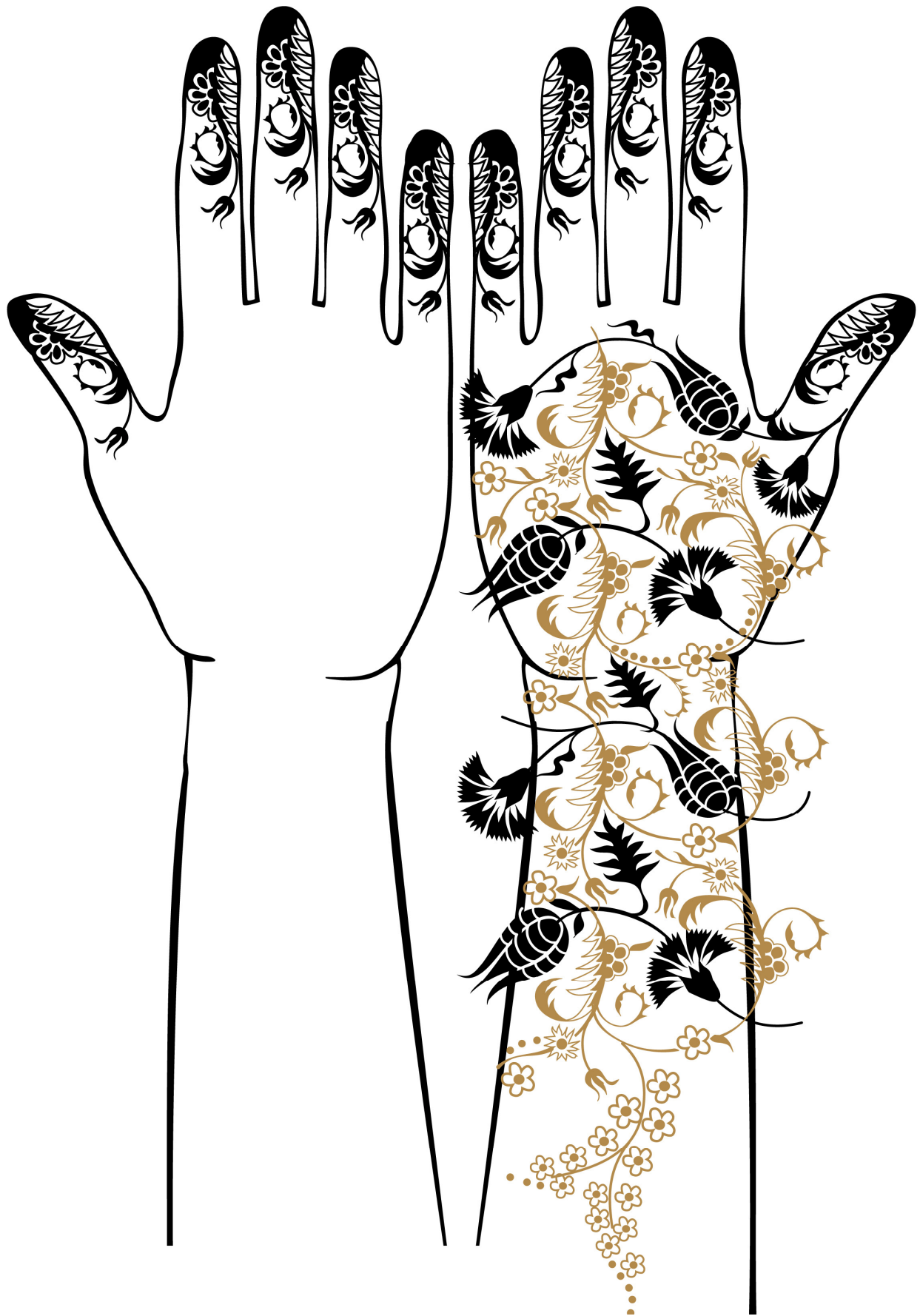


















*Each vine-leaf
paints its face, bride-like,
with gold ink ~*

Lami'i







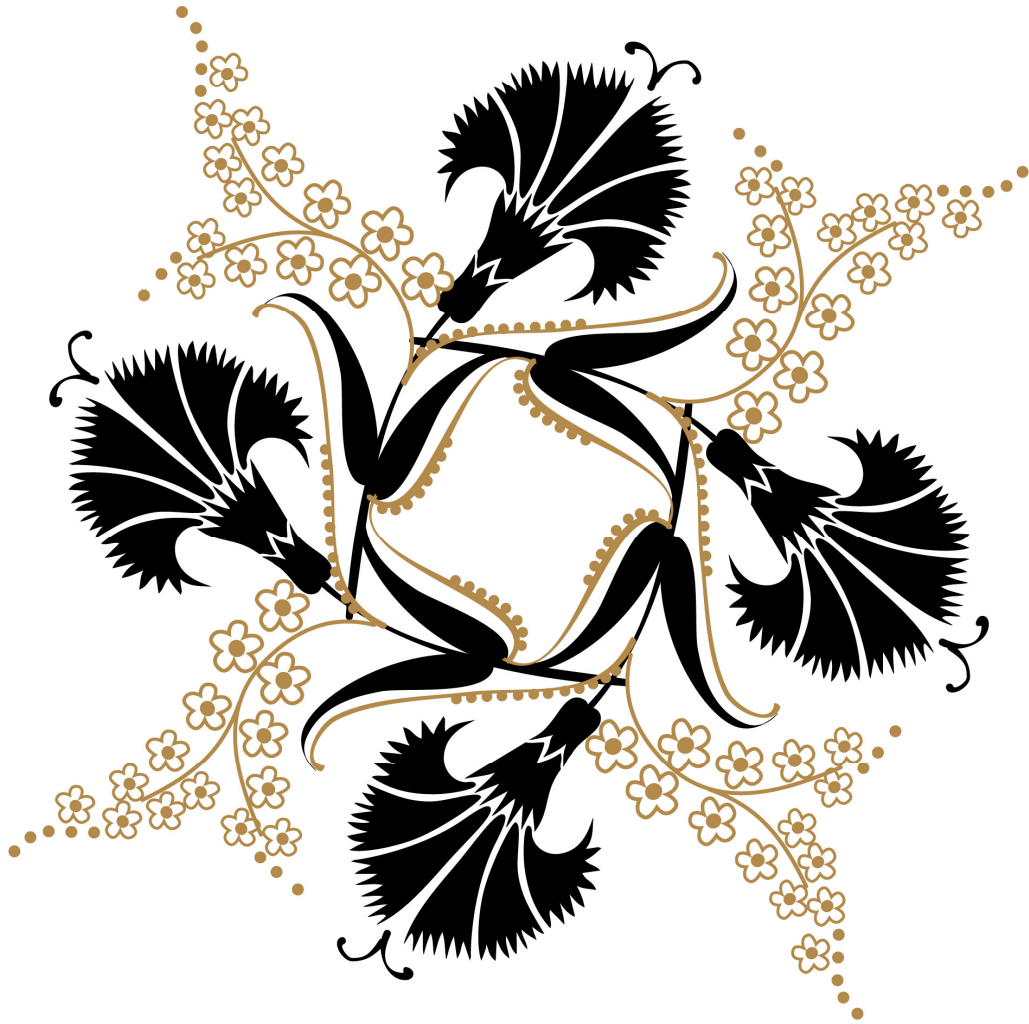




*At
one
glance
I loved
you With
a thousand
hearts*

Mihri Hatun d.1506





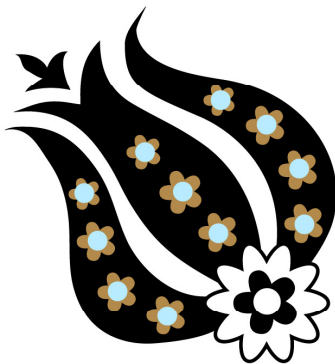
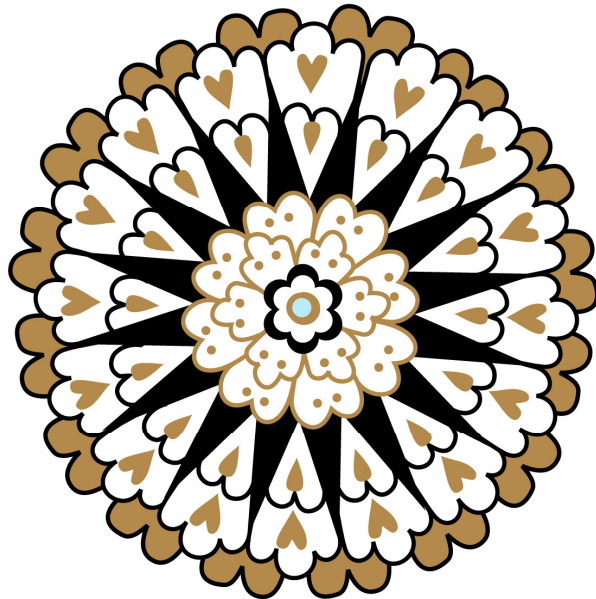
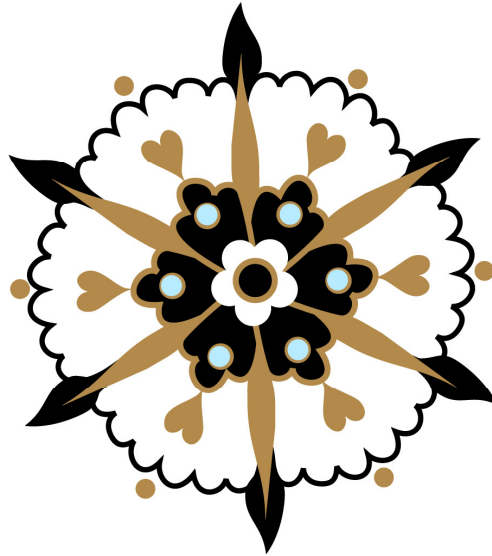
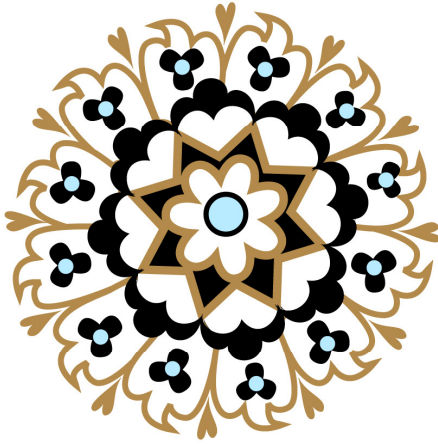


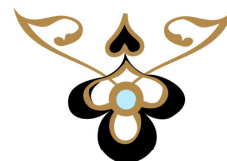
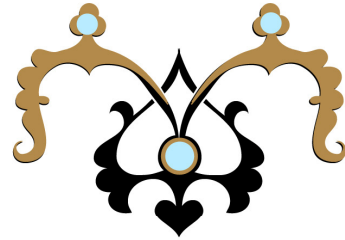


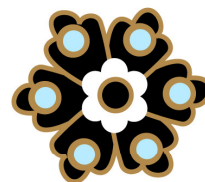
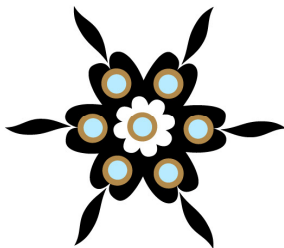














SPELLSTONE

Tulips *of Topkapi*

About the Author

Alex Morgan is freelance designer creating patterns for a range of surfaces. Working under the name 'Spellstone' Alex's artwork has been used on beautiful every day items as well as finely crafted instruments. She has designed a whole family of ornamented 'Henna' Guitars for [Luna Guitars](http://LunaGuitars.com) and also works with Honest Tea and Mehandi.com.



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