



European Art & Decorative Arts **Wall Text and Extended Labels**

FIRST FLOOR

The Morgan Memorial

The construction of the Morgan Memorial, completed in two sections in 1910 and 1915, more than doubled the size of the original Wadsworth Atheneum that opened in 1844. The building is dedicated to Junius Spencer Morgan, whose bust by William Wetmore Story stands at the top of the western stairs. Morgan was a Hartford man who founded a banking empire, and his son, J. Pierpont Morgan, chose to build the museum's new wing as a tribute to his father. The total cost of the Memorial—over \$1,400,000—represents the largest of J. Pierpont Morgan's generous gifts. He spent over twelve years purchasing the several properties on which the Memorial stands, and was involved in its construction until his death in 1913. Benjamin Wistar Morris, a noted New York architect, was selected to design what was to be a new home for the Wadsworth Atheneum's art collection. It was built in the grand English Renaissance style, and finished with magnificent interior details. Four years after J. Pierpont Morgan's death, his son, J. Pierpont Morgan Jr., followed the wishes outlined in his father's will and gave the Wadsworth Atheneum a trove of ancient art and European decorative arts from his father's renowned collection.

Living in the Ancient World

Ordinary objects found at sites from the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East reveal a great deal about daily life in the ancient world. Utensils for eating and drinking, glassware, lamps, jewelry, pottery, and stone vessels disclose the details of everyday life. Painted vases and bronze and pottery figures show Greek clothing and hair styles.

Excavations from Pompeii and Herculaneum in Italy, buried when Vesuvius erupted in 79 ce, document everyday Roman life.

A pervasive activity in ancient cultures, combat is illustrated on painted vases and through figural sculptures. Surviving works of bronze, pottery, glass, and stone demonstrate the traditions and practices of the artisans and artists who created them.

The Ancient World

Life in ancient Greece revolved around a thriving network of maritime trade. Early in their history Greeks began establishing trade posts across the Mediterranean. These grew into colonies, and by 500 bce Greece had extended its reach to North Africa, Spain, the Middle East, and beyond. The exportation of luxury goods, such as pottery, helped spread Greek art and culture throughout these territories. Some colonies were more "Greek" than others. In Italy, Greek identity was so strong that the area was nicknamed Magna Graecia (Greater Greece). Art from the territories in Central Asia reflected a fusion of Greek and Buddhist elements.

The Roman Empire

It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of the Roman Empire in Western history. At its height it extended around the Mediterranean and into northern Europe. Rome's legacy touches everything from plumbing and roads to medicine and government.

The Romans were canny appropriators, adopting and improving all manner of things from peoples across their vast territories. They were especially captivated by the culture of ancient Greece. Much of Roman art was adapted from Greek precedents and put to practical use for the Empire. As the Empire expanded, the sources for Roman art expanded with it, to include contributions from places like Syria and Gaul (modern-day France).

Everyday Objects in Ancient Cyprus

Because of thousands of years of trade with Greece, Egypt, and the Middle East, Cyprus — an island nestled between Greece and Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) — became a melting pot of cultural exchange. Ceramics from Cyprus reflect the way artists freely combined elements from different cultures. The red-polished bowl was made using a technique from Asia Minor. The shapes of the jugs and jars originated in Greece, as indicated by the italicized Greek names on the labels. Like a lot of ancient art, many of these objects were discovered in tombs.

Everyday Objects in Egypt

People in ancient Egypt had fewer possessions than we do today. Humble vessels — pots, jars, dishes, baskets, and the like — were the mainstay of an Egyptian home. They were used to store food away from pests and dirt, transport goods, and cook and serve meals. Most Egyptians used containers made of fired clay. Wealthier Egyptians could afford more expensive materials like the stone vessels displayed in this section. But everyday objects were not only for the living. Many of them were discovered in tombs, where they had been buried with the deceased for use in the afterlife.

People and Professions

War was a big part of life in ancient Greece and Rome. In Greece, independent city-states often battled each other. The most famous example is the Peloponnesian War, fought between the cities of Athens and Sparta.

For the Roman Empire, being in control of a vast territory meant there was always a border to defend or new land to colonize. Greek and Roman armies were well organized, well trained, and well equipped. In exchange for a grueling life, soldiers were given glory and respect. Their deeds were immortalized through epic poems, vase paintings, and bronze statues. The objects in this section attest to the prominent role of war in ancient Rome and Greece. But war was not the only aspect of life in the Greco-Roman world. Like today, Greek and Roman citizens cared about the current fashions. They attended the theater and other forms of entertainment. Their art offers us a glimpse into this ancient cosmopolitan life.

Everyday Objects in Greece and Rome

In ancient Greece and Rome, the home was the center of daily life. It was where cloth was woven, meals were eaten, and children were educated. Wealthy homes had designated rooms where men conducted business and entertained important guests. Often the most lavishly decorated in the house, these spaces might have included a number of the objects on view here. One can imagine a Roman pater (head of household) debating politics on a couch decorated with the bronze mule heads displayed in this gallery. Many ancient objects that survived have

been found in graves. It was customary for people to be buried with prized possessions and vessels full of food and wine.

2 Perfume vase (alabastron), 625–600 bce
Greek, Corinth
Terracotta
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.157

Alabastra, small vessels for holding perfumed oil, always had narrow openings to restrict the flow of this expensive product. They were made in large numbers in Corinth and traded all over the Mediterranean.

Barbarian on horseback, 2nd century bce
Greek
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.896.2

This figure's costume identifies him as a barbarian—someone who did not speak Greek. It reflects the wide-ranging cultural interaction between Greeks and non-Greeks that resulted from trade, colonization, and war.

Head of a woman, 4th–5th century ce
Greco-Buddhist, Hadda, Eastern Afghanistan
Stucco
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.126

Possibly a bodhisattva (enlightened being), this lifelike head was once part of a larger sculpture made of unfired clay. Considerable numbers of these figures stood in Buddhist chapels and monasteries in Afghanistan.

Lead-glazed cup (skyphos), 1st century ce
Roman, made in Asia Minor (modern Turkey)
Lead-glazed pottery
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.39

Cups like this—copied from metal forms with inexpensive molded decoration—were mass-produced in Asia Minor. The green glaze was made of lead silicate glass.

Head of a woman, c. 150 ce
Syria, Palmyra
Limestone
Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1952.499

Palmyra, a wealthy trading city in the Syrian Desert, came under Roman rule in the 1st century. During this period large-scale funerary monuments featuring human busts in high relief were created for the wealthy.

Pottery across the Roman Empire

Pottery was made throughout the Roman Empire in Gaul (France), Britain, and Germany. Potters from Gaul specialized in Roman-style molded, red-glazed terracotta called terra sigillata, which was exported to other parts of the Empire, especially Britain. German potters produced color-coated pottery, often decorated with designs in applied liquid clay.

Urn, c. 1st–2nd century ce
Roman, France, possibly near Toulouse
Red-glazed terracotta
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.465

The leaf-like shapes were applied to the pot's surface by squeezing liquid clay (called slip) from a bag through a nozzle (much like decorating a cake). This barbotine technique was used on many types of pottery across the Roman Empire.

Figure of a Gaul, 1st–2nd century ce
Roman
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.854

The short tunic identifies this figure as someone from Roman Gaul (roughly modern France). The area came under Roman control after being conquered by Julius Caesar in 54 ce.

Storage jar or lamp (kandila), Early Cycladic I period, 3000 –2800 bce
Cycladic, said to be from Amorgos or Paros
Marble
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.45

This vessel, called a kandila, has been labeled a storage jar, a lamp, and a ritual vessel. Made in the Cyclades, a group of islands in the Aegean Sea, it was labor intensive to produce because the marble would have been shaped with tools of stone, wood, or bone.

Red-polished bowl, Bronze Age, 2000 –1800 bce
Cypriot
Terracotta
Gift of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1949.469

This handmade bowl was covered with liquid clay (slip), polished, and then decorated with incised patterns before being fired. The red was from iron oxide in the slip.

Bichrome jug (oinochoe), Cypro-Archaic period, 750 –600 bce
Cypriot
Terracotta
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1916.33

Craftsmen on Cyprus specialized in vessels made using a potter's wheel and featuring concentric circles and other symmetrical geometric decoration. Most of it was exported to mainland sites in the Middle East.

Proto-white painted false-necked (stirrup) jar, Late Cypriot III period, 1200 –1050 bce
Cypriot
Terracotta
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1916.26

The true spout of this jar is the one set into the shoulder; the central (false) neck is permanently capped. Such vessels were probably used for storing and transporting oil and wine.

Helmeted head of man, Cypro-Archaic period, 700 –600 bce
Cypriot
Terracotta
Gift of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1949.466

Because Cyprus had no fine, hard stone like marble, sculpture was frequently made using terracotta (baked clay). Pigments, here worn away, were used to enhance facial and other features.

Cosmetic palette, Predynastic period, Naqada II, c. 3650 –3300 bce
Egyptian
Greywacke
Gift of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1949.531

Palettes for makeup were flat, smooth pieces of greywacke—a dark, hard sandstone—worked into shapes like fish and birds. Minerals were crushed into a powder for eyeliner on their flat surfaces.

Disc-form mace head, Predynastic period, c. 4500 –3100 bce
Egyptian
Calcite alabaster
Gift of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1949.512

A mace is a wooden club with a round or disc-shaped stone attached to one end. It was used at the end of a battle to kill prisoners.

Two jars, Predynastic period, Naqada I–II, c.3900 –3300 bce
Egyptian
River clay with red slip
The Charles Dudley Warner Collection, Gift of Miss Mary C. Barton, 1936.371, .373

Black top vessels were found in most Egyptian burial sites from the Predynastic period, very likely placed there to serve as containers for food or drink in the afterlife. The black rim was achieved by firing these pieces upside-down with the rim buried in ashes.

Egyptian Stone

Early Egyptians excelled at making vessels of stone, such as basalt, calcite, diorite, and limestone. Difficult and time-consuming to make—it took weeks to make a large vessel—they were highly valued, prestigious objects. Tools included hand-cranked drills used to bore out the interiors.

Cosmetics

In ancient Egypt both men and women wore makeup for personal hygiene and adornment. Oils and creams, for example, protected against the hot sun and dry winds. Green and black eye paint was widely used, the green made from copper, and the black, called kohl, from lead or soot.

Vase, Old Kingdom, c. 2649 –2030 bce
Egyptian
Calcite alabaster
Gift of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1949.522

Found in the eastern desert of Egypt, calcite alabaster is a semi-translucent, relatively soft material, which meant it could be turned on a lathe using flint tools and then hollowed out with a hand drill.

Two statuettes of a woman, c. 340 –200 bce
Greek, Boeotia
Terracotta
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.472–73

Known as Tanagras, from the site in central Greece where thousands were found, these statuettes depict casually posed, elegantly dressed women. They were made in molds and originally brightly colored. Mostly found in graves, they may have been offerings to the gods of the underworld.

Mars, 1st century bce –1st century ce
Roman
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.855

Mars was the god of war. Here he is shown dressed as a Roman soldier.

Spartan warrior, c. 510 – 500 bce
Greek, probably Sparta
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.815

The fearsome reputation of the Spartans, Greece's fiercest fighters, comes through in this figure. He wears a Corinthian helmet, and his closely fitting cloak is wound tightly in diagonal folds. The direction of the crest on the helmet suggests that he may be an officer.

Warrior, perhaps late Republican or Early Imperial, 40 bce–30 ce
Roman
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.820

This warrior wears a Corinthian helmet, worn by Greek foot soldiers in the 6th and 5th centuries bce. The sculpture, however, may be later. Roman sculptors commonly made miniature copies of earlier Greek statues.

Hunchback, 323 –31 bce
Hellenistic
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.817

Images of non-ideal figures became popular in the Hellenistic period. Artists strove to characterize the individual, bringing an element of personal experience and emotion to their work.

Greek Coins

Coins were first produced in the 7th century bce in Lydia (now western Turkey). Greek coins were minted soon after on the island of Aegina and quickly spread throughout the region. Cities frequently minted their own coins to celebrate their name, history, or mythology. Coins were manufactured by striking a blank piece of metal between an anvil and a punch die. Engravers cut the dies by hand, producing sculpture in miniature.

Coin (stater), 404–350 bce
Greek, Aegina
Silver
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.176

Silver staters with sea turtles were among the earliest Greek coins. Following the Peloponnesian War in 404 bce, land tortoises replaced sea turtles on the coins' reverse, as seen here. The back has a square punch mark with five sections, common to most coins of the time.

Coin (tetradrachm) of Ptolemy I Soter (ruled 323–285 bce), 310 –305 bce
Greco-Egyptian
Silver
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.166

Here, Alexander the Great is depicted wearing an elephant skin. The reverse shows the goddess Athena with spear and shield.

Incense burner, 1st century ce
Roman
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.886

Statuettes of theatrical actors were popular among the Romans. Here, a comic actor— playing a mischievous slave —wears a wide- mouthed mask and baggy costume typical of this character. The sculpture functioned as an incense burner; when the incense was lit, smoke issued from the gaping mouth.

Three wall fragments, Third Pompeian Style, c. 20 bce–20 ce
Roman, said to be from a villa between Naples and Rome
Fresco
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1969.119–21

Many private summer villas were located along the coast of Italy near Naples. These houses glowed with color, their walls decorated with painted architecture and landscapes. Many were buried when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 ce and only uncovered by archaeologists in the 18th century.

Pair of headrest supports (fulcra), Roman, c. 20–60 ce, British Museum

The mule heads were once the upper part of s-shaped attachments that fastened to the sides of the headrest of a couch, where they would have served as elbow rests. The female head comes from the lower section. Such couches were used by wealthy Greeks and Romans for dining and sleeping.

Mirror, mid-5th century bce
South Italian (Magna Graecia)
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.824

The mirror's tang, the lower part of which would fit into an ivory or bone handle, is in the form of a siren. The mirror's disc would have been highly polished and reflective. It was made in Magna Graecia, the coastal areas of southern Italy colonized by ancient Greeks from the 8th to 5th centuries bce.

Drinking cup (kantharos), 2nd century bce
Greek
Silver
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.527

Having vessels made of precious metal signified a family's wealth and status. Cups like this were displayed in the home and used to impress guests on important occasions. Silver and gold articles were also given as offerings to the dead; most luxury objects that have survived have been found in tombs.

Wine jug (oinochoe), 5th century bce
Greek
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.823

Ancient Greeks made bronze vessels for sumptuous drinking parties called symposia. This jug was used for serving wine.

Wine jug (oinochoe), 2nd century bce
Greek
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.867

The handle of this jug features a seahorse (hippocampus) at the top and the Greek god Pan at the bottom. Most surviving ancient Greek bronzes exhibit a green or blue patina, but in their original form they were polished bronze — brown with a golden sheen.

Oil flask (lekythos), c. 475–460 bce
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Greek, Attica
Hermonax Painter
Greek, active c. 475–450 bce
Terracotta
Gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1930.184

Lekythoi, pottery flasks designed to hold perfume, oil, or ointment, were often used as funerary offerings. Many have a cylindrical body and a loop handle attached at the shoulder and the neck, which was narrow for controlled pouring. This lekythos is decorated with a dancing maenad, a follower of Dionysus, god of revelry and wine. The realistic folds on the dress and lifelike rendering of the eyes are typical of the artist known as the Hermonax Painter.

Oil flask (lekythos), c. 490–475 bce
Greek, Attica
Brygos Painter
Greek, active c. 490–470 bce
Terracotta
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1963.40

A goddess, accompanied by a ram, holds a phiale (sacrificial libation dish) and a scepter. She may be Hera and the scene an extract from the Judgment of Paris. The red-figure technique of vase painting was invented in Athens around 530 bce. An artist covered the surface of the vessel with a clear glaze and then delineated the outline and many details of the figure with a thin black paint. Dark red and white paints were used, along with incised lines, to add dimension and perspective.

Water jar (hydria), c. 525–510 bce
Greek, Attica
Psiax
Greek, active c. 525–510 bce
Terracotta
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1961.8

This hydria, a vessel used to store water, depicts the harnessing of horses to a chariot, probably in preparation for a race. On the shoulder of the jar, Hercules battles the sea deity Triton as Nereus, called the Old Man of the Sea, looks on. The scene probably relates to the story of Hercules's eleventh labor to obtain the golden apples of the Hesperides—Hercules first had to learn the location of the apples from Nereus.

Cosmetic box (pyxis), 8th century bce
Greek, Attica
Terracotta
Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 1932.220

Pyxides were used to store cosmetics, trinkets, and jewelry, and most of those with horses have been found in women's graves. Because horses were very costly and only the wealthiest could afford them, the four steeds on the lid of this pyxis and its large size attest to the owner's status. The surface is covered with linear decoration, typical of pottery from this so-called Geometric Period. The angles, squares, triangles, and zigzags create simple designs of mathematical precision and clarity, which emphasize the shape of the pottery.

Core-formed Glass

The technique of forming glass objects around a clay core was developed in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia and revived in Hellenistic Greece (323–31 bce). Core-formed vessels, like this perfume bottle and jug, were usually small because producing them was a difficult process. First molten glass was coated onto a shaped clay core. Then colored trails of hot glass were wound around, and a rim and handles were added. After cooling, the core was scraped out.

Cast Glass

Shortly after the invention of core-formed glass, several casting techniques were developed and then later adopted by Roman glassmakers. Most commonly, hot glass was poured into a two-part mold in the shape of the vessel to be produced. Millefiori (thousand flowers) glass was also cast but was much more labor-intensive to produce. Glass slices from multi-colored canes would be fused together in molds until they melted together, creating the mosaic pattern.

Blown Glass

The greatest revolution in the history of glassmaking occurred in the 1st century ce when the Romans discovered that air could be blown through a pipe into molten glass to produce a variety of shapes and sizes. The new technique was simple and fast and spread quickly throughout the Roman Empire. Glass became affordable and an everyday part of many Roman households.

Ancient Glass

Egyptians and Mesopotamians began producing core-formed and cast glass vessels in the 15th century bce. Glass is composed of sand, a soda-rich mineral, and lime, plus impurities. The majority of glass vessels produced in the ancient world were small containers made to hold ointments, scented oils, cosmetics, and incense.

Mold-blown Glass

Shortly after the invention of glass blowing, the Romans realized that if they inflated the molten glass directly into a wooden or clay mold, vessels could be shaped and embellished in a single step. This technique allowed for a large range of decoration.

Cover of a bowl (pyxis), 2nd century ce
Roman, Cyprus
Blown and cold-painted glass
The Anna Rosalie Mansfield Gift, 1930.63

Painted glass from ancient periods has rarely survived due to the impermanence of the black ink pigments that were used. This cover shows a winged putto (naked child) holding a bunch of grapes and vine-leaves in his left hand.

Glass with Trailed Decoration

In the later years of the Roman Empire, glass vessels were decorated with more complicated and intricate designs. Glassmakers applied trail and coil decorations, heavy threads, frills, and zigzag patterns. Sometimes they used multiple glass coils to form complex and elaborate handles.

Cosmetic flask with four compartments (unguentarium), 4th–5th century ce
Roman, Syria or Palestine
The Anna Rosalie Mansfield Gift, 1930.58

This elaborate flask was used primarily as a container for powdered galena, a mineral used as eye make-up. A metal, bone, or glass rod would have been used to extract the contents.

Beaker or lamp, 4th century ce
Roman
Blown glass with blue blob decoration Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.600

In late Roman times, people began to use conical glass vessels as lamps. They burned longer than clay lamps, and their light was more evenly diffused.

Nature and Belief in the Ancient World

Religious beliefs and rituals influenced all aspects of life in antiquity. Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures — from at least 3000 bce to the fourth century ce — developed specific doctrines, cults, gods, and ceremonies. Archeological finds help to explain sacred spaces, objects of devotion, deities, and demons. Funerary art provides an understanding of belief systems surrounding death and the afterlife. Religion often centered on nature and the cycle of life, and divine forces were linked to natural phenomena. Images of animals and plants are commonly found on everyday and religious objects across ancient cultures.

Animal Imagery in Egypt

The indigenous animals of Egypt played an important, symbolic role in the lives of ancient Egyptians. In religious art, animal imagery was used to illustrate characteristics of the gods. The same animal could represent several gods. For instance, a lioness symbolized both the violent power of the goddess Sakhmet and the maternal instincts of Bastet.

In general, Egyptians did not believe living animals were gods themselves. But over time some animals, particularly cats, became more closely linked with religious practices. Animals that were considered sacred were kept at temples, where visitors could pay for them to be mummified. In return, the visitor hoped to receive favor from the related god.

Animal Imagery in Greece and Rome

In antiquity, animals were part of the fabric of everyday life. In the agricultural societies of Greece and Rome, they were important sources of food and labor. Certain animals, like the horse, were status symbols. Animal sacrifices were also a central part of Greek and Roman religious practice. In art, animals were as common as they were in life.

Depictions of gods often included a trademark animal, like Athena and her owl. Animals also appear on vase paintings illustrating Greek myths and legends. Some images of animals seem to have no symbolic meaning beyond celebrating the natural world, like the fresco of ducks in this gallery.

Belief Systems in Early Ancient Cultures

All early cultures depended on the earth for survival. Good rainfall spelled prosperity; drought brought devastation. Therefore, it is no wonder that belief systems in the ancient world centered on nature and fertility. The most important Egyptian deity was Ra, the sun god. Greece and Rome had gods for the sky and the harvest. More than simply worship nature, these early cultures sought to explain a world that was largely out of their control. Ritual offerings to the gods were a kind of barter system—gifts and sacrifices in exchange for good fortune. This extended to life after death as well. Elaborate funerary traditions were believed to ensure safe passage to the next world.

Egyptian Gods

Bastet: Maternal, protective goddess; depicted either as a lioness, cat, or a woman with the head of a cat, often with kittens.

Sakhmet: Goddess of war, also called the “Powerful One,” who represented violence, disaster, and illness; depicted with the head of a lioness.

Osiris: King of the dead, judge of the underworld, and god of resurrection; brother and husband of Isis; usually depicted as a mummy wearing a conical headdress.

Isis: The most important goddess in Egyptian mythology; mother of Horus and sister/wife of Osiris; depicted with cow horns and a sun disc, with Horus on her lap.

Horus/Harpocrates: God of the sky and son of Isis and Osiris; each pharaoh was considered to be a living incarnation of Horus; depicted with the head of a falcon.

Thoth: God of wisdom, writing, and magic; scribe of the underworld, who recorded the verdict on the deceased; depicted with the head of an ibis.

Ra: The sun god and one of the most important ancient Egyptian deities.

Greek and Roman Gods and Demigods

Zeus/Jupiter: King and father of the gods; attributes are scepter, thunderbolt, and eagle.

Aphrodite/Venus: Goddess of love and beauty; attributes are dove, dolphin, and Eros/Cupid.

Dionysus/Bacchus: God of wine and theater; attributes are grapevine, wine cup, thyrsos (staff with giant fennel), and leopard.

Athena/Minerva: Goddess of wisdom, warfare, and the arts and crafts; attributes are the aegis (animal skin or shield), helmet, owl, and olive tree.

Ares/Mars: God of war; attributes are armor and chariot.

Hermes/Mercury: God of travel, messenger of the gods; attributes are caduceus (staff with snakes and wings), winged sandals, and hat.

Hera/Juno: Goddess of marriage, queen of the gods; attributes are crown, scepter, cow, and peacock.

Poseidon/Neptune: God of the sea, horses, and earthquakes; attributes are the trident and fish.

Apollo/Phoebus Apollo: God of prophecy, music, poetry, and youth; attributes are the lyre, laurel wreath, snake, and bow and arrows.

Tyche/Fortuna: Goddess of fortune, fate, and luck; attributes are a cornucopia and ship's rudder.

Eros/Cupid: God of love; attributes are bow and arrow and usually wings.

Heracles/Hercules: Divine hero, son of Zeus; attributes are the lion skin and club

The Lararium

The lararium was a shrine in Roman homes for the household gods. Adorned with small sculptures or painted images of gods, goddesses, and lesser deities, it was central to family life and the place where household members would make daily offerings for their protection. The lararium took its name from lars familiaris, the guardian spirit of the family. Statuettes of lares stood in the lararium in the company of other deities that also served as house guardians.

Cat, Ptolemaic period, 3rd–1st century bce

Egyptian

Bronze

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.520

Several Egyptian gods were depicted as felines. This cat probably represents the maternal, protective goddess Bastet, who was associated with the sun god Ra. Ra is represented here by the scarab beetle (symbolizing the rising sun and rebirth) carved between the cat's ears. A collar-like necklace called an aegis is incised into the bronze, bearing the head of Sakhmet—the ferocious, lion-like alter ego of Bastet—adorned with her distinctive solar disc. Donors placed small bronze cats in temples to honor Bastet in the hope that she would help cure illness or ensure successful childbirth.

Ibis, Ptolemaic period, 300–30 bce

Egyptian

Alabaster, bronze, and glass paste

Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.162

This sculpture captures the elegance of the white ibis, a long-legged, curved-billed wading bird native to the Nile River. It was sacred to the ancient Egyptians as a symbol of the god Thoth and used as a votive figure in places where Thoth was worshipped.

Horus falcon, New Kingdom, c. 1550–1070 bce

Egyptian

Faience

Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.56

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In ancient Egypt, falcons were associated with pharaohs, protection, rebirth, agricultural abundance, and several gods. This idealized falcon probably represents one of the falcon-headed gods, most likely Horus.

Canopic Jars

During mummification, four internal organs were taken out of the body and stored in canopic jars. Each jar had the head of a different god: falcon-headed Qebhsenuf protected the intestines; jackal-headed Duamutef protected the stomach; baboon-headed Hapy protected the lungs; and Imsety, with a human head, protected the liver.

Statuette of a mongoose (Ichmeumon), 25th–26th dynasty, c. 712 –525 bce

Egyptian

Bronze

Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.70

The Egyptian mongoose was respected as an enemy of serpents and a killer of mice, which threatened the stored grain supply. In religious symbolism, it was associated with the god Atum.

Bastet with kittens, 24th–25th dynasty, c. 724 –664 bce

Egyptian

Faience

Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.71

This small sculpture was probably used as a votive offering in a temple. Bastet was one of several feline goddesses in ancient Egypt. She was worshipped as a goddess of joy and fertility and as the protectress of the home and children.

Heart scarab, 19th dynasty, probably Ramesses II period, c. 1279 –1213 bce

Egyptian

Stone

inv.1995.47

The scarab beetle, symbol of rebirth, was an important amulet and prominent in royal funerary decoration. Beginning in the 16th century bce, at the start of the New Kingdom, it was placed over the heart of most mummies. The inscription on this example refers to the pharaoh Ramesses II.

Upper part of a figure of Sakhmet, New Kingdom, 18th dynasty, reign of Amenhotep III, c. 1390 –1352 bce

Egyptian, Thebes, probably found at the temple of Mut in Karnak

Granodiorite

Gift of Reverend D. W. Marsh and Burgess P. Starr through the courtesy of the Connecticut Historical Society, 1955.103

This bust was originally part of a larger statue of the goddess Sakhmet, who represented violence, disaster, and illness. The lioness head of the goddess, when intact, would have had a complete solar disk crown, identifying her as the daughter of the sun god Ra. Six hundred similar statues were commissioned by Amenhotep III for his mortuary temple in western Thebes. In Egyptian mythology, leonine and feline statues, whether raging lionesses or beneficent cats, were vital to the maintenance of the divine order and, if not placated, might abandon Egypt.

Horse, Geometric Period, 8th century bce
Greek, perhaps Lakonia
Bronze
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.53

Small bronze horses were made throughout mainland Greece and used either as component parts of vessels or as freestanding sculptures, the latter found in large numbers in sanctuaries where they were a favorite offering to the gods.

Horse, 6th century bce
Greek, Boeotia
Terracotta
Gift of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1949.464

Small terracotta horses were placed in temples as offerings to the gods and in graves to denote the deceased's importance and wealth—owning horses required extensive land and expensive upkeep.

Pyxis, 6th century bce
Greek, Corinth
Terracotta
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.27

Corinthian potters routinely decorated their vessels with animals. Here, stylized lions and gazelles prowl nose to nose around the pot. While lions did exist in ancient Greece, gazelles were native to Africa and the Middle East. Images of the latter probably came to Greece through trade.

Perfume Containers (aryballos)

Each of these containers takes the form of an animal—a rabbit, a lion, and two monkeys embracing. They were intensely personal items, created to hold the perfumed oils so important to Greek life. Believed to be a gift from the gods, perfume was a symbol of wealth and status.

Isis nursing Horus, Late Period to Ptolemaic period, c. 712 –30 bce
Egyptian
Faience
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.518

Only the legs remain of the god Horus, here being nursed by his mother Isis. The throne placed on her head is a hieroglyph of her name. Plants on the back of her seat symbolize the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Shabti, Late Period, 26th dynasty, reign of Amasis II, c. 570 –526 bce
Egyptian, tomb of Neferibresaneith, Saqqara
Faience
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.20

Shabtis were funerary figures meant to perform agricultural labor in the afterlife for the deceased. A magical spell, inscribed on the front, ensured that the shabti would function properly. Often boxes of 401 shabtis—one for each day of the year, plus 36 overseers—were included in a burial.

Thoth, Late Period to Ptolemaic period, c. 712–30 bce
Egyptian
Faience
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.82

This ibis-headed figure of the god Thoth, wearing a kilt and striated wig, may have been placed within the wrappings of a mummy, positioned on the chest.

Head from figure of a woman, 3rd millennium bce
Cycladic
Marble
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.15

Marble figures of females have been found in significant quantities in early graves in the Cyclades, a group of islands in the Aegean Sea. Their meaning is unknown but may be related to fertility. They were originally more ornate, with pigments indicating anatomical details.

Two psi-type figures, Late Helladic IIIB, 1300–1200 bce
Mycenaean
Terracotta
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.67–68

Simply pinched from clay and painted, these figures were made in Mycenaean Greece, probably as votive offerings. They are known as psi-type after the Greek letter psi (Ψ).

Figure of a goddess, c. 650–550 bce
Greek, Boeotia
Terracotta
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.65

This type of figure represents a goddess; her tall, cylindrical headdress (polos) is especially associated with Hera, Demeter, and Persephone. Such statues would have been left in temples as dedications to divinities.

Lamp, 1st century ce
Roman
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.890

Roman gods decorate this elaborate lamp. Above, Mercury is flanked by Juno and Minerva. Below Mercury, Jupiter appears with his eagle. Fortuna, with her cornucopia and rudder, serves as the lamp's handle.

Lar, 1st century ce
Roman
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.834

Lar was a household deity that protected members of the family, ensuring their health and prosperity. He was usually depicted holding a rhyton (drinking vessel) and a patera (offering dish), which is missing here.

Female torso, 1st–2nd century ce
Roman
Marble
Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 1961.2

This torso once belonged to a figure of either Venus or a bacchante, one of the nymphs associated with the wine god Bacchus.

Head of Venus, 1st century bce– 1st century ce
Roman
Silver
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.525

In wealthy Roman homes, statuettes displayed in shrines were often made of expensive materials. This rare bust is made of thinly worked silver.

The Entourage of Bacchus (Dionysus)

In ancient literature and art, Bacchus (Dionysus to the Greeks), the god of wine, is usually accompanied by an entourage that included mythical beasts called satyrs (part man, part horse or goat) and human female worshippers called bacchantes (maenads). The chief satyr Silenus, often depicted drunk, was Bacchus's teacher and companion.

Satyr, late 6th century bce
Etruscan
Bronze
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.861

This satyr originally decorated the rim of a large cup. Typically part man and part horse or goat, this satyr is mostly human, albeit with bestial facial features, and probably represents a reveler at a drinking party.

Relief panel, 883– 859 bce
Assyrian, Nimrud (now Nineveh Province, Iraq), from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II
Gypsum
Gift of Reverend D. W. Marsh and Burgess P. Starr through the courtesy of the Connecticut Historical Society, 1955.101

This wall relief fragment comes from an audience suite in the inner courtyard of the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud, present-day Iraq. The palace was destroyed by the Babylonians and Medes in the 7th century bce.

A winged, eagle-headed guardian figure holding a bucket in his left hand, performs a ritual involving the Assyrian sacred tree (which would have appeared on an adjacent stone slab). The same inscription (in the wedge-shaped script, known as cuneiform) was carved on each of the panels lining the palace walls. The standardized text extols the victories and greatness of Ashurnasirpal II and describes the building of his magnificent palace.

Early Christian and Byzantine Art

Christianity began to spread in the first century ce, but only flourished after the religion was legalized under the Roman emperor Constantine the Great, who ruled from 306 to 337 ce. His decision in 330 to transfer the imperial capital from Rome to the ancient Greek city Byzantion (which he renamed Constantinople, and is now Istanbul), led to the state called Byzantium. Later in the fourth century, Christianity became the empire's official religion under Theodosius I. The Byzantine Empire was diverse in culture and religious practice, and traces of Classical antiquity could be found almost everywhere. Although Christian themes and symbols came to dominate the arts in the fourth century, subjects from Classical mythology with pagan religious imagery remained common long thereafter.

Byzantine Egypt

With immense natural resources, Egypt was one of the richest provinces in the Byzantine Empire. This wealth supported the flourishing artistic tradition in the region. The Ptolemaic Greeks and then Romans, who ruled the area since the fourth century bce, had brought Classical art and culture to the region. In the mid-fifth century ce, Christian leaders in Egypt separated from the official imperial church and established the Coptic Church—the name derived from the Greek word for Egypt, Aiguptos. Coptic craftsmen produced textiles, wall paintings, metalwork, and funerary items, which integrated Egyptian, Classical, and Christian influences.

Byzantine Coins

Besides establishing Christianity as his new religion and Constantinople as his new political center, Constantine also instituted a new monetary system, introducing the gold solidus as a standard currency. Early coins had an imperial profile on the obverse (front) and a mark of value on the reverse. In 539 ce, Justinian I became the first Byzantine emperor to change his portrayal from a profile to full face. About 692 ce, Justinian II put the image of Christ on the front and his own likeness on the back, identifying himself as a servant of Christ. This shift became the standard representation for the rest of Byzantine history, as seen here in the 11th century coin of Constantine VIII.

Trade and Commerce

Constantinople was strategically positioned between Europe and Asia, making it a prime location for international commerce. Merchants from China, Persia, India, and Africa were frequent visitors to the bustling metropolis. Luxury goods including silk, spices, or incense, as well as more mundane items, such as pottery and textiles, were widely traded. A standardized system of weights and coins was introduced to promote fair competition.

Steelyard weight, 4th–5th century ce
Byzantine

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Wall Text and Extended Labels, European Art
09-13-15-ay

Bronze

Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.25

Steelyard weights, a Roman invention, were used to weigh heavy, bulky goods by suspending them from the hook at one end of a rod, and then sliding weights along that rod until they came into balance with the load. These weights were often made to resemble imperial or religious figures, endowing them with an authority that would convey confidence in the accuracy of the measurement.

Jug, 4th– 6th century ce

Byzantine, possibly Egyptian

Bronze

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.846

The head of a woman with African features creates the shape of this jug. She has holes on her earlobes that would have held dangling earrings.

Pilgrim's flask, 4th– 6th century ce

Byzantine, Egypt

Terracotta

inv.161

Menas was a Roman soldier martyred around 295 ce for his belief in Christ. His remains soon became legendary for causing wondrous cures. Flasks depicting Saint Menas were sold to pilgrims at his shrine at Abu Mena, near Alexandria in Egypt. The flasks were made to hold the holy water collected from the cistern near the church.

Hanging lamp with a griffin's head, 4th– 5th century ce

Byzantine

Bronze

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.873

This lamp is remarkable for its combination of pagan and Christian imagery. The handle is in the form of a griffin's head. This mythological beast with its eagle's head and lion's body was associated with Apollo, the ancient Greek sun god. The cross on the body of the lamp and the dove on top of the griffin's head are Christian symbols, signifying salvation and enlightenment through the Holy Spirit.

Pilgrimage

As Christianity spread, the adoration of saints and pilgrimage became important principles of the new religion. During the 4th century ce, pilgrims from all over Christendom began flocking to the Holy Land and other places to visit the shrines of important saints and famous relics. Believers went to reaffirm their faith, seek a cure for an ailment, or obtain eulogiai — objects that had been blessed by contact with a saint or something holy, and were thereby imbued with the power to counter evil and work miracles. Pilgrims would purchase flasks or jugs with Christian images and have them filled with chrism — oil consecrated by a relic— or holy water for the long journey home.

Jug with Christian symbols, late 6th– 7th century ce

Byzantine, Eastern Mediterranean

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Wall Text and Extended Labels, European Art

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Mold-blown glass
The Anna Rosalie Mansfield Gift, 1930.43

This jug shows different types of crosses on its body. The three stepped cross on one side of the vessel represents the hill of Golgotha, also known as Calvary, on which Christ was crucified.

Textile fragment, 4th–7th century ce
Byzantine, Egypt
Wool and linen
Purchased with contributions at Minassian Sale, 1925.104

This textile fragment shows a dancing Nereid surrounded by cross-like symbols. In Greek mythology, Nereids were female spirits living in the sea. They frequently appeared on Egyptian textiles, where they were considered to be an aquatic counterpart to Dionysius, the Greek god of wine, and his entourage.

Textile fragment, 4th–6th century ce
Byzantine, Egypt
Wool and linen
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.115

The square inset shows a huntsman in a central medallion flanked by four scrolled medallions, each containing another hunter. The design is similar to Christian imagery of Christ surrounded by the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Coptic Textiles

Textiles and other perishable materials have survived for centuries in Egypt's hot and dry desert climate. Clothing and household furnishings made for daily use have been discovered in numerous burial sites. Their portability made them excellent items of trade, and they became available throughout the Roman Empire. Coptic textiles were woven primarily in linen, with dyed wool decoration.

Popular textile motifs included Dionysus, the Greek god of wine (called Bacchus by the Romans), and depictions of his feasts, pastoral and hunting scenes, personifications of the natural world, and figures from Classical mythology.

With the spread of Christianity, symbols used earlier in a pagan context were reinterpreted and given new meaning. For instance, the grape vines once associated with Dionysus were used to illustrate Christ's words in the book of John, "I am the true vine."

God on horse, 3rd century ce
Roman, Egypt
Tempera on wood
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1934.6

The full-length representation of the figure, along with the size and shape of the work, suggest that this painting was a votive panel most likely produced to worship a deity. Shortly before Egypt fully turned to Christianity, such panels depicted pagan gods. Originally an eastern European god, this figure might represent Heron, a popular deity with the Roman army and later adopted into the pantheon of Greco-Roman Egypt.

This type of painting on wood can be viewed as a link between the mummy portraits of the ancient world and the earliest icons of medieval times that led to the European tradition of panel painting.

Attributed to the Saint Louis Painter
Portrait of a young boy, 4th century ce
Roman, Egypt
Tempera on wood
Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, 1971.52.119

Beginning in the 1st century ce, a realistic portrait of the deceased — painted on a wooden panel—might be placed on the outer wrappings of a mummy. The big eyes and bushy eyebrows seen in this work are typical stylistic traits from an area of northern Egypt called Fayum. While the boy's clothing was common for the period, his necklace with three amulets is rare. The two outer figures represent the divine couple Isis and Serapis, and between them is a metal leaf, probably a passport for the dead. These amulets were often inscribed with instructions on how to behave in the afterlife.

Basin, 2nd–3rd century ce
Roman
Imperial Porphyry
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.226

The original function of large stone basins, such as the one in the middle of this gallery, is not yet known. This basin's decorative imagery with stylized ivy leaves and the head of a panther allude to Bacchus, the Roman god of wine, who represented the pleasures of life. The panther's mouth is pierced to function as a drain.

Objects made from the very dense rock called porphyry (meaning purple in Greek) were highly valued since Roman times. In the Byzantine period, these prized goods were frequently relocated and reused. The basins often found new homes as elements in fountains or, after Rome adopted Christianity in the fourth century, were converted to baptismal fonts or sarcophagi.

Medieval Art

The medieval period spanned over a thousand years of European history, from the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century to the dawn of the Renaissance in the fifteenth. During this time, the first universities were established, trade centers developed, and soaring cathedrals were built. Successive Crusades, fought to free the Holy Land from Islamic control, brought Europeans into the heart of the Middle East. In the fourteenth century, plague, famine, and war had a devastating effect on Europe's population. Yet throughout this lengthy era of change and instability, there continued to be great progress in learning and the arts. Christianity was part of everyday life, and art was primarily religious. Stone sculptures decorating cathedrals and monasteries represented complex theological ideas and biblical stories. People prayed at church and at home, aided in their contemplation of God by illustrated prayer books, sacred images, and small-scale religious objects. Extravagant versions of all these—paintings with gold leaf, lavishly illuminated prayer books, reliquaries made of precious metals and jewels, and tiny ivory altarpieces —reflected not only holiness but also the wealth of the devoted.

Unidentified Artist
French, Burgundy
Virgin and Child, c. 1430–50
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Wall Text and Extended Labels, European Art
09-13-15-ay

Limestone

Gift of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, 1949.183a

This statue of the Virgin and Christ emphasizes the tender connection between mother and child. The sculptor has depicted Christ as a realistic baby, which was rare in medieval art. He holds an orb, representing the world, as if it were a simple toy. Yet Mary's melancholic expression reminds the viewer of her son's future sacrifice. In a church setting, this emotional appeal would have helped the faithful relate to the holy figures and focus their prayers. The deeply cut drapery folds on Mary's robe tell us that the sculptor likely came from the Burgundy region in France.

Unidentified Artist

Italian, Pisa, early 14th Century

Corpus

Polychromed wood

The European Painting and Sculpture Purchase Fund, and Gift of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, by exchange, 2011.2.1

The title Corpus refers to the body of the crucified Christ. Although the original cross is missing, we can see the effects of the crucifixion on Christ's body. His head lolls to the side, mouth parted. The dead weight of his body has stretched his arms and belly. The polychromy, or multi-colored paint, adds to the sculpture's naturalism. This small work was probably sculpted for an intimate setting, like a private chapel, where the worshipper would be close enough to appreciate the life-like details. The work's poignant sorrow emphasizes Christ's humanity. By identifying with their savior's suffering, the faithful hoped to get closer to salvation.

Unidentified Artist

French, Angoumois or Charente

Capitol with lions, c. 1125–50

Limestone

Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1949.123

In the Middle Ages, the tops of columns, called capitals, were often the site of fantastic and sometimes whimsical imagery. Scholars refer to this as marginal architecture because it is located in the corners and edges of buildings. In this capital, twin lions share a single head. Stylized foliage shoots from the mouth with decorative flair. The meaning of the subject is unclear. Was it simply intended to delight the medieval viewer? Or is there a deeper symbolic significance? Scholars continue to speculate about the purpose of such monstrous imagery in medieval art.

Unidentified Artist

French, Cluny

Capitol with Arion on a Dolphin, c. 1125–50

Limestone

The Henry D. Miller Fund, 1949.213

The subject of this column capital might be the mythical musician Arion. Legend has it that Arion escaped capture at sea by charming a dolphin with his music and riding it to shore. Yet not all the elements on the capital match the myth. While the man does hold an instrument, the narrative does not explain the serpents emerging from his ears or the sword he wields. And although dolphins float below, the man actually rides a fish. Medieval artists often re-imagined Classical subjects by combining different sources. That might be the case here, where the artist works in an abstracted style typical of the early Middle Ages.

Unidentified Artist
French
Two Angels with Symbols of the Passion, 14th century
Plaster
Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 1949.222–23

Hovering in mid-flight, each of these angels holds a reminder of Christ's final days, known as the Passion. One angel has the column where Christ was bound and whipped. The other carries the sudarium, or veil, of Saint Veronica. As Christ carried his cross to Calvary, Veronica approached to wipe his brow with her veil. Miraculously, an imprint of Christ's face remained. These reliefs probably decorated a cathedral or church. Religious sculpture was an important part of medieval church ritual. It was used to educate the faithful, create feelings of piety, and signal the change from a secular to a holy space.

Unidentified Artist
French
Relief of St. Louis, 14th century
Limestone
Gift of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, 1949.217

Louis IX of France was considered the ideal Christian King. During his reign he led two Crusades to the Holy Land, returning to France with important holy relics. In his right hand Louis holds one of these relics, Christ's Crown of Thorns. In his left hand he holds a cross topped with the fleur-de-lis, the emblem of France. Although St. Louis was a historical figure, this is not a portrait of him in the modern sense. In the Middle Ages, it was more important to capture a person's moral character than their physical likeness. Here, Louis's calm expression and humble kneeling pose signify a virtuous soul.

Flemish or Dutch
Bone with traces of gilding and paint, bronze clasps
Gift of Mrs. Charles C. Cunningham, 1949.393

The bottom of the box is decorated with the checkered pattern of a chessboard. Each square on this box illustrates a moment from the life and Passion of Christ. The narrative wraps around the box, from Christ's Baptism to his Crucifixion and Resurrection. Traces of paint and gold enliven the figures. The box might have held church treasures, or perhaps the relic of a saint. In the Middle Ages, precious religious objects like this one reminded the faithful of God's glory.

Panel, c. 1320–50
Probably French, Mosan, or Rhenish
Ivory
Gift of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, 1949.170

The similarity between these two ivory panels tells us a lot about how and why they were made. Workshops in medieval Europe created thousands of small religious ivories to meet public demand, with different artisans all working from similar models. Images of the Crucifixion, a central story in Christianity, were especially popular. Created for personal use, panels like these aided pious Christians in prayer at home and while traveling.

Panel, c. 1270 –90
Spanish or English
Ivory
Gift of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, 1949.183

This small ivory panel of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child was once the center section of a larger religious work. Additional carved ivory panels were attached by hinges on either side. Like the doors to a cabinet, they would keep the religious images hidden. Whether in a church or a private home, opening the doors marked a sacred time and created a focal point for prayer.

Medieval Manuscripts

Before the invention of the printing press, books were created by hand. The word manuscript is Latin for hand (manu) written (script). A medieval book was costly to produce, and involved multiple steps and many people. A parchment maker scraped and stretched the animal skins that became the pages of the book. A scribe painstakingly wrote the words using a feather quill. A binder sewed the pages together to assemble the final product.

We call medieval manuscript illustrations illuminations because of the way they seem to glow on the page. The books in this case include gold leaf details — just one way that illuminators achieved this luminous effect.

Book of Hours, c. 1450 –60
Southern Netherlandish, Bruges
In the style of the Morgan 78 Master Ink, tempera, and gold on vellum
Given in memory of Mrs. Thomas W. Lamont, 1953.138

Personal prayer books, called Books of Hours, were the most popular manuscripts made in the Middle Ages. These books contained prayers to the Virgin Mary, each recited at a specific hour of the day. Christians directed their prayers to Mary in the hope that she would speak to Christ on their behalf.

An owner might personalize his or her Book of Hours with additional prayers, texts, and images that held special meaning. For example, this Book of Hours includes prayers to the Wounds of Christ, popular observances in England at the time.

Book of Hours, c. 1450 –75
Dutch, Haarlem or Utrecht
Ink, tempera, and gold on vellum
Given in memory of Mrs. Thomas W. Lamont, 1953.139

Imagine living in a time when your day was measured by prayer. That is what the “hours” in a Book of Hours refers to: the canonical hours of prayer. Although each Book of Hours was unique, they all had a few key elements: prayers to the Virgin Mary, a religious calendar, and prayers for the dead. Books of Hours were intensely personal items, used by their owners at least eight times a day. In addition to being spiritual, they were also expensive luxury objects.

Table of Consanguinity, 13th century
French or English
Ink on parchment

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Wall Text and Extended Labels, European Art
09-13-15-ay

Gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1931.357

This chart is the medieval version of a family tree. The names of the oldest generations occupy the circles at the top and the youngest at the bottom. Spreading sideways are maternal and paternal uncles and aunts. The diagram only includes family members related by blood, not marriage. Since the Church prohibited marriage between close blood relatives, it was critical to know the degrees of consanguinity (kinship) between relatives. A consanguinity table was therefore a convenient way of determining eligible marriages.

Unidentified Artist

French

Scenes from the Apocalypse, c. 1290s

Tempera and gold on vellum

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1983.38–9

These two illuminations depict scenes from the end of the world. They are taken from a medieval Apocalypse manuscript, believed to be the record of John the Evangelist's extraordinary prophecies.

The Release of the Locusts from the Bottomless Pit

And the fifth angel sounded the trumpet, and there was given to him the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened it and there arose a smoke...and there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth like unto horses prepared for battle, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had the hair of women and the teeth of lions. And they had over them a king, the angel of the abyss. — Book of Revelation 19:1–15

Birds Eating the Flesh of Men

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried in a loud voice, saying to all the birds, 'Come and gather to the great supper of God, that ye may eat the flesh of kings... the flesh of all men.'—Book of Revelation 19:17–18

Taddeo di Bartolo

Italian, Siena, c. 1362– c. 1422

Madonna and Child

Oil and tempera on panel

Gift of The Robert Lehman Art Foundation, 1962.444

The somber Virgin holds the standing Christ Child, who wears a priestly robe. He carries a goldfinch, a symbol of the Resurrection. By inserting his fingers into the bird's mouth, the Child foretells his own future. Typical of Taddeo's style are the decorative patterns adorning the clothing of mother and child and the attention to details—notice the tapered fingers of the Virgin. Originally this panel probably served as the central image of a larger altarpiece and was flanked by two or more paintings of saints.

Workshop of Paolo da Venezia

Italian, active 1333– c. 1362

The Angel of the Annunciation and The Virgin Annunciate, mid–1340s

Tempera on panel

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1941.156–57

Paolo is the first Venetian artist whom we know by name. He maintained a large workshop and influenced many younger painters of the day. Elongated figures with small heads, as seen in this pair, became common in his works during the 1340s. Although the two panels originally formed part of a large altarpiece, they tell a complete story on their own. The Archangel Gabriel informs the Virgin Mary that she will bear the future savior of mankind. Responding to his right hand raised in benediction, Mary seems to pull back, startled and yet submissive.

Workshop of Niccolò di Buonaccorso

Italian, Siena, c. 1348–1388

The Annunciation, 1370–88

Tempera and oil on panel

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1951.94

This Annunciation was probably part of a multi-panel painting, or polyptych. Small, folding altarpieces of two or more panels were frequently found in domestic settings similar to the one depicted here. The Virgin stands in a loggia, an open gallery, while the angel Gabriel kneels in the courtyard, bringing her the news that she will bear the Christ Child. The artist tried to create a sense of space by using pattern and line in the bedspread and flooring, an effect frequently found in paintings from Siena at this time.

Giovanni dal Ponte

Italian, Florence, 1385–c. 1437

Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Catherine

Tempera on panel

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1982.2

Saint John the Baptist wears a garment of camel hair and Saint Catherine of Alexandria touches the spiked wheel used for her torture. They flank the central Madonna and Child, who are surrounded by four angels making music in the lower section, and four above clasping their hands in prayer. The dove of the Holy Spirit is visible at the top of the arch. The painting is in the form of a small altarpiece, or ancona, probably created for worship in a private home.

The Arts of China

China is one of the world's oldest civilizations, whose rich and ever-changing history produced equally dynamic artistic traditions. Much of the art that survives from early periods comes from the tombs of China's upper classes and mirrors earthly life in all its vivacity. Early Chinese art was also made for China's major religions, especially Daoism and Buddhism. While Daoism was native to China, Buddhism came from India along the Silk Road around the first century ce. Worshipers of both faiths flocked to temples and caves, whose walls were painted or lined with monumental sculptures depicting Daoist gods and goddesses, Buddhas and bodhisattvas (enlightened beings).

Tianlongshan Caves

Created between the sixth and ninth centuries, Tianlongshan—Heavenly Dragon Mountain—in Shanxi province, China, is the site of twenty-five cave temples that served as places of retreat and meditation for Buddhist monks. Carved into the south-facing side of two sandstone cliffs, their history spans three major Chinese historical periods, the Northern Qi, Sui, and Tang dynasties. Many of the sculptures were removed and dispersed in the early twentieth century. Fortunately, photographs taken in the 1920s, when the sculptures were still intact, permit

scholars today to digitally reconstruct these remarkable Buddhist sanctuaries. Over one hundred figures and fragments from the caves are known today.

Tile from a tomb, Han dynasty, c. 1st century bce

Chinese

Grey earthenware and pigments Purchase Fund, 1951.16

During the Han dynasty lavish tombs were constructed for rulers and aristocrats and elaborately furnished with grave goods. Han tombs were horizontal pits dug under the ground or into a hillside. Their interiors, constructed to look like palaces, were faced with clay bricks or tiles with molded designs that often included mythical creatures. The undulating dragon with an armed man dancing on its back was a favorite theme. Its precise meaning is not known, but in Chinese belief the dragon is an auspicious creature connected with rain and the beneficent forces of nature. It is also a creature that can transport shamans on ecstatic journeys to visit deities in heaven.

Bactrian camel, Tang dynasty, 720–750 ce

Chinese

Earthenware

Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 1963.41

Glazed earthenware camels were among the most spectacular figures placed in the tombs of the wealthiest members of Tang society. This two-humped Bactrian camel is saddled, loaded, and ready to join a westbound caravan along the Silk Roads crossing Central Asia. The grotesque masks on the saddle cushions are thought to represent the Central Asian merchants who were prominent in the luxury trade between China and western countries. This trade was important to the Chinese economy and nurtured the Tang taste for the exotic in art as well as in life.

Guanyin holding a bottle and fly whisk, Five Dynasties, 907–960 ce, or Song dynasty, 960–1279 ce

Chinese

Bronze with traces of gilding

Gift of James Junius Goodwin, 1947.241

Guanyin, the bodhisattva of compassion who helps everyone in time of need, is the most beloved enlightened being in the Buddhist pantheon. This youthful figure was originally part of an altar group with Buddha at the center. The fly whisk in the right hand stands as a mark of respect for the Buddha; the bottle in the left hand contains holy water. A tiny image of Buddha Amitabha in the hair identifies the sculpture as Guanyin.

Figure, Late Eastern Zhou dynasty to early Western Han dynasty, c. 3rd century bce

Chinese, Changsha, Hunan Province

Polychromed wood Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1949.110

This figure from a tomb in the ancient state of Chu in south China was meant to act as an aide to the spirit of the deceased in the next life and to testify to the status the person had attained in this life. Originally part of a set, it may represent an official wearing the painted robes of an important dignitary. Striking figures such as this one, with highly stylized bodies and animated painted faces, were among the first Chinese attempts to render human likenesses. Chu tombs were sunk several feet vertically into the earth with a burial chamber at the bottom.

Animal or demon mask (chanfron), Western Zhou dynasty, 11th–9th century bce
Chinese
Bronze
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alexis Zalstem-Zalesky, 1955.93

Bronze masks of this type are exceptionally rare. They were likely made for burials, perhaps to protect the sacred areas of a tomb from evil spirits. The era of the Zhou dynasty was part of the Bronze Age of China, so-called because bronze—an alloy of copper and tin—played an important role in the material culture of the time. It was used to make weapons, chariots, ritual vessels, and masks.

Wall painting, Ming dynasty, probably 15th–16th century
Chinese, Northern China
Paint on clay
Gift of Cornelius Ruston Love Jr., 1951.230

This painting may depict the goddess of sons and grandsons, Zisun Niangniang. Mounted on a dragon, the goddess and accompanying boy likely represent the wish of traditional families to have an educated son who attained high rank. This painting was once part of a larger mural from a Daoist temple. Female pilgrims would journey there seeking the goddess's blessing and aide—so they would conceive children, be protected during childbirth, and have their children protected.

Standing bodhisattva, possibly Guanyin, possibly Jin or Liao dynasty, 11th–12th century
Chinese, purportedly from Gansu Province
Polychromed clay, stone, and wood
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr. through purchase, 1955.261

This life-size figure of a bodhisattva, or enlightened being, would have been one of many sculptures in a Buddhist temple complex. Adorned with a crown, jewels, and flowing robes, this sculpture might represent Guanyin, the bodhisattva of compassion, who is known as Avalokiteshvara in Sanskrit. Guanyin, who was neither male nor female, could appear in various guises to help the distressed and deliver all living creatures from suffering. The figure is made of sun-baked clay formed around a wooden support. Although damaged and repaired over the centuries, it still retains its stone eyes and some of its original painted surface.

Head of Buddha, Tang dynasty, early 8th century ce
Chinese, Tianlongshan caves, near Taiyuan Shanxi Province
Sandstone
Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1951.95

This head once graced an over life-size seated figure of Buddha from Cave 14 at Tianlongshan. Carved in place in the back wall of the cave temple, the sculpture was flanked by six attendant bodhisattvas (enlightened beings). The stylized head includes the Buddha's characteristic features: short curled hair; the ushnisha, or protuberance atop the head that symbolizes the expanded wisdom that the Buddha gained at his enlightenment; and elongated earlobes reminding us that he was once a prince who wore much jewelry, including heavy earrings, before he abandoned worldly life in favor of the religious life.

The Arts of China: The Qing Dynasty

Historical eras in China are identified by the name of the dynasty in power. Some families ruled for centuries, while others for only a few decades. In 1644, the Manchu defeated the Ming and established the Qing dynasty, the last Chinese dynasty which ended in 1911 after 268 years. Its heyday was from 1662 until 1795 — a period of political stability and economic prosperity that allowed the arts to flourish and the Qing emperors to become leading patrons.

The perfection of porcelain was among the most notable artistic achievements of the Qing dynasty. Imperial kilns at Jingdezhen in southern China produced thousands of objects for the court, which was located in Beijing. The Qing emperors occupied a vast palace complex called The Forbidden City and furnished it with blue and white and multi-colored vases and jars, ritual vessels, and useful wares. Meanwhile, private kilns in Jingdezhen rivaled the Imperial kilns in output. They produced porcelain to supplement the Imperial kilns, for domestic use, and for export to other parts of Asia and growing markets in the West.

Vase, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, 1736 –95
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.661

This vase is carved with phoenixes, symbolizing warmth from the sun and future peace and prosperity. The birds appear beneath inverted bats with outstretched wings, which represent the arrival of blessings. The scrolling shapes on the neck are adapted from ruyi (ceremonial wish-granting scepters) and mean “as you wish.” Low relief carving of this kind was meant to mimic the intricate designs of ancient ceremonial Chinese bronzes created thousands of years before. In the case of the present vase, the potter also chose a form inspired by earlier bronzes—a vessel called a zun.

Incense burner, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, c. 1780s
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.692

The tripod form of this incense burner, or censer, derives from an ancient bronze ritual cooking vessel called a ding. Its decoration includes the Eight Buddhist emblems—a wheel, conch, canopy, umbrella, lotus flower, vase, fish, and knot—each associated with a blessing.

Buddhism played a central role in religious and political activities during the Qing dynasty. Porcelain vessels made for the imperial court, like this censer, were specially commissioned for Buddhist altars. Made to hold burning incense, it would have been part of a five-piece altar set and used in religious ceremonies.

Blue and White Porcelain

Porcelain decorated with cobalt blue under a clear glaze was made in China starting in the 14th century, mostly in the city of Jingdezhen. During the Ming dynasty, remarkable artistic heights were reached, and by the Qing dynasty, under the emperor Kangxi, unsurpassed technical workmanship was achieved—perfectly fired clear blue decoration on sparkling white porcelain.

Bottle, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, late 17th– early 18th century
Chinese, Jingdezhen

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Wall Text and Extended Labels, European Art
09-13-15-ay

Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1918.518

The bulge on the neck of this bottle makes it easy to grip, even with slippery hands. The shape was developed in the Middle East, where people ate without utensils. The Chinese made them in porcelain for export to the Middle East and Europe.

Bottle, Qing dynasty, Kangxi, Yongzheng, or Qianlong period, 1700–50
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.708

The dragon on the bottle's shoulder symbolizes the emperor, and the phoenix on the bottle's body represents the empress. Together they stand for marital happiness, and vessels with both images were often given as wedding gifts.

Bowl, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, 1786
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.713

Roundels enclose Chinese characters that translate as, "high as the mountain and long as the river," which figuratively means, "noble and far-reaching." Buddhist auspicious emblems for good luck and fortune form the surrounding decoration.

Bowl, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, 1736–95
Chinese, Jingdezhen, Zhi yuan tang zhi hallmark
Hard-paste porcelain
Bequest of Mrs. Gurdon Trumbull, 1934.251

Two five-toed dragons, symbols of the emperor, form the central decoration of this bowl. They are shown racing amidst blue clouds above a band of rocks and crashing waves.

Bowl, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, late 18th century
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.629

The decoration of this bowl, called "rice grain," was made by piercing holes through the thick walls of rough, unfired porcelain and then filling them with translucent glaze that coated the entire vessel.

Dish, Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period, 1722–35
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.721

A red, five-toed dragon reaches to grasp a "flaming pearl," the symbol of wisdom and enlightenment.

Oxblood Glaze

Deep red glazes, sometimes called oxblood, were a specialty of Kangxi imperial kilns at Jingdezhen. They were developed in the early 18th century to recreate prized red monochrome glazes of the 16th century. The color was derived from copper, which turned red when fired in an oxygen- deprived kiln.

Porcelain for the Scholar's Table

Small artistic objects made of various materials, including porcelain, were produced for Chinese scholars to hold their tools for painting and writing. The porcelain objects came in eight classic shapes, usually with monochrome glazes. Sets included lidded seal-paste boxes, three forms of water bottles, open-mouthed brush washers, and beehive-shaped water containers.

Peach-bloom Glaze

Typically pinkish red with russet spots, this copper-based glaze is also tinged with green from where the copper oxide did not turn completely red. The powdered copper was blown onto the surface, causing a mottled effect. This glaze was used almost exclusively for small porcelain objects made for the scholar's table.

Water jar, Qing dynasty, probably Kangxi period, 1662–1722

Chinese, Jingdezhen

Hard-paste porcelain

Gift in memory of Mae Cadwell Rovensky, 1961.264

Incised roundels with archaic-style dragons are barely visible under the glaze of this jar, which was used to store water on a scholar's table.

Seal-paste box, Qing dynasty, probably Kangxi period, 1662–1722

Chinese, Jingdezhen

Hard-paste porcelain

Gift in memory of Mae Cadwell Rovensky, 1961.248

This small box held seal paste, a red paste (like sealing wax) used by an artist or collector to stamp his mark on paintings or other works of art on paper.

Jade

What is commonly called jade is actually two different minerals, nephrite and jadeite, both notable for their hardness and beauty when fashioned into works of art. Made and highly valued from very ancient times in China, by the Qing dynasty jades were of unsurpassed detail, complexity, and technical virtuosity. Carvers produced a vast range of extravagant objects, like table screens, sculpture, vessels, and objects for the scholar's desk.

Brush washer, Qing dynasty, possibly Qianlong or Jiajing period, late 18th– early 19th century

Chinese

Nephrite (pale celadon jade) Bequest of Elisha E. Hilliard, 1951.313

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Wall Text and Extended Labels, European Art
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This brush washer is made to resemble the curving, scrolled head of a ruyi — a wish-granting scepter. Its surface is decorated in low relief with bats and clouds.

Double-gourd washer, Qing dynasty, Kangxi, Yongzheng, or Qianlong period, 18th century
Chinese
Nephrite (white jade) and ivory (stand) Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1919.14

This delicate washer is in the form of a double gourd and also decorated with double gourds, tendrils, and a bat. Double gourd forms embellished with further gourds was a rebus that when decoded reads *guadie mianmian* — a wish for many descendants.

Table screen with stand, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, 1736–95
Chinese
Nephrite (white jade), boxwood, hardwood, and stained ivory
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1919.7

Two cranes stand on the trunk of a pine tree. A medicinal mushroom called a *lingzhi*, revered for its life-prolonging properties, is depicted on the far right. Altogether these motifs signify long life — “may you enjoy longevity like the pine and the crane.”

Brush pot and stand, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, 1736–95
Chinese
Nephrite (pale celadon jade) and wood (stand) Bequest of Elisha E. Hilliard, 1951.308

Daoist sages, pine trees, deer, and scholars with peach boughs and staffs make up the decoration of this brush pot. It would have been an appropriate accessory for a scholar’s desk, where it was not only a utilitarian vessel but also an object of contemplation.

Vase, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, 1736–95
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Bequest of Elisha E. Hilliard, 1951.321

Called a *tianqiu ping*, or “vault of Heaven” vase, because of the globe-shaped lower body, the generous shape of this vase afforded a broad canvas for porcelain painters to demonstrate their prowess. Dominating the decoration is a large dragon, one of the four divine animals that symbolized fertility. The creature is depicted with five toes (emblematic of the emperor), rather than four (for nobility) or three (for lower ranking people). The lotus blossoms that cover the vase symbolize purity.

Vase, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, c. 1700–20
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.662

The uneven blue background color was achieved by spraying cobalt pigments through gauze with a bamboo tube. Then the surface was covered with a clear glaze and fired at a high temperature. Only then was it gilded with birds, flowers, leaves, and decorative patterns and borders.

Vase, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, c.1700
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Morris Joseloff, 1963.506

The three Daoist Star Gods — Lu, with the deer (rank); Fu, holding the boy (happiness); and Shou, with the staff (longevity) — are featured on this vase. Among the most popular Chinese deities, together they form a wish for good fortune, success, and a long life.

Vase, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, 1662–1722
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Morris Joseloff, 1963.505

This vase is decorated in the color palette called *famille verte*, which uses five colors with green dominating. Pervasive during the Kangxi period, it was applied to both useful and decorative objects. The battle scene may be from a Ming dynasty novel, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

Jar, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, 1662–1722
Chinese
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1918.498

Petal-shaped panels with scenes of elegant court women harvesting lotus blossoms, caring for children, and playing musical instruments alternate with others filled with flowering plants including chrysanthemum, lotus, peony, and magnolia. The jar would have been part of a set of three that also included two matching vases. Its large size indicates that it was made for export, probably to Europe, where such pieces were displayed in fashionable interiors.

Historic Overview

Modern European portraiture evolved during the fifteenth century. Artists began depicting not only rulers and people of high standing, but also members of the growing merchant and middle classes.

Portrait drawings were originally done as preparatory studies for paintings or sculptures. Increasingly, though, draftsmen created them as finished works of art, as seen in the earliest sheets in this show, which were drawn by unknown Italian artists during the sixteenth century. These informal works contrast with portraits like Robert Nanteuil's *Louis XIV* and Ercole Lelli's *Portrait of a Man*, which tell us more about the prestige of the sitters. Lelli's portrait relates to the many artists' portraits in this exhibition, including examples by Gustave Courbet and Erich Heckel. They provide views of the different artists' personalities, as well as insight into the status of the artists.

Another important and popular type of drawing is caricature, which begins with a keen observation of the sitter's position in society, but can also reveal the perspective of the artist. Examples in this show include ravishing works by Pier Leone Ghezzi, Nicolas de la Fage, and Pablo Picasso.

Egon Schiele

Austrian, 1890–1918

Portrait of Doctor X, 1910

Black pastel and watercolor on paper

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1967.69

The head of this unknown sitter is inquisitive and wary; the hands are elongated and grasping. These characteristics are typical of many of Schiele's portrait drawings, which tend to portray the sitter in a brittle and angular fashion. While the figure looks realistic, the portrait as a whole has an abstract quality that disconnects the head and hands from the body and background. Because of this approach that Schiele infused into his works, he became one of the most successful portrait painters in early twentieth-century Vienna.

Michael Sweerts

Flemish, 1618–1664

Portrait of a Nobleman, 1660

Etching on paper

Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 2001.17.1

The inscription below this portrait explains that Sweerts executed a painted version as well (Pi is an abbreviation for pinxit, which is Latin for "painted"). Although the painting is lost, Sweerts likely produced this etching of it in order to distribute his art to a wider audience. Many people who could not afford a painted portrait could purchase an etching, and Sweerts's reputation grew as images of his work reached more people. The sculptural quality of this figure, highlighted by the strong contrast of light and dark areas and the modelling of the head, demonstrates Sweerts's great talent as a printmaker.

Unidentified Artist

Italian, Lombardy

Head of a Man, 2nd half of the 16th century

Red chalk on red-tinted paper

Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1958.728

This drawing, neither flattering nor finished, is most likely an artist's study. Such works became common beginning in the late fifteenth century as the availability of paper grew. From that time onward, drawings were a means of visually recording and saving a catalogue of expressions, poses, materials, and compositions for later use. This head, while roughly executed, is detailed, particularly around the man's eyes, suggesting that the artist was studying the subject's intense gaze.

Unidentified Artist

Italian

Profile of Bearded Man, 1st half of the 16th century

Red and black chalk on paper

Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1956.768

This small, gem-like drawing was long considered the work of the sixteenth-century artist Parmigianino who is best known for his delicate and elegant figures. As such, it was included in the collections of the eighteenth-century artists and collectors Jonathan Richardson and Joshua Reynolds. The virtuoso style makes it likely that an artist close to Parmigianino created this portrait, because the combination of red and black chalk is unusual for him.

Anthony van Dyck
Flemish, 1599–1641
Portrait of Justus Sustermans, c. 1630–31
Etching on laid paper
Gift of Mrs. Francis B. Lothrop, 1956.86

From his dress and bearing, Justus Sustermans could be mistaken for an aristocrat, diplomat, or wealthy gentleman, but the inscription below identifies him as a Flemish painter. So why did van Dyck present him without a brush and palette or some other indication of his trade? Around 1630 van Dyck planned a gallery of engraved portraits of eighty to one hundred of the most important people of his time. Van Dyck wanted to elevate the status of Sustermans and the other artists that he included in the gallery, so he depicted them in ways that made them indistinguishable from the aristocrats and the wealthy who hired them.

Anders Zorn
Swedish, 1860–1920
Self-Portrait with his Wife, 1890
Etching on paper
Bequest of George A. Gay, 1941.2571

The intense expression in Zorn's eyes is in sharp contrast to the casual and rather distracted look of his wife Emma, who nonchalantly holds her left hand on her hip. With uninterrupted hatchings (fine lines in close proximity), Zorn gave Emma a translucent appearance. As he confessed in his memoirs, he had borrowed the composition from Rembrandt's famous print (on view nearby), but deviated from it in an original way by giving his wife a more independent role.

Rembrandt van Rijn
Dutch, 1606–1669
Self-Portrait with Saskia, 1636
Etching on laid paper
Bequest of George A. Gay, 1941.775

This is one of the best-known self-portraits of Rembrandt, an artist who frequently presented himself in paintings, drawings, and prints. It is also the only one in which he included his wife, Saskia van Uylenburgh. It shows the thirty-year-old artist taking a quick rest from his work on a drawing or etching. The apparent reality of the scene is deceptive because Rembrandt put himself and Saskia in historic dress.

Pier Leone Ghezzi
Italian, 1674–1755
An Ecclesiast Seated
Pen and ink on paper
Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1950.448

Ghezzi was a painter and draftsman whose fame rested on the hundreds of portrait drawings, particularly caricatures, that he drew. Unlike his caricatures, which exaggerate the features of the people that he portrayed, this drawing seems to be a straight-forward depiction of one of the many low-rank ecclesiastical figures in eighteenth-century Rome.

Robert Nanteuil
French, 1623–1678
Louis XIV, 1666
Engraving on paper
Gift of Mrs. Francis B. Lothrop, 1956.87

As one of the most successful French engravers of the seventeenth century and the official engraver of the French court, Nanteuil produced several portraits of Louis XIV. Nanteuil included here the royal coat of arms, armor, books, and a laurel to show Louis as an ideal king who was both educated in the humanities and a military commander. The Latin inscription emphasizes the king's divine right to rule with the words *dei gratia* (by the grace of God). Portraits like this were printed in large numbers and easily distributed. As a result, they became an ideal tool for French propaganda during the seventeenth century.

Robert Nanteuil
French, 1623–1678
Queen Christina of Sweden, 1654
Engraving on paper
Gift of Forsyth Wickes, 1960.348

Queen Christina of Sweden caused a sensation across Europe in 1654 when she abdicated her throne, converted to Roman Catholicism, and started a new life in Rome. Writers such as Georges de Scudéry dedicated poems to her, and painters vied for the opportunity to portray her. This likeness is based on a painting by French artist Sébastien Bourdon. By transforming Bourdon's portrait into a print and adding de Scudéry's dedication, Nanteuil aimed to satisfy the rising demand for portraits in seventeenth-century Europe.

Ottavio Mario Leoni
Italian, 1578–1630
A Man in a Tall Hat and Ruff
Black chalk on light blue paper
Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 1948.125

Leoni's portrait drawing is both natural and direct. As if captured in motion, the middle-aged man glances back and connects with the viewer. Although Leoni probably drew this portrait in Rome in the 1620s, the sitter was most likely Flemish or Dutch, based on the fact that the fashion for wearing a ruff or plaited collar was waning by 1600 except in northern Europe.

Ercole Lelli
Italian, 1702–1766
Portrait of Giampietro Zanotti, 1739
Pen and brown ink with gray wash on paper with red chalk
Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 1948.133

The image of the man wearing a turban, sketched in red chalk, and the surrounding border of male nudes, executed in pen and ink, are actually two separate drawings with the chalk one inserted into the oval center of the pen and ink one. The sitter is Giampietro Zanotti, a painter who co-founded the Bolognese Art Academy in 1710. In 1739, he authored a history of the Academy, and this drawing was the model for the engraved portrait that appeared in the book.

Nicolas Raymond de la Fage

French, 1656–1684

Caricatures

Pen and ink on paper Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 1948.148

Ugly, awkward, and misshapen are all words that could describe the three principal figures in la Fage's drawing, but the exaggeration of physical attributes in seventeenth-century caricature was meant to be more humorous than disparaging. During that period, caricature was meant to subvert the classical artistic standards being taught in art academies. The academies instructed their students to idealize the figures that they depicted. Caricature, on the other hand, undermined the very idea of perfection.

Erich Heckel

German, 1883–1970

Self-Portrait, 1912

Watercolor and chalk on paper Special Gift Fund, 1959.8

Heckel's head is an arresting pale mask floating in a sea of bright patches. The head dominates the flat wash of colors through simplicity and contrast, not detail. For Heckel, the principle concern of his self-portrait was not physical accuracy but rather the expressive charge that it would transmit to the viewer. The wide-spread use of photographic portraiture by the end of the nineteenth-century inspired artists like Heckel to develop new visual directions and aesthetics for painted and printed portraits, often, as in this case, at the expense of an authentic likeness.

Gustav Klimt

Austrian, 1862–1918

Study for the Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer Seated, c. 1904–6

Black chalk on light brown wove paper Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 2002.2.1

Klimt's sketch is simple but focused, meant to catch the posture of the seated figure, the position of her elegant hands, and the tilt of her head. It is one of many working sketches that he made in preparation for the portrait of the Viennese socialite, Adele Bloch-Bauer, which he completed in 1907. The drawing may be an early one because of the pose, the lack of details present in other preliminary drawings, and the absence of any of the abstract decorative patterning that would dominate the finished work.

Godfrey Kneller

English, 1646–1723

A Gentleman

Crayon heightened with white chalk on paper Bequest of Warren H. Lowenhaupt, 1967.472

With its softly drawn strokes, careful rendering, and dramatically applied white chalk, this drawing is typical of Kneller. As the leading portraitist in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, he

produced numerous paintings of members of the court and the London middle class and may have drawn this head in preparation for a larger work in oil paint. Indeed, it has been argued that it was a model for his portrait of Samuel Pepys, the most famous diarist of his time.

Pablo Picasso

Spanish, 1881–1973

Self-Portrait with Two Nudes, 1903

Pen and ink, Chinese white, and blue chalk on paper

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1933.519

Dressed against the cold, hands in his pockets, and a pipe in his mouth, Picasso depicts himself as if he were strolling through the streets. His face is like the profile portraits of Roman emperors, severe and commanding, but his dress gives him a casual air. In the background, he sketched two remarkably voluptuous and lifelike nudes.

Gustave Courbet

French, 1819–1877

Self-Portrait, c. 1849

Black chalk on paper

Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 1950.605

Courbet gazes out defiantly, as if eager to fend off any negative comments about his rustic dress, which recalls clothing worn by rural peasants. This charcoal drawing was produced during the late 1840s, a period in which he drew and painted many such self-portraits, presenting himself in various guises or different states of mind. Born the son of a farmer, Courbet was originally from the countryside, but by the late 1840's, he was trying to carve out a career in Paris. The series of self-portraits may have been part of his efforts to establish an artistic identity for himself.

David Wilkie

Scottish, 1785–1841

Abram Incab Messir, 1841

Chalk and watercolor on paper

Purchased through the gift of James Junius Goodwin, 1951.228

Wilkie presents Abram Incab Messir as an exotic and powerful sitter. Messir was a dragoman — an interpreter in Arabic-, Persian-, and Turkish-speaking countries for European travelers, diplomats, and merchants. Wilkie met him while traveling in Turkey and depicted him wearing Turkish dress. Messir's layers of clothing and fur-lined wrap give him a substantial, imposing appearance. The book he holds alludes to his intelligence and his work as an interpreter.

Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres

French, 1780–1867

Portrait of Louis-Pierre Haudebourt

Graphite on paper

Private Collection, t.1.2011.24.25

The architect Louis-Pierre Haudebourt was in his late twenties when Ingres captured his youthful likeness. As in many of his other portrait drawings, Ingres included much more detail in Haudebourt's head and face than in his torso and clothing, creating an elegant unfinished effect. Ingres introduced a playful element into the portrait by

drawing Haudebourt with his thumbs hooked through his suspenders. This small gesture conveys Haudebourt's ease and self-confidence.

Adolf von Menzel

German, 1815–1905

Study of a Woman in Profile, 1890

Graphite with stumping and scratching out on paper The European Paintings and Sculpture Purchase Fund, 2001.11.1

Menzel captured a single fleeting glance in this portrait of an unidentified woman. Her waved hair, deep-set eyes, and shadowed cheek come alive through his dazzling use of graphite. Menzel used a carpenter's pencil—made of soft graphite, with a broad, flat point—and a technique called stumping (rubbing with bits of tightly rolled paper or leather) to achieve a variety of tones and textures. In his later years, Menzel worked primarily on a small scale, often employing the cropping evident here. Throughout his career, Menzel was a prolific draftsman, who drew hundreds of figure studies.

Creating an Identity: European Portraits from the Works on Paper Collection at the Wadsworth Atheneum

More than ever, portraits have become a defining visual art form in our digital age. They can be vivid, intimate, and direct, or they can be staged and formal. These differing and captivating qualities have been explored by artists of all ages. This selection of works from the Renaissance to the early twentieth century gives us insight into how we have viewed ourselves. As a medium for portraiture, paper invites the artist to experiment and allows a variety of approaches. Studies for a larger work, an imaginary portrait, or a caricature are all quick to execute and require little preparation. This exhibition unites works as diverse as a quick sketch by Italian Baroque artist Pier Leone Ghezzi and a studied self-portrait by French Realist Gustave Courbet.

The riches of the Wadsworth Atheneum's European drawing and print collections are rarely exhibited because of their fragility and sensitivity to light. Since the 1920s the museum has acquired by purchase and by gift a splendid and varied group of European works on paper. At the core of the collection are works by French and Italian artists. This is the first exhibition of a series that will explore highlights from the museum's European works on paper collection.

Follow in the Artist's Footsteps

Did you know that many artists learn their craft by copying other artists? Edward Bartholomew, the artist who made this sculpture of Eve, copied an Italian artist named Pasquale Gezzi. Follow in Bartholomew's footsteps by sketching our collection. Grab a pencil and paper below and find a work of art in our galleries that inspires you. When you have chosen your work of art: Look: take 30 seconds to look at the artwork. Get closer — but not too close — and notice details. Step back and take in the whole work of art.

Sketch: Once you have examined your artwork, begin sketching. Draw a small section, a single detail, or the entire composition. Feel free to take artistic license and change elements of your artwork — that is how great art is made.

Ponder: What new things did you learn or notice about the work of art by drawing it? If you could, what would you ask the artist?

Draw Me

Grab a pencil and paper and try your hand at drawing this statue of Eve — using only a single line.

Pick a starting point, like the top of Eve’s head, and keep drawing without ever taking your pencil off the paper. Think strategically about how to include details like the leaves and the waves of her hair.

Challenge yourself to capture as many details as you can.

Remember, the goal is to keep the line going, not to create a perfect drawing.

Renaissance Art

The Renaissance (French for “rebirth”) revolutionized Western Art. Although there was no abrupt break with medieval values, an individualistic view of humanity and a greater interest in science evolved during the fourteenth century. These developments created a more secular society interested in the teachings of the ancient world. Expanding trade routes connected cities in northern and southern Europe with recently discovered regions around the globe, resulting in new wealth, the rapid growth of urban centers, and an increased demand for the arts. During the Renaissance, a distinctive style of art emerged, marked by a clear and simple structure. With the discovery of linear perspective, artists began to explore spatial depth and composed powerful, unified scenes. Inspired by ancient art, they also studied the human figure and learned to realistically portray anatomy and proportions. The introduction of oil paint in Western Art during the fifteenth century allowed painters to experiment with glazes and to create glowing colors. In the decorative arts, craftsmen made sacred objects as well as luxury goods for everyday use and display.

Titian’s Portrayal of Children

The leading artist in sixteenth-century Venice, Titian is perhaps most recognized today for his many religious and mythological paintings. Among his contemporaries, however, he was most celebrated for his portraits. As the foremost portrait painter in Europe, Titian depicted the grandest people of his time: a succession of churchmen, a pope, kings, princes, and nobles, as well as the Holy Roman Emperor. Less well known is Titian’s contribution to the development of children’s portraiture. During the Renaissance, children were commonly presented as miniature adults or in close company with them. Titian instead portrayed children as individuals with the innocence and spontaneity peculiar to their age. This portrait of Ranuccio Farnese is among his most famous examples and inspired numerous artists who followed.

Maiolica

Maiolica is Italian earthenware covered with an opaque white glaze. The fired pottery was dipped into a glaze made of lead and tin oxides mixed with silicate of potash, producing a white surface that could be painted on easily. A second firing fixed the pigments and glaze and melted it to a glossy surface.

Apothecary jar, c. 1427–31

Italian, Florence

Workshop of Maso e Miniato di Domenico or Giunta di Tugio Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica)

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.416

The oak-leaf design, painted in rich cobalt blue outlined in manganese purple, was a Florentine specialty in the early 15th century. The crutch on each handle was the emblem of the Florentine hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, which ordered over a thousand drug containers between 1427 and 1431.

Apothecary Jars

Pharmacies, which required hundreds of vessels to store ingredients to make remedies, provided a strong economic base for the ceramic industry. Apothecary jars were produced in various shapes, including cylindrical vessels with rims so that parchment could be tied over the tops, jars with spouts, and round, two-handled jars.

Apothecary jar (albarello),
c. 1545–50

Italian, possibly Castelli

Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.430

This jar held sugar derived from the herb bugloss. Drugs made with this ingredient supposedly helped reduce fevers, quieted lunatics, and acted as a stimulant when added to wine. The soldier who decorates this albarello is dressed in fanciful Roman armor.

Apothecary jar (albarello), c. 1500–20

Italian, Florentine region, probably Montelupo

Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.439

This jar was once part of a set that was probably made for the same apothecary. They all have a carnation within a laurel wreath on the front and strong and bold foliage on the back. This jar held aloe lavato — a form of aloe perhaps used for washing.

Apothecary jar (albarello)

Italian, Siena

Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.447

These jars are decorated with borders of interlaced and geometric patterns framing grotesques (imaginary figural decorations), trophies, and foliage designs. There are no inscriptions to indicate the substances that would be stored in these jars. That practice only became popular, commonplace even, towards the end of the 15th century.

Virgin and Child, c. 1480–1510

Italian, Romagna or Le Marche

Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.444

Devotional sculptures like this Virgin and Child were probably made to adorn the inside of a church. They could stand on the altar, or like this piece, be set right into the wall. Any candlelight in the church would have been reflected in the brilliant glaze and created the illusion of light emanating from the sculpture itself. The detailed geometric decoration covering the inside of the niche emphasizes its depth and attests to the interest in representing perspective that developed during the Renaissance.

Manger, c. 1480–1510

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Italian, Romagna or Le Marche

Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.432

This relief depicts both the Nativity of Christ and the Annunciation to the Shepherds. In the lower half, Mary and Joseph kneel in reverence to the infant Jesus, and in the upper half, the Angel of the Lord announces the birth of Jesus to the shepherds, who had been watching over their flocks outside of Bethlehem. This object is a rare example of large-scale maiolica sculpture made by potters from the end of the fifteenth century. It would have been imbedded into a wall of a church or chapel and used as a devotional altar.

Attributed to Gregor Erhart

German, active 1500 – c.1540

Saint Vincent or Saint Lawrence (?)

Saint Urban (?) Saint Killian (?)

Polychromed wood

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lippincott Goodwin, 1953.96; and Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1953.97-98

Saints are identified by the objects they hold, such as books or fruit. However, the identity of these saints is difficult to determine because over the centuries those original attributes were lost and replaced. The deeply cut folds in the statues' clothing indicates that they were probably carved by Erhart himself, or another workshop located in southern Germany, perhaps Swabia. Originally, the three saints might have been part of a large multi-panel altarpiece. Their colorful paint, including lots of gold, would have glowed in a dark church, adding to an atmosphere of exaltation and mystery for the faithful.

The Master of the Hartford Annunciation

French, School of Amiens

Annunciation, c. 1480

Oil and tempera on canvas transferred from panel

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1942.351

This painting depicts the Annunciation, when the angel Gabriel tells the Virgin Mary she will carry the Son of God. Gabriel's greeting, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee" is painted in gold, from his lips to her ears. The chosen setting, the soaring interior of a fifteenth-century cathedral, is symbolic. The church was often compared to Mary, because they were both considered vessels for Christ. The painter of this charming work combined older medieval traditions with some new artistic innovations. The doll-like figures and gold leaf take their cue in part from medieval manuscripts. The realistic architectural space looks forward to the Renaissance.

Unidentified Artist

German, Upper Rhine

Angels with Musical Instruments, c. 1480

Polychromed wood

Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 1950.132–33

With their drapery swirling around them, these little angels seem to embody joy. They were originally meant to be part of a larger religious work, perhaps an altarpiece. The presence of musical instruments indicates the scene may have been a happy event, such as a Nativity or a Coronation of the Virgin. The angels likely come from the Upper Rhine region of Germany, known for its polychromed (painted) wooden sculpture. The creator of these angels put great care into individual details despite their small size. For instance, notice that the angel playing the lute is covered in golden feathers.

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Unidentified Artist
French, School of Avignon
Pietà, c. 1470
Tempera on panel
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1928.322

Pietà is Italian for “mercy.” In art, it refers to images of the Virgin Mary mourning over her dead son. Christ’s skeletal body and bleeding wounds heighten the emotional impact of the painting. The buildings in the background resemble the castles of Avignon’s fifteenth-century skyline. Perhaps the familiar setting helped viewers imagine themselves present at this holy event. The French city of Avignon was a cultural center and artistic melting pot. In this painting, the bold, simple composition and gold background have roots in Italian painting. The angular figures and crisp lines reflect the work of Flemish artists.

Unidentified Artist
French or Flemish
Portrait of a Member of the Van Busleyden Family, c. 1495–1505
Oil on panel
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1941.155

This portrait most likely functioned as the right wing of a diptych (two framed paintings hinged together) used for personal devotion. In a prayerful pose, the sitter faces left where another panel probably depicted the Virgin and Child. Although the sitter is not yet identified, his refined hair and rich clothing identify him as a sophisticated patrician. The coat of arms refers to the Van Busleyden family whose members held powerful positions in the administration of Burgundy, giving them ample resources to commission works like this.

Cosimo Rosselli
Italian, Florence, 1439–1507
The Visitation, c. 1500
Oil on panel
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, Gift of Mrs. Arthur L. Erlanger, by exchange, and Bequest of Mrs. Clara Hinton Gould, by exchange, 1989.16

Rosselli’s restrained approach and exquisite use of color perfectly capture the quiet emotion of the Visitation. Elizabeth kneels before her younger cousin, the Virgin Mary, with the rolling hills of the Tuscan countryside behind them. Both women are newly pregnant. The Virgin Mary carries the Christ Child, and Elizabeth’s son will be John the Baptist—later adopted as the patron saint of Florence.

Donatello and workshop
Italian, Florence, c. 1386–1466
Madonna and Child
Terracotta relief, in painted décor with gilt carved wood bracket
Bequest of Mrs. Clara Hinton Gould, 1948.243

Donatello was the leading sculptor in Florence during the fifteenth century when reliefs depicting the Madonna and Child were in high demand for devotional display in homes and chapels. Donatello presents the figures in three-quarter view, allowing him to convincingly render depth in the shallow relief. He conveys the human bond shared by this sacred mother and child through the directness of their gaze into each other’s eyes and the tender

placement of their hands. Several other casts of this group are known and often his whole workshop became involved in their production.

Guido di Pietro, called Fra Angelico

Italian, Florence, c. 1395–1455

Head of an Angel, c. 1445–50

Tempera and oil on panel

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1928.321

This panel is actually a small portion of a larger altarpiece depicting the Virgin and Christ Child, now in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Here, the angel holds a piece of the cloth that is fully visible in the Amsterdam panel. With its soft features, elegant neck, and tender glance, this angel has an exceptional artistic quality. It is fitting that the artist was named, soon after his death, *Pictor angelicus*, the angelic painter. His treatment of religious subjects in a pious yet compelling manner made him one of the most important artists of the early Renaissance.

Ambrosius Benson (and workshop?)

Netherlandish, born in Lombardy, c. 1495–1550

Virgin and Child

Oil on panel

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1945.352

The Virgin wistfully looks down at the Christ Child while he nurses. A lamb, symbolic of Christ's sacrifice, is brought by a group of angels to the Fountain of Life at the left. Joseph picks fruit from a tree while a donkey grazes at the right. These scenes refer to the Virgin's purity and the salvation of humankind through Christ's Crucifixion, popular topics during the early sixteenth century, especially in Bruges where Benson worked. He employed a busy workshop to satisfy the rising demand for such devotional panels across Europe.

Sixteenth-Century Art

With ideals of harmony and simple grandeur, the Renaissance style came to its peak in the early sixteenth century. It was the most influential style across Europe until the nineteenth century even though its span was brief and never universally adopted. The early sixteenth century was a time of great cultural and political exchange between southern and northern Europe, and Rome was the thriving epicenter of artistic activity. The rise of the Protestant Reformation, however, led to divisions in Europe, with deep consequences for the arts. The power of the Catholic Church and Rome's influence waned, leading many local artists to look for patrons outside the city and even to leave Italy. Fierce wars and profound religious uncertainties lasted for decades. Artists working in Europe's courts responded with a more complex artistic style that reflected this time of turmoil. Known as Mannerism for its "mannered" or artificial quality, this new style spread throughout the continent during the mid- and late sixteenth century.

Dramatic stories from ancient history and mythology became popular subjects. Landscapes and peasant life were systematically explored by artists towards the end of the century.

Vase, c. 1560 –75

Italian, Urbino

Workshop of Fontana Family

Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.406

Neptune, god of the sea, rides a seahorse and holds his trident above his head. He is surrounded by other mermen and sea nymphs, among them his bride Amphitrite (riding the horse). The Fontana workshop was noted for painting scenes of marine deities and creatures immersed in a background of sinuous blue waves.

Maiolica

Maiolica is Italian earthenware covered with an opaque white glaze. The fired pottery was dipped into a glaze made of lead and tin oxides mixed with silicate of potash, producing a white surface that could be easily painted. A second firing fixed the pigments and glaze and melted it to a glossy surface.

Basin, c. 1560 –70

Italian, Urbino

Probably workshop of Fontana Family Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica)

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.409

Basins of this type were used for display. The central medallion depicts an animal sacrifice—a scene inspired by a section of the Arch of Constantine that shows Emperor Marcus Aurelius making a similar offering. On the reverse, six relief-molded swans follow the contours of the basin's shape.

Vase, c.1570 –80

Italian, Urbino

Workshop of Fontana Family or Antonio Patanazzi Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica)

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.407

Vases like this were meant for display, likely on dining room sideboards and in pharmacies. The shape of this example is derived from ancient Roman vases. The fanciful decoration was probably inspired by Raphael's intricate frescoes in the Vatican.

Pharmacy in Roccavaldina (Messina), Sicily, 1620, maiolica dating from 1580–81

3 Platter, c. 1560 –70

Italian, Urbino

Workshop of Fontana Family

Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.411

The central scene depicts Julius Caesar triumphant in battle. It is surrounded by symmetrically arranged vegetal, human, and animal decoration called grotesque, which was inspired by the recently discovered grottos of ancient Rome. The reverse side is decorated with Neptune amid waves and dolphins.

1 Basin for a ewer, c. 1530

Italian, Deruta

Possibly workshop of Mancini Family Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica)

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.431

Maiolica dishes inscribed with a woman's name and the word bella or diva were likely made as gifts for a lover or wife. They were produced in large numbers in many of the leading pottery towns in the second quarter of the 16th century.

Pilgrim flask, 16th century
Italian, Venice or French
Enameled glass
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.336

Derived in shape from canteens carried by Middle-Eastern travelers, this purely decorative flask is a prime example of enamel painting on glass. Gum Arabic was used to fix the paint to the glass object, which was then fired to fuse the colors permanently to the surface.

Dish, c. 1510–25
Italian, probably Siena
Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.438

It is unclear what the imagery on this dish means. The young boy, or putto, is committing suicide by throwing himself on a sword, a method common in ancient mythology. Yet he wears coral beads, which were used as charms in Renaissance Italy to protect against illness and harm.

Dish, c. 1510–20
Italian, Deruta
Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.452

This plate's inscription, *co[n] ferma fede* (with firm faith), and the imagery of two clasped hands suggest that it may have been a love or betrothal gift. The golden-luster metallic glaze is a hallmark of pottery made in Deruta in the first half of the 16th century.

Dish, c. 1520–30
Italian, Faenza
Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.434

In the center of this plate a child kneels in front of a skull, above which is written *Memento Mei* (remember me). This confrontation with death, a vivid reminder of mortality, is strangely combined with elegantly painted motifs derived from antiquity—winged heads, satyr masks, flowers, and cornucopias.

Pastiglia casket, c. 1500–40
Italian, Venice or Ferrara
Workshop of Moral and Love Themes Alder wood, lead paste, and gilding
Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter Keney, 2011.6.1

Given as courtship or marriage gifts, these boxes were often decorated with lessons of virtue. The lid shows Lucretia, the Roman epitome of the righteous wife. The front and back depict stories of the Roman heroes Marcus Atilus Regulus and Scipio Africanus. Pastiglia is a lead paste that can be imbued with scent. Decorations were made in tiny molds and then joined to form the whole.

Goblet, c. 1534–50
Probably Austrian (Tyrol), Hall, glasshouse of Wolfgang Vitl or Sebastian Höchstetter
Non-lead glass

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Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.342

Venetian-style glass was made across the Alps from Venice in Austria where the Hall factory opened in 1534. Challenged by difficulties in obtaining the raw materials for cristallo, Hall produced a thicker, smoky glass, with minute bubbles and impurities. The gilded, molded knob is also typical of Hall's work.

Goblet, c. 1550–1600

Italian, Venice

Non-lead glass (cristallo)

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.347

This delicate wineglass is made of cristallo, a colorless glass developed in Venice in the 15th century. Made with highly purified materials (primarily silica and soda), it was much clearer than its predecessors. It could be easily manipulated when hot and thus blown very thinly.

Dish, c.1530

Italian, Castel Durante or Fabriano

Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.453

The Agostini family coat of arms appears in the center of this plate. The simple, elegant space between it and the rim features a bianco-sopra-bianco (white on white) design that was commonly used to separate densely decorated surfaces. The plate's rim shows trophies and musical instruments.

Jug, 1513

Italian, Montelupo

Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica) Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.435

This jug, which would have held nearly four gallons of wine, was made for Bernardo di Jacopo de' Medici and his wife Ginevra della Stufa. Their united coat of arms appears beneath the papal tiara and keys — symbols of their relation to the Medici Pope Leo X. The coat of arms seen under the handle probably belongs to the gift-giver.

Cope, early 16th century

Spanish

Linen, silk, gold, and metallic wire

Gift of Mary Batterson Beach, by exchange, and the Costume and Textile Purchase Fund, 1982.159

This cope (a ceremonial cloak worn by the clergy) is unusual because the body was made in Spain in the 1500s, while the hood bears the German coat of arms of the Reck family and is dated 1629, suggesting that it passed from one owner to another at that time. The scene illustrated on the hood is an episode in the life of Christ — The Holy Family in the Temple when Christ is Twelve. The orphreys (the richly embroidered bands that run down the front of the garment) portray apostles and other saints.

Andrea Previtali

Italian, c. 1470–1528

Madonna and Child with a Donor, c. 1504–5

Tempera and oil on panel

Gift of Mrs. Stanley L. Richter, 1944.58

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In Renaissance Europe, devout patrons often commissioned works of art that included their own portraits interacting with religious figures. Here, the Madonna gently touches the head of the donor while the Christ Child makes a sign of blessing. Previtali places his figures before a luminous landscape bathed in atmospheric light. From a sacred perspective, the sprouting cut tree as well as the ruined palace at the right balanced by the new one to the left may symbolize hope and regeneration. The new palace also reflects the most recent trends in Venetian Renaissance architecture.

Francesco d'Ubertino Verdi, called Bacchiaccha
Italian, Florence, 1494–1557

Tobias and the Angel

Oil on panel

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1930.79

The refinement of Bacchiaccha's delicate figures and pastel-like colors appealed to the Florentine nobility and the court. Here he tells a story from the Old Testament Apocrypha about how the Archangel Raphael helped the young Tobias. When Tobias is sent far away by his blind father to collect a debt, the Archangel appears and helps him to catch a fish— seen at bottom beside the boy's dog— with curative powers. When Tobias returns home, a salve made from parts of the fish would be used to heal his father's blindness and exorcise the devil that possesses his future wife.

Piero di Cosimo

Italian, Florence, c. 1462–1522

The Finding of Vulcan on the Island of Lemnos, c. 1490

Oil and tempera on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1932.1

One of the most original Renaissance artists, di Cosimo often chose subjects from classical mythology. Here he portrays the story of Vulcan, the classical god of fire, as told in Homer's Iliad. The young Vulcan's parents, Jupiter and Juno, tossed him from Mount Olympus through a hole in the clouds. Di Cosimo depicts Vulcan's leg in an awkward pose after his decent.

He landed on the island of Lemnos, where a group of nymphs discovered and nursed him. This work and a companion piece were probably created for the home of a wealthy, cultivated Florentine resident.

Battista Dossi

Italian, Ferrara, c. 1490 –1548

The Battle of Orlando and Rodomonte, c. 1527–30

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1949.81

Orlando Furioso by Ludovico Ariosto was one of the most famous epic poems of the Renaissance. Dossi has boldly depicted an absurd episode — the fight on a bridge between the naked Orlando and the armor-clad Rodomonte. Instead of focusing on the fight, Dossi meticulously included additional elements from the narrative, such as the tower and the mausoleum with its many trophies.

By doing so, he created an enchanting representation of the chivalrous spirit of the early sixteenth century.

Sebastiano del Piombo

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Italian, Venice, active in Rome, c. 1485–1547
Portrait of a Man in Armor, c. 1512
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1960.119

After training in Venice, Sebastiano moved to Rome, where he became one of the most sought after artists of his time, rivaling even Raphael. He most likely painted this portrait shortly after his arrival there. The extravagant armor suggests that the sitter was a military commander of high rank. Note the sitter's intense direct gaze and the brilliant reflections on the armor. Seen faintly at the left is the head of a page, or apprentice. Sebastiano had originally painted him out, but his image has resurfaced over time.

Domenico di Bartolommeo Ubaldini, called Domenico Puligo
Italian, Florence, 1492–1527
The Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist and Two Angels, c. 1525
Oil on panel
Gallery Fund, by exchange, 1991.2

Christ stands and reads to the Virgin from an open book, referring both to his role as a teacher and to the future books of the New Testament. Saint John the Baptist, in the lower right, holds a cross and points to Christ, predicting the Crucifixion. Two angels hold white lilies, symbols of the Virgin's purity. The white sweet briar rose on the parapet foreshadows the Passion. With its elongated proportions and a constricted composition, Puligo's work embodies the early Mannerist style that became popular in Florence during the 1520s.

Alessandro di Cristofano di Lorenzo, called Alessandro Allori
Italian, Florence, 1535–1607
Portrait of a Noblewoman and her Son, 1574
Oil on panel
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1988.14

The slightly elongated features of the mother and son, along with the sharp contours and icy colors, identify this portrait as being typical of Mannerism, a style known for its elegance and artifice. A favorite artist of the Medici court in late sixteenth-century Florence, Allori idealized his fashionable sitters and paid great attention to the details of their dress. The young mother has a static, almost frozen demeanor that highlights her elevated social status. Even her little son appears aloof with his calm expression and formalized gesture.

Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem
Dutch, 1562–1638
The Prodigal Son Wasting his Substance, 1604
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1941.391

The story of the prodigal son, who leaves his father's house, wastes his inheritance, and returns home for forgiveness, is told in the Gospel of Luke. Here the prodigal son, seated at a table with musicians and singers, embraces an alluring woman as he lifts his wineglass. The elaborate costumes and decorative pastel-like colors add an elegant touch to the scene. Cornelis was one of the principal practitioners of the Mannerist style in Holland at the end of the sixteenth century.

Unidentified Artist
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Flemish, early 17th Century

The Trojan Horse

Oil on panel

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1965.3

One of the most important events in Greek mythology, the Trojan War has inspired countless artists since ancient times. Painters were especially drawn to the story of the Trojan Horse. Here, one can see the Greek soldiers gliding out of the horse's belly and attacking their unsuspecting victims. The flickering light only reinforces the drama and highlights the ability of the still-unknown artist to paint this dynamic scene with such a restrained palette.

Hendrick Goltzius

Dutch, 1558 –1617

Adam, 1613

Oil on panel

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 2004.23.1

This painting was originally paired with one of Eve, now at the Museum of Fine Arts in Strasbourg, France. Adam holds a sprig of hawthorn, the tree from which Christ's crown of thorns was supposedly fashioned. The sprig becomes a symbol of both the Fall of Man and his Salvation. A painter who achieved great fame during his lifetime, Goltzius developed a powerful figural style that foreshadowed the Baroque. He was particularly fond of painting the Fall of Man, as it allowed him to depict classical nudes under the guise of religion.

Giovanni Francesco Bezzi, called Nosadella

Italian, Bologna, active c. 1549 –1571

Thyestes and Aerope,

c. 1565–71

Oil on canvas

Purchased in honor of Dr. Eric M. Zafran, Susan Morse Hilles Curator of European Art, with funds from The European Painting and Sculpture Fund, The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, and The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund, in gratitude for his many years of dedicated service to the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (1997–2012), 2012.19.1

This monumental canvas is the only known painting by Nosadella with a secular theme. In the boldly lit scene, Aerope is urging her brother-in-law and lover, Thyestes, to steal the Golden Fleece from his brother, her husband Atreus. The dramatic gestures, contorted poses, and emphasis on dancing light, all typical of the Mannerist style, combine to create a mood of turmoil appropriate for the disturbing act of betrayal.

Lelio Orsi

Italian, Emilia, c. 1511–1587

Noli me Tangere, c. 1575

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1936.500

Noli me Tangere (Touch me not) is Christ's admonition to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection, when she recognizes him in the garden outside his tomb and starts back in surprise. Behind them, the turbulent sky echoes the drama. In the figures of Christ and the Magdalene, Orsi combined a characteristic delicacy of gesture and expression with a muscularity derived from the later works of Michelangelo. In fact, this image of Christ is based directly on Michelangelo's famous Saint John the Baptist in the Last Judgment fresco of the Sistine Chapel.

Leandro dal Ponte, called Bassano
Italian, Venice, 1557–1622
The Flagellation, c. 1585
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1940.25

Christ's flagellation by an unruly mob before his crucifixion is set before a column and staircase, suggesting the palace of Pontius Pilate. The lurid lighting and bright touches of color that illuminate this nighttime scene work to heighten the impact of the violence. Leandro's animated brushstrokes, especially evident in Christ's face and torso, enhance the drama of the scene.

Leandro was a member of a family of artists and had been trained by his better known father Jacopo.

Lucas Cranach the Elder
German, 1472–1553
The Feast of Herod, 1531
Oil on panel
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1936.339

The Biblical story of Salome was popular during the Middle Ages and Renaissance. It was seen as a cautionary tale of women's power over men. King Herod Antipater of Galilee and Perea requested his stepdaughter, Salome, to dance for him, and in return she demanded the head of Saint John the Baptist. Cranach has depicted the moment when Salome, having received her wish, presents to Herod and his wife, Queen Herodias, the saint's severed head on a platter. Her grisly offering is mirrored by the appetizing tray of fruit carried by the servant.

Bernard van Orley
Flemish, c. 1488/1492 – c. 1541/1542
The Crucifixion, 1515–20
Oil on panel
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1939.429

Van Orley shows the Crucifixion against a dark sky with the sun and moon in eclipse. Christ's serene facial expression and extended body contrast with the contorted poses of the crucified thieves. At the left, the Virgin Mary collapses in despair, while Saint John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalene grieve openly. Van Orley's rich colors and elaborate details reflect the tradition of Flemish Renaissance painting. But other elements, such as the athleticism of the figures and the depth of space, suggest an awareness of Italian and German Renaissance art.

Jan Sanders van Hemessen
Netherlandish, c. 1500–1575
Loose Company, 1543
Oil on panel
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1941.233

This is a scene of debauchery. With her wine glass, raised naked arm, and suggestive pose, the young woman in the center leaves few questions about her profession. Whether the much older man is still enjoying this close entanglement might be debated, but the painting is warning us not to give in to all-too-human temptations. Van Hemessen developed these moralizing pictures as his trademark during the mid-sixteenth century. As one of the earliest painters specializing in profane subjects, he played an important role in the development of genre scenes.

Hans Mielich
German, 1516–1573
Outdoor Banquet, 1548
Oil on panel
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1949.199

At this imaginary outdoor banquet, elegantly dressed court members are seated at a table under an elaborate trellis. Mielich painted in exacting detail, as can be seen in the sumptuous costumes, lush foliage, and musical instruments. The palace on the left, not typically German in style, might be a reflection of the artist's travels through Italy. He included his own self-portrait in the right foreground and added a wandering beetle on the top edge to create an illusion of reality. Mielich worked for the Duke of Bavaria, whose court was one of the most famous in Germany.

Jacopo dal Ponte, called Bassano
Italian, Venice, c. 1510 –1592
The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, c. 1553
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1959.254

Bassano took an innovative approach in depicting Saint Catherine's mystical marriage to Christ. The Virgin Mary and a scruffy looking shepherd occupy the central space, while the main event takes place off to the right. Rather than looking out toward the viewer, the participants are lost in personal reflection during this act of faith. The rich colors, uncommon use of pink and orange, elegantly elongated figures, and the sketchy, seemingly unfinished qualities of the work are hallmarks of the Venetian Mannerist style.

Titian
Italian, Venice, 1488/1490 –1576
Ranuccio Farnese, 1542
Oil on canvas
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1952.2.11
Support for this loan was generously provided by Henry and Sharon Martin.

Titian painted this portrait shortly after twelve-year-old Ranuccio had been made prior, or religious director, of San Giovanni dei Forlani, an important property belonging to the Knights of Malta. The grandson of Pope Paul III, Ranuccio was the youngest member of one of the wealthiest and most powerful families in Italy. With vivid contrast between the dark background and the luminous red coat, as well as numerous layers of translucent oil glazes, Titian captures Ranuccio as a sensitive young man who is about to embark upon a public life.

SECOND FLOOR

Early Baroque Art in Europe

The term “barroco” originally described an irregular pearl, but now refers to the theatrical and exuberant style of painting that prevailed in Europe from the late sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century. The origins of the Baroque are closely related to the Catholic response to the rise of Protestantism. Art was intended to promote the principles

of Catholicism and help restore the dominance of the Catholic Church, which had become the leading arts patron across Europe. Powerful, large-scale images of popular saints and religious stories were painted to appeal to everyone, no matter how rich or poor, whether well educated or illiterate. Rome stood at the center of this new creative activity. Countless artists flocked to the city, bringing with them their own traditions that blended into the developing style. The most famous of these artists is Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, who arrived in Rome in the 1590s. His realistic saints and sinners placed in dramatically lit settings were immensely popular and influenced many European artists. The Wadsworth Atheneum was one of the first museums in the United States to collect Baroque art thanks to its visionary directors A. Everett “Chick” Austin Jr. (1927–1944) and Charles C. Cunningham (1946–1966).

Salvator Rosa

Italian, Naples, 1615–1673

Lucrezia as Poetry, c. 1641

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1956.159

Paintings of allegorical figures were popular in seventeenth-century Italy, but this work by Rosa is in a class of its own. It portrays his mistress, Lucrezia, as the Muse of Poetry—an art form that the multitalented Rosa also pursued. The traditional symbols of poetry, such as the pen, book, and laurel leaves, help to identify the subject, but it is the half defiant, half withdrawn attitude of Lucrezia that gives the portrait its particular, enigmatic tone. A companion Self-Portrait by Rosa is in the National Gallery, London, and together they are the quintessential expression of his creative genius.

Pier Francesco Mazzucchelli, called Il Morazzone

Italian, Lombardy, 1573–1626

The Agony in the Garden, c. 1608–12

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1997.1.1

This work depicts Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane with his sleeping disciples, just before he is arrested. As he prays that God’s will be done, an angel appears, giving him strength. Morazzone was a seminal figure in the development of early seventeenth century Lombard painting. With its gaunt Christ, the striking light contrasts, and the rich colors, this painting conveys a feverish intensity. Look at the highly stylized figures of Christ and the angel and compare them with the relaxed naturalism of the slumbering apostles in the foreground.

Master of the Hartford Still Life

Italian, Rome, early 17th century

Still Life with Flowers and Fruits, c. 1600–10

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1942.353

The painter of this grand still life is not yet identified, and has therefore been labeled the anonymous “Master of the Hartford Still Life.” Even though it has a slightly unnatural quality, the artist was clearly familiar with the achievements of Caravaggio, who supported himself by painting flowers and fruit when he first arrived in Rome. Still-life paintings became an independent subject matter only around 1600, and this is one of the earliest examples. Such works often combined religious symbolism and vanitas—art works that portrayed the transitory nature of existence—as both the flowers and fruits depicted quickly fade.

Jusepe de Ribera
Spanish, active in Naples, 1591–1652
The Sense of Taste, c. 1614–16
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1963.194

This jolly, somewhat ragged figure is the embodiment of the sense of taste and also, perhaps, an allusion to the sin of gluttony. His frugal meal clearly delights him— a generous portion of lamprey, a cone of olives, a hard, crusty roll, and a carafe of wine he has already begun to enjoy. The five senses—taste, sight, touch, smell, and hearing— have been a popular theme in art since the Middle Ages. Usually they were shown as allegorical female figures, but Ribera applied in this and other works a more earthy approach and depicted them all as men.

Carlo Saraceni
Italian, Venice, c. 1579–1620
The Holy Family in Saint Joseph’s Workshop, c. 1615
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1963.496

During the Counter-Reformation—when the Roman Catholic Church directed reform efforts to combat the spread of the Protestant Reformation—the Papacy favored this subject because it emphasized the humanity of the Holy Family, represented here as a model of harmony. Saraceni interpreted Saint Joseph’s carpentry shop as an intimate setting of a family (with the addition of young angels), but with an underlying note of sadness. A nail presented by Jesus to his mother and the pieces of wood held by Joseph, as well as the two small angels, allude to the Crucifixion. Mary seems to chastise her son for his willing sacrifice.

Nicolas Poussin
French, 1594–1665
The Crucifixion, 1644–46
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1935.422

This Crucifixion dramatically illustrates the moment of Christ’s death when the sky went dark, graves were opened, and the bodies of the saved rose up. At the right foreground, we can see Adam, whose grave was believed to be on Golgotha. The complicated scene is contained by the great arc formed by the three crosses, while gestures and gazes unite the figures within the space. We know from Poussin’s letters that he became completely consumed by the theme and never tried to paint it again. The painting was always dark, but has suffered due to changes in the paint pigments and early harsh cleanings.

Artemisia Gentileschi
Italian, 1593– c. 1651/53
Self-Portrait as a Lute Player, c. 1615–18
Oil on canvas
Charles H. Schwartz Endowment Fund, 2014.4.1

Artemisia was one of the leading painters of the seventeenth century thanks to her bold style, use of sensuous colors, and mastery of the brush. Trained by her father Orazio Gentileschi (see his painting nearby), she enjoyed extraordinary success during her life. In this self-portrait, the artist wears a luxurious costume and plays the lute to portray herself as a cultivated woman. Her low-cut bodice and direct gaze create an erotic overtone that was

appropriate to the traditional association of music and love. It also hints at Artemisia's reputation as a seductive woman.

Orazio Gentileschi

Italian, Florence, active in Rome, 1563–1639

Judith and her Maidservant with the Head of Holofernes, 1621–24

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1949.52

Gentileschi represents the biblical episode of Judith, the heroic widow who, in order to save her besieged city of Bethulia from the Assyrians, agreed to dine with their general, Holofernes, in his tent. Taking advantage of his drunkenness, she beheaded him with his own sword. The artist shows Judith and her servant, Abra, surreptitiously leaving the enemy camp with the head partially concealed in a basket. Gentileschi knew Caravaggio, and his influence is reflected in the charged drama of this scene, with its large figures and dramatic lighting. The luxurious textures and elegantly painted fabrics, however, reveal Gentileschi's own style.

Anthony Van Dyck

Flemish, 1599–1641

The Resurrection, c. 1631–32

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1964.1

Van Dyck was inspired by Rubens and Titian, whose influences can be seen here in the emphasis he placed on color and brushstroke rather than precise drawing. While perhaps better known as a portraitist, Van Dyck created in *The Resurrection* a painting of an ecstatic vision that embodies the Baroque. Viewers were meant to share in the emotion of the astonished soldiers as Christ soars before their very eyes toward the divine light of heaven. The broad, free style suggests that the painting may have been left unfinished.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio

Italian, 1571–1610

Saint Francis of Assisi in Ecstasy, c. 1595–96

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1943.222

Caravaggio revolutionized the painting of his era through a theatrical use of light, dramatic narrative, and the naturalistic depiction of everyday people and objects. These hallmarks can already be seen here, in his first known religious composition. Saint Francis is just emerging from an ecstatic state cradled by an angel, while shepherds sit in the shadowy background bathed in a mystical light. Identifying himself with Christ's suffering, Saint Francis has just received the stigmata—the actual wounds of the Crucifixion—visible only on his side in Caravaggio's interpretation.

Bernardo Strozzi

Italian, Genoa, 1581–1644

Saint Catherine of Alexandria, c. 1615

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1931.99

Catherine was a fourth-century Egyptian princess who converted to Christianity. Frustrated in his efforts to have her recant and marry him, the Emperor Maxentius ordered her to be executed on a spiked wheel. When the wheel was miraculously destroyed, Catherine was beheaded instead. She is portrayed here with her usual attributes—a fragment of the wheel, a book, a sword, and the palm branch as a sign of martyrdom. Strozzi created this sensual vision with fluid brushwork, shimmering colors, weightless forms, and fleeting facial expression—all characteristics of his finest works.

Sisto Badalocchio

Italian, Parma and Rome, 1585–about 1647

The Holy Family, c. 1610

Oil on panel

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1956.160

Born in Parma and trained in Rome, Badalocchio combined in this painting the sensuous, colorful landscape tradition of northern Italy with the balanced, self-contained style developed in Rome in the first years of the seventeenth century. The Christ Child sleeps peacefully, cradled in the arms of his mother, as Joseph looks on tenderly. While the subject is ambiguous, this work might be interpreted as an illustration of the Rest on the Flight into Egypt.

Francisco Ribalta

Spanish, 1565–1628

The Ecstasy of Saint Francis: The Vision of the Musical Angel, c. 1620–25

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1957.254

Ribalta chose a moment from the life of Saint Francis that was rarely painted. According to legend, a beautiful red-haired angel playing the lute appeared to the ailing monk at Rieti, near Rome, a year before his death. The sweetness of the divine music eased his pain and induced a state of ecstasy. Ribalta portrayed the essence of the miraculous vision that transported the saint from his earthly suffering. The painting was probably first housed in a Spanish monastery, where it would have effectively served as an example for the monks.

Baroque Art: Collecting and Patronage

The Baroque era was a time of expanding patronage for the arts. Traditional sponsors, including the Catholic Church, monarchs in France and Spain, and members of the ruling classes, continued to support artists and artisans. Rome was a center of established patronage where the Papal court, along with cardinals, ambassadors, and noble families, assembled important private collections. Princes and aristocrats from other parts of Europe collected and commissioned art as well, but now were joined by the newly wealthy merchant class, eager to adopt the grand lifestyle. Patronage took several forms, from directly commissioning works of art to forming collections through the burgeoning art markets in Rome, Paris, Amsterdam, Antwerp, and other European cities. Institutions and individuals competed for artworks in the latest styles, promoting the institution and meeting personal aspirations. Some artists participated more directly in the art market, where they acted as agents, dealers, and even collectors. As in most eras, art was a status symbol as well as a source of aesthetic and intellectual pleasure. Assembling an important collection was an essential sign of authority, status, and position.

Dining and Display

The display of wrought gold and silver on tiered pieces of furniture, called buffets, was an important aspect of dining-room decoration beginning in the sixteenth century. The size and splendor of the buffet reflected the status of the guest and the host; the number of tiers was an indication of the owner's rank. A buffet loaded with precious objects could signify one's royal or noble blood. It might demonstrate one's economic or political status, or be used to impress domestic and foreign dignitaries and diplomats. A buffet could be crowded not only with gold, silver, or silver-gilt, but also with stone vessels, Chinese porcelain, or whatever treasures could be assembled for the occasion. Hosts even borrowed pieces from friends or rented them from goldsmiths for great banquets.

Attributed to Balthasar Griessmann, German, c. 1620–1706
Presentation Model of a Reliquary, third quarter 17th century
Linden wood

The European Painting and Sculpture Purchase Fund; Bequest of Henry E. Schnakenberg, by exchange; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur L. Erlanger, by exchange; and Gift of The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, by exchange, 2010.3.1

Made from soft and easily worked linden wood, this model combines figural and floral decoration in an intricate composition. It likely served as the prototype for a version to be produced in precious metal for a church dignitary. A religious function is implied by the hats on empty cartouches in the lower part of the sculpture, belonging to a bishop, a cardinal, and a pope. The top section is a covered bowl designed to hold a relic, an object that belonged to a holy person. This is the first wood object attributed to Griessmann, who is recognized as an ivory carver.

Jacques Stella
French, 1596–1657
The Judgment of Paris, 1650
Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1957.445

In this painting, Stella illustrated a story which was famous as a precursor to the Trojan War. The goddesses Venus, Juno, and Minerva are shown standing in front of Paris and the god Mercury, awaiting the young mortal's verdict as to who is the most beautiful. The theme provided Stella with a chance to paint a pantheon of classical nudes, which he endowed with a sculptural, porcelain-like quality. Stella enjoyed the patronage of Cardinal Richelieu and the French court. He was also a collector himself and owned Nicolas Poussin's magnificent Crucifixion, displayed in the adjacent gallery.

Eustache Le Sueur
French, 1616–1655
Young Man with a Sword, c. 1645
Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1966.11

Although Le Sueur never went to Italy, this work evokes the Italian portraits of such High Renaissance artists as Raphael, Titian, and Sebastiano del Piombo, who were just as popular in seventeenth-century France as they are today. Evidence that Le Sueur might have studied some of those earlier paintings in his native Paris can be seen in the controlled pose and turned head of the young man. Yet Le Sueur rendered this portrait in his own style, using restrained but vivid coloring. Short-lived, Le Sueur enjoyed commissions from the nobility and upper-middle class in Paris.

Michael Sweerts
Flemish, 1618–1664
Boy with a Hat, c. 1655
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1940.198

With his averted gaze and flushed face, this boy radiates youth, innocence, and liveliness. His soft features and exaggerated beauty stand in contrast to his coarse clothing and misshapen hat. Whether this is an actual portrait or an idealized face is difficult to say. Yet this combination of realism and idealization has been described as Sweerts's signature style—a style that brought him admirers all across Europe. At the time Sweerts painted this study head, he ran a successful drawing academy in Brussels.

Claude Gellée, called Claude Lorrain
French, 1604–1682
Landscape with St. George and the Dragon, c. 1643
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1937.2

Lorrain depicts the legendary tale of St. George rescuing a woman from being sacrificed to a dragon, whose scaly green hide he has punctured. But the artist's real passion is the sweeping landscape, characterized by its soft light and harmonious proportions. He specialized in such landscapes set in an idealized Roman countryside, which were in high demand especially among the Italian and French aristocracy. Lorrain painted this scene and a companion work (National Gallery, London) for Cardinal Fausto Poli (1581–1653), who may have commissioned them to mark his election as a cardinal in 1643.

The Le Nain Brothers (possibly Louis Le Nain)
French, c. 1593–1648
Peasants in a Landscape, c. 1640–45
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1931.210

Scenes from peasant life were rare in seventeenth-century France, yet the Le Nain brothers were able to carve out a successful career in Paris by specializing in this subject. Rather than depicting the harsh reality of peasant life, the Le Nain portrayed peasants absorbed in self-reflection and private activities, such as the man on the left who seems to be detached from the other figures. The hilly landscape recalls the Picardie region in Northern France where the artists were born and educated.

Baroque Art: Looking Abroad

Countless artists traveled the waterways and footpaths of Europe looking for new markets, seeking patrons, fleeing political turmoil, or simply satisfying their curiosity. Through their journeys, artists spread styles and ideas to distant regions and cultures and, in turn, absorbed new aesthetics that they often integrated into their own works. Returning home, their new paintings attracted attention and influenced other artists. Northern artists often traveled to Italy, especially Rome. They studied the warm Mediterranean light, the art of ancient Rome, and the colorful street life. A group of Flemish and Dutch artists called the Bamboccianti charmed Italian artists and collectors with their preferred subject—scenes brimming with peasants, beggars, and other low-life figures portrayed with a great sense of naturalism.

Geographic explorations during the previous centuries led to robust international trade in the 1600s. Fortunes were made, spurring the demand for luxury goods and art to display in newly built houses and palaces. Through expanded global trade, Europeans discovered foreign artistic traditions, particularly those of the Far East. The novelty and exotic appeal of objects from these far-off lands resulted in a remarkable increase in their importation and

Dish, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, c. 1700 – 22
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.684

With its glossy surface and rich cobalt blue decoration, this dish exemplifies the high quality porcelain being made in China in the eighteenth century. The center features a peony and other blossoms surrounded by eight lotus-shaped compartments containing flowers of the four seasons. On the rim are peacocks set in chrysanthemum scrolls divided by panels of peaches and pomegranates. European buyers favored Chinese porcelain with both radiating designs and exuberant patterns. Large numbers of this particular dish must have been exported to Europe since we know that several examples were in the Dresden Court collection in the eighteenth century.

Dish, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, c. 1690 – 1700
Chinese, Jingdezhen
Porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.685

This dish is unusual for its massive size and bold floral pattern. The shape of the dish indicates that it was made for export because its curving rim and eight fluted lobes are not of Chinese origin, but rather derive from European silver forms. The all-over pattern of spiraling, leafy vines and peonies—decoration also created for export—resembles that found on vases and garnitures recovered from the wreck of the Dutch East India ship *Vung Tau*, found near Vietnam. More than 28,000 pieces of porcelain from this wreck were auctioned in Amsterdam in 1992.

Japanese-style Delftware

The Dutch East India Company imported large quantities of Japanese porcelain into Holland beginning in the 17th century. In an effort to compete with these imports, Delft potters began imitating Japanese wares, producing both blue and white and polychrome pieces in the Japanese style. Porcelain made in Arita and exported from Imari was of particular interest to Delft potters and patrons who seemed to appreciate the color palette of iron red, underglaze blue, and gold.

Covered vase, c. 1710
Dutch, Delft
Tin-glazed earthenware
The Richard and Georgette A. Koopman Collection of Delft, 2004.26.50

The decoration on this vase was inspired by Japanese Arita porcelain of the late 17th century. The zigzag design, called the "lightning" motif, is a misinterpretation of the zigzag bridges of Japanese gardens.

Plate, c. 1700 – 20
Japanese, Arita
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.717

A mainstay of the Dutch export trade, this Japanese plate combines polychrome enamel and underglaze blue decoration. The richly decorated pieces fit perfectly into the Baroque interior and appealed to the taste of the wealthy burghers.

Plate, c. 1722 – 30
Dutch, Delft
Ary van Rijsselbergh
Dutch, active 1703–1735
Tin-glazed earthenware
The Richard and Georgette A. Koopman Collection of Delft, 2004.26.28

Although these figures were meant to be Chinese, the color palette has more in common with Japanese porcelain. Such mixing of design suggests that Dutch potters were not concerned with accurate distinctions between Chinese and Japanese sources.

Garniture of five vases, 1725–30
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1186–90

Like the Dutch, Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and founder of the Meissen factory, had a keen interest in Asian porcelain, which he began to collect on a grand scale in about 1715. His large collection was placed in the Japanese Palace in Dresden, which Augustus had built especially to house his Asian and Meissen porcelain. Many pieces of Meissen, perhaps even these vases, were commissioned specifically for this venue. Scenes of fishermen by bridges, pavilions, elaborate Chinese rockwork, foliage, and birds decorate these vases. Each of the two beakers sports a dragon. The shapes and decoration of all five derive from Chinese Kangxi-period porcelains.

Chinoiserie

The fashion for all things from the Far East reached epic proportions in the 17th century. Western craftsmen began to imitate and adapt Chinese forms and motifs, creating a style called chinoiserie. Dutch potters produced imitation Chinese porcelain made of earthenware, and English silversmiths decorated their wares with fanciful “Chinese” figures.

Cup, c. 1690 – 91
English, London
Possibly Alexander Roode
English, active from at least 1683
Silver
The Elizabeth B. Miles Collection of English Silver, 1979.21

English silver decorated with chinoiserie was produced in small quantities in the later 17th century. The design was often taken from pattern books and reflects the vogue for all things Asian that resulted from European trade with the Far East.

Dish, c. 1680 – 85

Dutch, Delft, The Moor's Head Factory (Het Moriaenshoofft)

Jacob Wemmersz Hoppesteyn

Dutch, active 1664–1686

Tin-glazed earthenware

Gift in memory of Mae Cadwell Rovensky, by exchange; Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., by exchange;

Gift of Dr. Katharine Merritt, by exchange; and Bequest of Elisha E. Hilliard, by exchange, 2010.5.1

While the palette of this dish is neither strictly Japanese nor Chinese, the figures and border motifs are Chinese-inspired. The two warriors appear to have been taken from a book illustration by Olfert Dapper (1635–1689), a Dutch writer who wrote geographical accounts of Africa, China, Persia, India, Arabia, and Georgia, all while never leaving Holland. The dish was made by the Moor's Head factory, one of the first to experiment with polychrome decoration. This was in response to the Dutch importation of polychrome wares from Japan in the 1660s and 1670s, and from China in the 1680s.

Pair of vases, Ming – Qing dynasties, Transitional period, 1635 – 80

Chinese, Jingdezhen

Hard-paste porcelain

Bequest of Elisha E. Hilliard, 1951.320a,b

In 1624 the Dutch East India Company established a post on Formosa (modern-day Taiwan) and began regular trading with South China. Private merchants also engaged in the porcelain trade, specializing in importing Chinese porcelain with polychrome enamels. In the Netherlands people used this type of porcelain for interior decoration. You might have found this pair of vases standing in a fireplace during the summer.

This vase was likely part of a larger set of vases (some of them probably beaker-shaped) that would have adorned a mantelpiece or the top of a large cupboard. The shape, decorative borders, and continuous scenes of figures in a landscape were inspired by Chinese porcelain of the 17th century.

Covered vase, c. 1680 – 86

Dutch, Delft, The Greek A Factory (De Grieksche A)

Samuel van Eenhoorn

Dutch, 1655–1685

Tin-glazed earthenware

The Richard and Georgette A. Koopman Collection of Delft, by exchange, with assistance from The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund, 2004.25.1

Made during the golden age of Delft pottery, this vase is notable for the exceptional quality of the drawing, the richness of the cobalt blue, and the subtle gradations of tone used by the painter to impart a sense of space and volume. Its large scale is uncommon in Delftware, and generally was reserved for the most important ornamental pieces.

Covered jar, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, late 17th – early 18th century

Chinese, Jingdezhen

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Wall Text and Extended Labels, European Art

09-13-15-ay

Hard-paste porcelain
Bequest of Elisha E. Hilliard, 1951.324

Possibly part of a garniture, this large jar would have been quite expensive for a European buyer because of its size. Decorative panels—none of them the same—are filled with familiar Chinese motifs. We see baskets of flowers, “precious objects” in the form of vases and boxes sitting on and around tables, and flowering plum trees.

Jan Miel
Flemish, 1599–1664
Carnival in the Piazza Colonna, Rome, c. 1645
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1938.603

The popular Carnival festival has turned the Roman Piazza Colonna into a brimming beehive filled with people from all strands of life. Among the figures are Papal Swiss Guards, in their brightly striped garb, and a group of actors dressed as characters of the commedia dell’arte, including Harlequin with his checkered costume, Scaramouche in black, Doctor Boloardo with a book, and the corpulent Pulchinella. The effigy hanging from the gallows, a ritual of the last day of Carnival, symbolizes the passing of winter. Although Flemish-born, Miel worked mostly in Rome, where his scenes of common life influenced many local artists.

Michael Sweerts
Flemish, 1618–1664
Burying the Dead, c. 1650
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1941.595

Burying the Dead is one of a series of seven paintings by Sweerts that illustrate the Acts of Mercy as enumerated by Christ. The six other paintings are dispersed in various collections, but as a group they are considered Sweerts’s greatest work. He painted them while living in Rome, where he learned from Italian figurative and landscape artists. Here, Sweerts placed the Christian narrative in a real-life setting. The backdrop is suggestive of Rome, and the figures are dressed as if they were picked from its streets. The central composition, however, is similar to paintings of Christ’s entombment.

Salvator Rosa
Italian, Naples, 1615–1673
The Tribute Money
Oil on canvas
Gift of Beatrice H. Kneeland in memory of Henry T. Kneeland, 1986.269

According to the Gospel of Matthew, when Christ and Peter arrived in Capernaum, they were each asked to pay a tax for the maintenance of the Temple. Christ instructed Peter to catch a fish and take a coin from its mouth to pay the tax. Rosa’s version is set in a richly varied landscape, for which he was best known. Although Rosa criticized Northern artists living in Italy, he was nevertheless influenced by their style and choice of subjects.

Unidentified Artist
Italian, mid-17th century
Portrait of Giovanni Lodovico Almerici
Oil on canvas

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Wall Text and Extended Labels, European Art
09-13-15-ay

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1962.600

The letters on the table, inscribed “Al’ Sig. Gio. Lodovico Amer.” and “Pesaro,” identify this rather melancholic sitter as Giovanni Lodovico Almerici, the son of a noble family in Pesaro, Italy. The psychological nuances apparent in his expression and the detailed attention to his clothing make this painting one of the most compelling Baroque portraits in the collection even though the artist is not yet identified. Because of its liveliness and nuanced execution, it could have been executed by a Roman artist influenced by Pietro da Cortona or Carlo Maratta.

Adam Pynacker

Dutch, c. 1620–1673

River Barges by an Italian Shore, c. 1665–70

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1952.51

Seas and rivers filled with barges and ferries held a life-long fascination for Pynacker. In this late work, he once more turned to his preferred subject, suffusing this view with the warm light he had experienced decades earlier while in Italy. Three barges loaded with cargo prepare to rendezvous with the large ship in the distance. The scene is distinguished by the serene atmosphere of a late afternoon, seemingly undisturbed by the brimming human activities.

Aniello Falcone

Italian, Naples, 1607–1656

Cavalry Battle between Turks and Christians

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, and the European Paintings and Sculpture Purchase Fund, 2015.7.1

Battle paintings became a popular genre during the mid-seventeenth century, but unlike earlier depictions, these were not intended to show heroic deeds. Instead, they often focused on minor, anonymous events taking place away from the central action, such as the panicked flight of these soldiers. The Turkish rider on the left stands out with terror in his eyes as he looks back at the bloodshed he is escaping. Falcone might have been inspired by contemporaneous Dutch battle paintings, which were much sought after in Italy. His paintings were acquired by wealthy collectors in Naples and Rome as well as throughout Europe.

Dirck van der Lisse

Dutch, active c. 1635, died 1669

Pastoral Landscape

Oil on panel

Gift of Mrs. Charles C. Beach, by exchange, 1951.229

With the ancient Temple of Vesta on the left and the expansive, open landscape to the right, van der Lisse painted one of the most iconic sites of the Roman Campagna. He is best known for such sweeping views of the countryside surrounding Rome, although he never left Holland. Van der Lisse might have become familiar with the Campagna through the images created by his teacher Cornelis van Poelenburgh, who did spend many years in Italy.

Sébastien Bourdon
French, 1616–1671
The Smoker, c. 1637–40
Oil on copper
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1939.622

While residing in Rome from 1636 to 1638, Bourdon came under the influence of the Dutch painter Pieter van Laer (nicknamed “il Bamboccio” or “ugly puppet”) and his followers, the Bamboccianti. These artists specialized in small-scale, naturalistic paintings of Roman street life, which commanded high prices. Here, Bourdon set a cast of low-life characters, including an old soldier and musician, against a silvery landscape. The Smoker is one of a number of works that he produced while in Rome or shortly after his return to Paris.

Cornelis van Poelenburgh
Dutch, 1594/95–1667
The Feast of the Gods, 1623
Oil on panel
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1940.24

Poelenburgh spent the years 1617–27 in Rome, where he perfected his manner of small-scale, finely detailed works. He painted this subject, The Feast of the Gods, several times, and here, his composition was inspired by a famous fresco of Raphael’s. The date 1623, seen in the scythe, marks the Wadsworth Atheneum’s painting as one of the few securely dated works from Poelenburgh’s time in Italy, when he created the best of his idyllic landscapes, suffused with light and populated with mythological figures.

Nicolaes Berchem
Dutch, 1620–1683
A Moor Offering a Parrot to a Lady, c. 1660–70
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1961.29

This elaborate painting reflects the Dutch interpretation of Mediterranean life and leisure. An elegantly dressed lady is being courted by an African “Moor.” The exact meaning of this encounter remains ambiguous. It may be an allegory of love and desire, represented by the statue of Venus and Cupid, or an illustration of the five senses. Berchem was one of many seventeenth century Dutch painters who went to Italy, returning to Holland with a nostalgic yearning for the south. While Berchem’s style reflects the Dutch interest in rendering details of form and texture, its light evokes Italian scenery.

Late Baroque Art

Splendid courts with new palaces in cities such as Versailles, Vienna, and Dresden attracted international artists during the late Baroque period. This time was largely shaped by the outcome of the Thirty Years War, which pitted Catholics against Protestants. The war’s end in 1648 gave Europe a stability that allowed for the growth of political and cultural centers across European environments where the arts could flourish. In order to promote the power and splendor of their patrons, artists often worked on large interior spaces that combined architecture, painting, and sculpture. Although religious imagery was still in high demand, other subjects were explored—especially historical and mythological themes—as well as portraits and cityscapes. The art of the late Baroque is known for its open and airy compositions and its looser brushwork, leading to the more lighthearted Rococo style in the eighteenth century. Characterized by elegance, playfulness, and intimacy, this style soon spread throughout Europe. Painters,

sculptors, and craftsmen created highly decorative works for newly remodeled interiors. Craftsmen designed exuberant fantasies, both useful and decorative, for spaces meant for entertainment and pleasure. Luxury dining reached new heights, with elaborate dinner and dessert services of porcelain and silver designed to complement new foods and recipes that would dazzle guests.

The Invention of Hard-paste Porcelain in Europe

Hard-paste porcelain was invented in China, probably in the Tang Dynasty (618–906). Since its first importation into Europe, many had tried to unearth the mysterious composition of the material. The arcanum, or secret formula, for East Asian hard-paste porcelain was finally discovered in Germany by Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus and Johann Friedrich Böttger. Both worked for Augustus the Strong at the Saxon court. The alchemist Böttger had been seeking a way to turn base metals into gold. Instead, with the input of the scientific experiments of von Tschirnhaus, he discovered the recipe for Asian porcelain, the “white gold.” The first successful firing of European hard-paste porcelain took place in 1708.

The Meissen Porcelain Factory

In 1710, Augustus II the Strong, Elector of Saxony, established the Royal Porcelain Factory at Albrechtsburg Castle in Meissen, near Dresden. Augustus had an obsession with porcelain, a *maladie de porcelain* (porcelain sickness) as he called it. Meissen became the first European manufactory to produce hard-paste porcelain, and its porcelain soon ranked in value with silver and gold. Despite high precautions to protect the secret recipe, other factories started to produce hard-paste porcelain just a few years later. In order to insure the identification of the original Meissen porcelain, crossed swords—often painted in blue underneath the base—were introduced as a trademark in the 1720s.

Hard-paste vs. Soft-paste Porcelain

European porcelain falls into two principal classes, hard-paste or true porcelain and soft-paste porcelain. The main difference between the two is that the firing temperature of hard-paste porcelain is much higher (1300 – 1400° C vs. c. 1100° C). Hard-paste porcelain consists of kaolin, quartz, and feldspar, while soft-paste is made with powdered glass instead of the feldspathic rock. In comparison with soft-paste porcelain, hard-paste is bright white and almost impermeable to liquid. It is also less likely to scratch and crack during firing. However, its higher firing temperature makes it harder to apply decorative elements, such as certain colors that do not survive the heat.

Centerpiece, 1758 – 59
German, Augsburg
Bernhard Heinrich Weyhe
German, 1702 – 1782
Silver-gilt
Museum Purchase, 1950.437

Often called a *surtout* or *épergne*, this splendid rococo pergola served as the centerpiece on a very grand table, probably during the dessert course. Merry musicians, representing the four continents, play amid the fantastic

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architectural setting. Accompanying the centerpiece are four serving containers, two condiment dishes, a shaker, and a cruet; two dishes meant to hold lemons are hidden among the decorations at the top. A centerpiece of nearly identical design survives in Munich, and is part of a service that includes two additional pergolas, two candelabra, six casters, four salt cellars, four sauceboats, and two tureens.
C.12 - 3" Label Rail Cases

Centerpiece, c. 1745
Chinese, Canton
Enamel on copper
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.248

This elaborate centerpiece was created in Canton, China, for Jacopo Oddi of Perugia, who was made a Cardinal in 1743. Meant to be the focal point of a grand table setting, the central portion was probably filled with fruit, while the cruets and containers held condiments such as oil, vinegar, mustard, salt, pepper, and other spices. Eighteenth-century Chinese export enamels are rare, and this is an extraordinarily complete example. The technique involved covering copper forms with enamels (colored glass). The enamels were fused to the metal base in a high-temperature firing.

Ewer and basin, 1722 – 26
French, Saint-Cloud Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain and silver
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.921–22

The vivid green color and Asian-inspired flowers are similar to Delft wares painted at the turn of the 17th century, while the parrots—especially the one below the spout—and leggy flowers are common features of Dutch-decorated Chinese porcelain from about 1725.

Broth basin, c. 1730 – 40
French, Saint-Cloud Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1991.11

The flat handles and bold, erect knob of this broth basin relate directly to silver designs. On the other hand, the delicate plum blossoms in relief reflect similar decoration found on Chinese porcelain.

Two tobacco jars, c. 1743
French, Chantilly Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.901–2

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Tobacco was chewed, smoked, or taken as snuff. Jars of tobacco were often placed in the middle of the room to be shared socially. Snuff would be transferred from a larger jar to individual snuff boxes. The coat of arms on these jars probably belonged to Maurice Marquet, who was made a nobleman by Louis XV in 1743.

Chinese figures holding puppets, c. 1735 – 40
French, Chantilly Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.950–51

These French figures mix Japanese and Chinese elements in their costume and form. They represent Japanese Bunraku puppet theater performers, but their oval faces, high foreheads, and gently curving eyebrows relate to Chinese Kangxi-period porcelains. Originally, the heads and hands were movable, suspended by rods in grooves set inside the necks and wrists.

Budai, c. 1735 – 40
French, Chantilly Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.903

Budai is the Daoist god of happiness and good fortune. Chantilly copied this directly from a Chinese model—probably the single most popular blanc-de-chine figure exported to Europe.

Amphitrite, c. 1750
French, Mennecey Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of Forsyth Wickes, 1963.463

Amphitrite, goddess of the sea, is shown with a lobster in her left hand and a dolphin at her feet. For the model, Mennecey copied a then well-known 17th-century sculpture by Michel Anguier.

The Magic Lantern, c. 1760
French, Mennecy Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.924

Magic lanterns were machines that were used to project images from painted transparencies that were inserted between a candle and a lens. In the 18th century, they were carried at night by wandering musicians and sideshow performers known as Savoyards.

Chinoiserie

Although European fascination with China dates back to the 13th century, it reached new heights in the 18th century when trade with China allowed for increased travel to the Far East and brought large quantities of Chinese goods into Europe. A new style called chinoiserie developed, adapted from Asian motifs to create highly original forms of ornament and image. Painters and porcelain modelers filled fantastic settings with mustached and top-knotted Caucasians dressed in "Chinese" costume—masqueraders who bore little resemblance to real Chinese people. Charm and elegance, with a strong touch of exoticism, are the hallmarks of this style.

The Four Continents (Europe, Asia, Africa, America), c. 1760
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler and assistants
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1292–95

Allegories of the Four Continents—representing the four corners of the world—were common following the discovery of America. The models for this series were first created in the mid-1740s and came in a small version and a large one, seen here. This larger version was commissioned by Tsarina Elizabeth of Russia, daughter of Peter the Great.

Tobacco box, c. 1730 – 35
Austrian, Vienna, Claudius
Innocentius du Paquier Factory
Hard-paste porcelain
The Elijah K. and Barbara A. Hubbard Decorative
Arts Fund; and The European Decorative Arts
Purchase Fund, 1998.17.1

Du Paquier, a Viennese court official, established his factory in 1719 with the assistance of workers who had left the Meissen factory. It was particularly noted for its enchanting chinoiserie designs, naturalistic floral decoration, and lavish use of Baroque interlaced ornament.

Teapot, c. 1710 – 15
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Böttger stoneware
The Evelyn Bonar Storrs Trust Fund, 2002.6.1

Both the relief decoration and the form of this teapot are based on stoneware teapots imported from Yixing, China, dating from 1710—the exact period in which this Meissen teapot was produced. The black glaze and gilding, though, imitates Asian lacquer on wood.

Teapot, c. 1720 – 30
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Probably decorated by the Seuter workshop
German, Augsburg
Hard-paste porcelain
Bequest of Reverend Alfred Duane Pell, 1925.439

In the early years of the Meissen factory, independent enameling and gilding workshops operated by freelance artists frequently decorated excess stocks of white porcelain.

Coffee pot, c. 1730
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1992.76

The way in which the background

color relates to the painted scene on this coffee pot is highly unusual. Traditionally, the color was applied first, leaving certain areas (called reserves) white for additional decoration. Here, the figures were painted first and the green added after, creating an entirely different effect.

The Judgement of Paris, c. 1762
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1482

In mythology, the shepherd Paris was chosen by Jupiter to decide which goddess—Juno, Minerva, or Venus—should receive a golden apple inscribed “for the fairest.” He chose Venus, who in return helped him win Helen of Sparta for his wife. Helen’s abduction was the catalyst for the Trojan War. This porcelain group, probably commissioned by Frederick the Great when Prussia occupied Saxony during the Seven Years’ War, appears to have been the centerpiece of an ensemble that included eight other groups of mythological couples.

Crinoline Figures 1 Cavalier and lady, c. 1745 – 50
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1330

Referring to the hooped skirts worn by many of the female figures created at the Meissen factory, crinolines were an essential element of a lady’s costume. Hoops accentuated a slim waist and showed off richly embroidered silks. The oval hoop skirt, or pannier, was the ultimate status symbol and sometimes extended more than four feet on either side of the hips. They were known to have caused traffic jams

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in the streets and riots over theater seats, but aristocratic women loved crinolines because they set them physically apart, making the women works of art. The man wears the Polish Order of the Eagle, which was established in 1705 by Augustus the Strong of Saxony, who had become King of Poland in 1697. He bestowed the award on eight of his closest diplomatic and political supporters.

The Thrown Kiss, c. 1736
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1344

Blowing a kiss became a social mannerism in the 18th century. It involved precise gestures and was usually done in combination with a bow or curtsy. Properly executed, the forefinger of the right hand would be brought in a curved direction toward the lips without touching them; the hand then curved away from the face and down.

The Sacque Dress or Andrienne
3 Family group, c. 1740 – 45
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1334

An early 18th-century French dress style that spread to other European courts, the sacque evolved from the informal negligée or dressing gown. By the 1730s, the back of the dress had been formalized into two double-boxed pleats; the front was either loose or fitted into the waist with a bodice cut separately from the skirt. It was worn over a hooped petticoat of embroidered satin, brocade, or damask that allowed large floral patterns to be displayed to advantage.

Rendez-vous at the hunt, c. 1744
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1336

Hunting was wildly popular in the 18th century. It was not just an occasion to chase animals, but also a social event in which women participated. Additionally, it provided an opportunity for undisturbed intimacy. Though Kaendler depicted the woman in a hooped skirt, it would be impossible for a woman to ride in such a costume.

Sale of heart-shaped boxes, c. 1738
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1342

A Tyrolean girl is offering a variety of different boxes to an elegant lady and cavalier. Her case is filled with all kinds of small treasures: boxes, necklaces, earrings, a golden spoon, and pince-nez (glasses that clip to the nose). However, it is no coincidence that the lady picks the heartshaped box to show to her admirer.

Augustus III, c. 1753
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1329

Kaendler had already considered creating a monumental equestrian statue in porcelain of Augustus III, Elector of Saxony, for quite some time when in 1745 he designed a smaller version for the king's table. Six years later, Augustus commissioned the thirty-three-foot-high porcelain statue to be erected in the center of Dresden. Kaendler was a visionary who believed that almost everything could be produced in porcelain. However, we will never know if it would have been possible to realize this

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project. After working on the full-sized statue for five years, Kaendler had to stop due to the Seven Years' War.

Sauceboat, c. 1735 – 40
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1210

Kaendler created this sauceboat shape for a dinner service for Count Alexander Joseph Sulkowski, Saxony's Prime Minister. This particular sauceboat, though, can be identified by the coat of arms as belonging to the director of the Meissen factory, Heinrich Count von Brühl. A dish from his more famous Swan Service can be seen in this case.

Dish, c. 1737
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1990.2

This plate is from the monumental dinner service, comprising around 2,400 pieces, commissioned by Heinrich Count von Brühl, director of the Meissen factory from 1733 to 1763, to celebrate his marriage in 1737. With it, Kaendler revolutionized dinner services by modeling the central motif in relief and confining painted decoration to the coat of arms and edges. The swans, rather than the herons, give this famous collection its name—the Swan Service.

Pair of cannons, c. 1740
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1411–12

These cannons feature the coat of arms of Count von Brühl. They were

probably part of one of his many table decorations.

Freemason group, c. 1744
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1376

Originally a guild for masons, in the 18th century the Masonic Order became a secret society patronized by aristocrats. Although not intended to rival the Church, Freemasonry came to denote support for the Enlightenment and centralized government, often in opposition to the local clergy and conservative members of the aristocracy. For that reason, it was banned by Pope Clement XII in 1738.

Lady of the Order of the Pug, c. 1744
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1328

The Order of the Pug, named for the period's favorite lapdog (which was known for its loyalty and spirit), became a substitute at the Catholic courts of Germany for Freemasonry. Its rituals were light-hearted versions of Masonic ceremonies, and, unlike the Masons, the order accepted female members.

Froehlich and Schmiedel, c. 1741
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1385

On the left is the Saxon court jester Froehlich, whose costume may mimic a Viennese clown—short jacket, baggy

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pants with suspenders, wide-brimmed pointed hat, and broad-topped boots. Baron Schmiedel, shown on the right, was the sad-witted butt of Froehlich's jokes. The owl and the mousetrap refer to Schmiedel's deathly fear of mice.

Comedian, probably
the Captain,
c. 1720 – 25
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1990.1

Although at times identified as Harlequin, Beltrame, or Giangurgolo, this model is more likely the Captain. His dramatic pose evokes late Baroque ivory and bronze sculpture of the 17th century. This figure is a rare, early work made of Meissen's original porcelain recipe—china clay mixed with alabaster and chalk or quartz, which produced a cream-colored paste.

Man and woman with a birdcage, c. 1741
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1496

Although Kaendler alluded to the theatrical nature of these figures in his work records, he did not identify them specifically. However, the imagery—the female placing cock's feathers on the man's hat, the empty birdcage, and the cherries that the man holds over her head—all suggests that the subject is marital infidelity.

Spanish Lovers, c. 1741
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1340

This is either a pair of lovers from the commedia dell'arte or a couple dressed in masquerade costumes. The slashed sleeves of the male figure are typical of 16th- or 17th-century dress; they permitted a shirt or colored lining to be pulled through in "puffs." This fashion was thought to be Spanish by the French, French by the Swedes, and Flemish by the English.

Greeting Harlequin, c. 1740
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1354

Known for his elaborate bows, here Harlequin is performing a "passing bow to the left," one made while passing an acquaintance in the street or on a promenade.

Mockery of Old Age, c. 1745
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1373

In this depiction, the elderly man is being mocked by his young wife. Even as she tenderly kisses him, the two Harlequins hold symbols of her infidelity. The hen's feathers represent unfaithfulness and the radishes on the plate represent lust.

Pair of operatic figures,
c. 1759 – 60
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1326–27

The female figure may be Faustina Bordoni, a famous Italian mezzo soprano, who sang leading roles at the Dresden Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art Wall Text and Extended Labels, European Art 09-13-15-ay

Court Opera. Her exaggerated, flattened, hooped skirt, as well as the veil and train that have been added to her court dress, reveal the theatrical nature of the costume; some actresses wore hoops of more than eleven feet in circumference. Her unidentified companion wears a "heroic" costume that combines ancient elements, such as breastplates and shin pads, with modern elements, such as wigs and feathered hats.

Busts of two monks, possibly St. Felix of Cantalice and St. Francis of Assisi, c. 1743 – 44
German, Meissen Porcelain Factory
Model by Johann Joachim Kaendler
German, 1706–1775
Hard-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1507–8

These busts were commissioned in 1743 by Cardinal Annibale Albani, the papal ambassador to Dresden. They were ordered along with a portrait bust of the pope and at least eight busts of other religious figures. Dresden's position as a Catholic enclave in the middle of a Protestant country may explain why Meissen produced a number of religious objects, including altarpieces, crucifixions, and figures of saints. Conceived by Kaendler in large scale from the beginning, these busts demonstrated the versatility of porcelain and proved that monumental sculpture was not beyond its scope. Both figures may have had metal halos.

Pompeo Batoni
Italian, Rome, 1708–1787
Portrait of Sir Humphrey Morice, 1762
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1936.43

Humphrey Morice looks at us with such extraordinary liveliness and presence that scholars believe this portrait served as a preliminary life sketch for two more elaborate full-length portraits of the same

sitter. Batoni was the leading portrait painter in Rome during the mid- to late eighteenth century. His elegant style, as exemplified in this painting, perfectly met the demands of distinguished foreign travelers, who flocked to Rome and wanted portraits to mark the occasion.

Bernardo Bellotto
Italian, Venice, 1721–1780
View of Pirna in Saxony, 1763
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1931.280

Bellotto was the nephew and only pupil of Canaletto, who is best known for his scenes of Venice. Bellotto worked there with his uncle until 1747 when he left for desirable posts at the courts in Munich, Dresden, Vienna, and Warsaw. This work was painted during one of Bellotto's stays in Dresden. The town of Pirna and the castle of Sonnenstein are seen from a hill, and the river Elbe is visible in the distance. This detailed rendering of topography is typical of Bellotto, as are the cool colors, intense clear light, and rich shadows.

Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto
Italian, Venice, 1697–1768
The Square of Saint Mark's and the Piazzetta, Venice, c. 1731
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1947.2

Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, perfected the specialty known as vedute (view painting). His chief subject was Venice, which he often painted for wealthy travelers as mementos of their visits to the city while on the Grand Tour. This work depicts the most popular site in Venice, St. Mark's Square. The view is toward the southwest with the façade of St. Mark's Basilica on the left and the Ducal Palace and the Piazzetta, or smaller square, beyond. The giant campanile (bell tower) dominates the center of the scene.

Valerio Castello
Italian, Genoa, 1624–1659
The Legend of Saint Genevieve of Brabant, c. 1652
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1999.12.1

This scene is taken from the medieval German legend of Saint Genevieve, a rare subject in Italian painting. Genevieve, the wife of Siegfried of Trêves, was falsely accused of adultery and sentenced to death. But she and her son fled to a mountain cave, where they survived for six years, nourished by a deer. Finally, while out hunting, Siegfried found her and brought her home.

Castello was among the leading artists in Genoa, an artistic crossroads of seventeenth-century Europe. His energetic style is exemplified here in the restless composition, swift brushwork, and warm coloration.

Charles-Antoine Coypel
French, 1694–1752
The Fainting of Armida, c. 1733–35
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 2011.5.1

This painting illustrates a scene from *Gerusalemme Liberata* by Torquato Tasso, an epic poem famous in the eighteenth century. The sorceress Armida, realizing that the spell she had cast upon the Crusader Rinaldo was broken, prepares to destroy the enchanted kingdom she had created. Coypel used this dramatic moment to demonstrate his remarkable ability to paint extravagant settings and elaborate costumes. The theatrical gestures and expressions are characteristic of Coypel's works, setting him apart from his contemporaries. Celebrated as a painter during his lifetime, he also wrote several plays.

Giuseppe Maria Crespi
Italian, Bologna, 1665–1747

The Way to Calvary, c. 1738–42
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. Beatrice H. Kneeland in memory
of Henry T. Kneeland, 1986.273

Although better known today for his paintings of everyday life, Crespì's religious works express an emotional intensity and somber piety that set him apart from other Italian artists of the eighteenth century. The agony of Christ's fall under the weight of the Cross is portrayed with great compassion in a direct and intimate manner. Crespì painted a larger version of this painting (now lost) for a lunette, or semi-circular space, above a door in his own house.

Attributed to Charles Joseph Flipart
French, 1721–1797
Portrait of the Castrato Carlo Scalzi, c. 1738
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1938.177

This portrait is thought to represent the Italian opera singer Carlo Scalzi, one of the most famous male sopranos, or castrati, of the eighteenth century. His remarkable costume is a European interpretation of Persian dress, very much an operatic fantasy. He points to a musical score that has helped to identify him. Trained in Paris, Flipart lived in Venice and Rome for many years before he went to Spain to become a court artist of King Ferdinand VI.

Luca Giordano
Italian, Naples, 1634–1705
The Abduction of Europa, c. 1685–90 or later
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1930.3

Smitten by the lovely Phoenician princess Europa, Zeus disguised himself as a bull and enticed the maiden to ride on his great back. Once she was seated, he carried her off into the sea and on to Crete.

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This painting is probably the pendant to the nearby *The Abduction of Helen of Troy*. In both, the composition follows an exuberant diagonal as the abductors flee with their victims from land to water. There are, however, subtle differences between the canvases, suggesting that they may have been executed at different times and paired only later. Together, they form an ensemble of striking visual power that exemplifies the late Baroque.

Luca Giordano
Italian, Naples, 1634–1705
The Abduction of Helen of Troy, c. 1685–90
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1930.2

Helen, daughter of Zeus and Leda and wife of the Greek king Menelaus, was abducted by the Trojan prince Paris. The affair led to the Trojan War, the subject of Homer's epic *The Iliad*. Giordano is best known for his large decorative series which he executed in his proverbial quick manner. Called "Luca fa presto" (Luca, work quickly), he was one of the most versatile and prolific artists of his time. His eclectic style was influenced by earlier Venetian painters like Veronese and Titian, as well as the fresco decorations of his contemporary Pietro da Cortona.

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo
Italian, Venice, 1696–1770
Susanna and the Elders, c. 1720
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. Arthur L. Erlanger, 1954.196

According to a version of the Book of Daniel, Susanna was a beautiful woman secretly admired by two of the city's elders. Sneaking into her garden one day as she bathed, they tried to force her to submit to their passions. When she refused, they accused her of having an affair. Susanna was condemned to death and vindicated only by Daniel's intervention. This painting

depicts the elders surprising Susanna and offering her gifts in exchange for her favors. Tiepolo, one of the most famous artists of the seventeenth century, painted the subject with elegance and grace, employing his typical fresh color palette and flowing brushwork.

Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo
Italian, Venice, 1727–1804
The Miracle of Christ Healing the Blind Man, 1752
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1952.289

Christ healing a blind man by touching his eyes is recounted in different variants in the Gospels. The miracle has been interpreted as an allegory for the revelation of true faith.

Domenico Tiepolo was the gifted son and collaborator of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, the great Venetian painter. He learned his characteristic loose, sketchy brushwork from his father. This composition is typical of Domenico's work—the figures are arranged across the foreground with their heads lined up on the same level and clothed in exotic costumes in a foreign setting. The thick application of paint, known as *impasto*, is also typical of Domenico's style.

Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo
Italian, Venice, 1727–1804
The Last Supper, late 1750s
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1931.106

Thanks to the bold, almost dizzying perspective, the tightly contained space, and the quick, sketch-like handling of the figures, this small work has a remarkable presence. Christ shares with the Apostles his final meal and reveals his imminent betrayal. The announcement is greeted by amazement and disbelief on the part of the disciples. But unlike other paintings of this subject, Judas, the

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betrayal, cannot be identified.

Francesco Guardi
Italian, Venice, 1712–1793
View of the Piazzetta Looking toward San Giorgio
Maggiore,
Venice, c. 1770–80
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1935.62

Today, Guardi and Canaletto are regarded as the most important painters of Venetian scenes in the eighteenth century. During their lifetimes, however, Guardi never achieved Canaletto's popularity. This work displays Guardi's characteristically delicate and quick brushstroke, as well as his understanding of light and atmosphere. The library of the architect Sansovino is in shadow on the right, the corner of the Ducal Palace is on the left, and the island and Church of San Giorgio Maggiore appear in the background.

Alessandro Magnasco
Italian, Genoa, 1667–1749
A Medici Hunting Party, c. 1706–07
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1937.84

Magnasco is best known for inventive genre scenes populated with brigands, monks, and peasants. Here, he painted an actual event. The Grand Duke of Tuscany had invited Magnasco to accompany him on a hunt. When the court buffoon stepped behind a tree to relieve himself, the hunters pretended to shoot at him and, in alarm, he begged for mercy.

Behind the low tent on the right, the Duke is raising his rifle, as the Duchess attempts to restrain him. Magnasco is seen full face to the Duke's left. In the left corner, emerging from behind the tree is the unfortunate buffoon.

Franz Anton Maulbertsch

Austrian, 1724–1796
Saint John of Nepomuk as Patron of the Sick and Poor, c. 1761
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1941.153

In the fourteenth century, Saint John of Nepomuk was drowned at the order of the king of Bohemia for resisting royal interference in church matters. After being canonized in 1729, he became the focus of a cult that spread throughout central Europe. Maulbertsch, who was the foremost late Baroque painter of church altars and frescoes in central Europe, painted this modello (oil sketch) for an altarpiece in the cathedral of Budweis, now in the Czech Republic. The ecstatic figures, set in a vertical composition and illuminated by flickering light, are characteristic of his work.

Luis Meléndez
Spanish, 1716–1780
Still Life with Pigeons, Onions, Bread, and Kitchen Utensils,
c. 1772
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1938.256

An earthenware jug, a copper bowl, onions, garlic, bread, and a pigeon would be the ingredients for a humble meal, but Meléndez elevated these common objects by arranging them with sensitivity and brilliantly using light to enhance their varied colors and textures. His superb technique allowed him to produce a precise naturalism, with powerfully modeled objects set against neutral backgrounds, displayed up close, and angled from a low vantage point. During the period when Meléndez painted this work, his still lifes were fashionable among members of the Spanish court.

Giuseppe Maria Crespi
Italian, Bologna, 1665–1747
An Artist in his Studio, 1730s
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Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1936.499

This is probably a self-portrait painted by Crespi late in life but depicting him as a younger man. With its intimate look into the domestic surroundings of the artist, this picture unites portraiture and genre. Sitting at his easel, Crespi is surrounded by some of the accessories of his profession, including casts of faces and body parts, as well as his own copy of a painting by the seventeenth-century artist Giovanni Francesco Barberi, known as Guercino. Crespi, nicknamed “Lo Spagnuolo” (simply because he liked to wear Spanish clothes), was a leading painter, draftsman, and printmaker working in Bologna.

Gaspare Traversi
Italian, Naples, 1722–1770
A Quarrel over a Board Game, c. 1752
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1948.118

Traversi is best known for his paintings of daily activities such as this tavern scene where a fight has erupted between two well-dressed gentlemen over a game of either chess or checkers. He dramatizes a range of exaggerated expressions from anger to fear. The pronounced lighting and close proximity of the figures emphasizes the theatricality of the scene. The overall staged quality further suggests that the artist may have been inspired by contemporary opera or theater.

Louis Rolland Trinquesse
French, 1745 – c. 1800
An Interior with a Lady, her Maid, and a Gentleman, 1776
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 2006.20.1

Trinquesse is best known for his domestic genre scenes, so-called tableaux du mode, which capture the fashionable elegance

of pre-Revolutionary French society. Set in the confines of a boudoir, the body language between the three protagonists conveys an erotic tension, suggesting an amorous entanglement. The prominent placement of the neo-Greek incense burner at the right illustrates Trinquesse's interest in interior design. Besides excelling in reproducing details of texture and décor, Trinquesse also had a distinct sense for colors, demonstrated in the gleaming black of the gentleman's pants and the shiny pink of the lady's satin dress.

Vases

The Vincennes-Sèvres factory produced over 250 different models of ornamental vases in the 18th century. They were sold singly, in pairs, or in groups (garnitures) of three or five. They were displayed on chests of drawers, console tables, and mantle pieces, often in front of mirrors that would reveal the decoration on the back. Buyers included the royal family, ambassadors, courtiers, and dealers. Highly valued, they were frequently given as diplomatic gifts.

Pair of vases, 1766
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1045–46

Scenes of idealized country life—based on prints after François Boucher and Nicolaes Berchem—decorate these urn-shaped Neoclassical-style vases. This model was called vase ferré (chained in iron) because of the four metal-like panels bound by ropes and suspended from rings.

Pair of vases, 1769
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Painted by Charles-Nicolas Dodin, active 1754–1802
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1060–61

The painted scenes on these vases are from prints after François Boucher's paintings. The rich blue background
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color, made using cobalt oxide, was introduced at Sèvres in 1763 and became a factory favorite.

Vase, c. 1766–70
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Painted by Charles-Nicolas Dodin, active 1754–1802
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1064

Dodin was one of Sèvres's best figure painters. His work can be recognized by a careful attention to detail, fresh colors, and distinctive large, flat leaves. The scene is based on an engraving after a painting by François Boucher.

Pair of vases, c. 1770
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Painting attributed to Jean-Baptiste-Etienne Genest, active 1752–1789
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1087–88

Like all of the vases in this case, we see the combination of antique forms and motifs — the urn shape, acanthus-leaf handles, and oak-leaf gilding—with Rococo-style painted decoration typical of Sèvres porcelain from the 1760s. A transition during this period from lighthearted decoration to a heavier, more serious neoclassical style reflected changing French taste.

Two wine bottle coolers, c. 1751–52
French, Vincennes Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1991.9–10

These coolers were two of four sold to Guillaume-Joseph Dupleix de Bacquencourt, who was named counselor to the Superior Court of Justice in October 1752. He bought them in December of that year along with sixty plates and sixteen compote dishes, some of which you see below in this case. The ensemble was the

first dining service known to have been sold at Vincennes.

Bather and Sleeping woman, c. 1747–52
French, Vincennes Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.952-53

These two figures were among the many early sculptures produced at Vincennes. They were made singly or in pairs, primarily to serve as decoration on furniture or mantelpieces. Sometimes the figures were set on gilt-bronze mounts and added to clocks or candelabras, where they might be accompanied by colorful porcelain flowers.

The Vincennes-Sèvres Porcelain Factory

Porcelain production at the château of Vincennes began in 1740. In 1745, the fledgling factory was granted a twenty-year privilege to produce painted and gilded porcelain in the manner of Saxony (Meissen). The factory soon developed a uniquely French style, producing tableware, decorative sculpture, and porcelain flowers.

In 1756, having outgrown its space at Vincennes, the factory moved to the town of Sèvres, just outside of Paris on the way to Versailles. It was taken over entirely by Louis XV in 1759, becoming the Royal Porcelain Manufactory. Today we refer to porcelain made from 1740 to 1755 as Vincennes and after that as Sèvres.

Broth basin and stand, c. 1744–48
French, Vincennes Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
The European Decorative Arts Purchase Fund,
1995.11.1

The shape of this broth basin and stand, including the handles, is taken directly from a Meissen form produced from approximately 1725 to 1740. The imagery of wooing couples set in park-like landscapes comes from French paintings, but was transmitted through Meissen of

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the 1730s and 1740s.

Pair of vases, 1749–51
French, Vincennes Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.977–78

These vases were designed by the goldsmith Jean-Claude Duplessis, the Vincennes factory's artistic director for models from 1748 to 1774. There are several variations for the body, neck, and base of this design: the body may curve gracefully or have a distinct central shoulder; the neck may be smooth or lobed; and the base may have shells or rocks with flowers.

Pot-pourri vases, c. 1752–53
French, Vincennes Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.982–83

In the 18th century, pot-pourri vases were regarded as essential furnishings for fashionable dwellings, and recipes for their aromatic contents were closely guarded secrets. The painted and sculpted floral decoration on this pair was probably based on the direct observation of real flowers.

Tea Sets

Tea, coffee, and chocolate were consumed in bedrooms, boudoirs, salons, gardens, and in the bath. Tea was taken at breakfast time and at formal receptions. Because of its popularity, tea sets were a staple of the Vincennes-Sèvres factory. While the teapots, sugar bowls, milk jugs, and cups and saucers came in only a few models, a wide variety of trays were made following the latest styles. Sets ranged from service for one to service for four. Teapots usually were small, as they were meant to hold very strong tea that would be diluted with boiling water served from a metal kettle.

Tea set, 1768
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1051–56

The tray in this tea set was designed by the goldsmith Jean-Claude Duplessis and first recorded in 1760. Its decorative pattern resembles French brocaded silk of the 1760s and 1770s.

Pair of flowerpots, 1757
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.997 and
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1990.51

These square flowerpots, often called orange tubs because of their resemblance to large pots used for planting orange trees, were used for potted plants and usually had drainage holes in the bottom. Sometimes living plants were replaced by porcelain flowers on green lacquered metal stems.

Pair of chestnut baskets and stands, c. 1759–60
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1010–11

Chestnuts were roasted and then served either as a compote, dry with a covering of sugar, or glazed with icing. Chestnut baskets were usually sold singly or in pairs and sometimes were included in a large dinner service. Pierced examples were expensive, as the latticework and ribbons took many hours to perfect.

Tea set, 1770
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1066–69

Combinations of stippled gilding with gray monochrome figures are often found on pieces decorated in

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the 1760s and 1770s. The scroll on the rim of the tray and the laurel garlands surrounding the figures show the influence of neoclassicism on the factory's decorators as they looked to ancient forms. It is possible that this particular tea set was bought by Louis XV in December 1772.

The Toilette and the Dressing Table

Dressing took place in the bedroom or boudoir. The act of getting prepared for the day— called the toilette — included dressing, hair styling, and makeup application. By the later seventeenth century, this morning ritual took on a more public character for people of rank and wealth. Ladies would receive guests or suitors, while men used the time to conduct business. The dressing table developed from a portable box to hold cosmetics. As the ritual of the toilette evolved, objects for personal grooming— mirrors, brushes and combs, and cosmetic boxes — became more elaborate. Sometimes the dressing table served other purposes, including eating, game playing, and writing. For this reason it usually had two covers, often a carpet draped by a linen cloth called toile in French, which led to the word toilette.

Dressing table service, c. 1680
English

Silver and mirror glass (replaced)

The Elizabeth B. Miles Collection of English Silver by exchange and the Bequest of Roscoe Nelson Gray in memory of Roscoe Nelson Dalton Gray and Rene Gabrielle Gray, 1979.1.1–11

Elaborate sets for the dressing table came into fashion in England in the 1660s. This one has a standing mirror, candlesticks, bottle-shaped flasks for water, rectangular flasks for scents, clothes brushes, a comb box, and a pincushion. The decoration includes embossed floral and scroll motifs, as well as narrative scenes with tales from classical antiquity. The crest of the mirror features Silenus — the half man, half beast who was Dionysus's tutor. The lid of the comb box shows a relief depicting Chione, one of Apollo's lovers.

Perfume burner, c. 1675– 80
English
Silver
The Elizabeth B. Miles Collection of English Silver,
1979.142

This burner was used to perfume an entire room with scents of myrtle, orange, and rosewater. The heat from burning charcoal in the bottom chamber vaporized scented pastilles (pellets) in the upper chamber. The aromatic smoke would come out through the pierced body. Perfume burners made of a precious metal like silver would only be found at the royal court or in homes of the nobility.

Oval plaque, c. 1700 –10
Dutch, probably Rotterdam, Het Wapen van
Dantzich op de Hoogstraat Factory (1640–1852)
Tin-glazed earthenware
The Evelyn Bonar Storrs Trust Fund, 2009.4.1

This elaborate scene of genteel Dutch women includes a lady at her morning toilette having her hair arranged, while another stands holding a fan and one sits as she is served tea, coffee, or chocolate by a Moorish servant. All are being entertained by a gentleman violinist. The plaque records in great detail elements of an upper-class Dutch interior, including flooring, furniture, ceramics, mirrors, and lighting fixtures. The figures are dressed in fashionable clothes, derived from styles that came to Holland from the French court of Louis XIV.

Eighteenth-Century Art: The French Revolution

During the second half of the eighteenth century, France slid into a long economic, political, and cultural crisis that culminated in the French Revolution (1789 –1799), a turning point in European history. Fueled by the radical ideas of Enlightenment philosophers, the rising middle class demanded more participation in political life. The swelling conflict turned violent during the summer of 1789 with the storming of the Bastille in Paris, and climaxed in 1793 with the executions of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette. The ensuing chaos eventually led to Napoleon Bonaparte’s rise to absolute power in the early nineteenth century.

The Wadsworth Atheneum’s collection of works from this period offers commentary on the revolution at its various stages. The French Revolution sharply divided opinions across Europe and among artists, visible in the objects here that present a panorama of the distinct positions that artists took during this time of upheaval. Other works reflect the public image and lifestyle of some of the main figures of pre-revolutionary France, such as Louis XV and his mistress Madame Pompadour.

Revolutionary Sèvres

The last decade of the 18th century was difficult for the Sèvres factory. After the French Revolution, the quantity and quality of its production suffered. Royal and aristocratic patronage ended, sales dropped, and the factory struggled to survive. Yet even after the fall of the monarchy, the new government decreed in 1793 that the factory, as one of the glories of France, should be preserved.

Wine glass coolers, 1794
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Painted by Françoise-Philippine Descoins, active
1781–1801, and Michel-Gabriel Commelin, active
1766–1802
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1151–52

Usually sold as part of a dessert service, these coolers were used to chill wine glasses. They would be filled with cold water or crushed ice, and glasses would be placed upside down for cooling.

Service with Birds and “Etruscan” Borders

From 1792 to 1796, during the French Revolution, Sèvres made five yellow dinner services with birds and “Etruscan” borders in black or dark brown. The birds were copied from François-Nicolas Martinet’s illustrations for the Comte de Buffon’s ten-volume *Histoire naturelle des oiseaux* of 1770 – 86. The pieces shown here may have been sold in 1794 to “citizen” Auguste Julien.

Four plates, 1793
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory

Painted by Edmé-François Bouillat, active 1758–1810; Sophie Binet, active 1779–1798; Etienne Evans, active 1752–1800; and Pierre-Joseph Rosset aîné, active 1753–1799
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1147–50

Birds were always used as decorative subjects at Vincennes and Sèvres. During the last quarter of the 18th century they were often based on ornithological book illustrations. The birds are identified by inscriptions on the reverse of each plate.

The Vincennes-Sèvres Porcelain Factory

In 1740 a private porcelain factory was established in the château of Vincennes, just east of Paris. Louis XV was an early shareholder, and in 1753 authorized it to use his cipher of crossed LLs as its mark. In 1756 the factory moved to Sèvres, between Paris and Versailles, and in 1759 the king bought the factory outright. Both the royal family and the French court were major clients of Sèvres. For three weeks each December the factory used the king's private apartments as a showcase and sales room for its latest creations.

Louis XV, c. 1755
French, Chantilly Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1509

The king is seen at the age of about fifty, a difficult time for Louis XV. His brooding air and the military attributes on the pedestal may foreshadow the troubling years of the Seven Years' War (1756 – 1763), fought in both Europe and America.

Wine glass cooler, 1771
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Painted by Nicolas Catrice, active 1757 – 1774
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1070

Designed to chill an individual wine glass, this cooler belonged to a 322-piece service ordered by Madame du Barry, Louis XV's last mistress.

Tray, 1760
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Painted by Louis-Denis Armand, aîné, active 1746 – 1789
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1022

This tray was part of a tea set for four, sold to Louis XV in 1760. The combination of pink and green was in vogue that year, and the king bought several other pieces with the same color scheme. In order to retain its customers, Sèvres introduced new color combinations or types of decoration every year or two.

Tray for mustard pot, 1773
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Painted by Jacques Fontaine, active 1752 – 1800
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1074

A common condiment in the 18th century, mustard was served in a pot that sat on a tray like this one. This tray was part of a service given in 1773 by Louis XV to Marie Antoinette's sister, Maria Carolina Luisa, queen of Naples. The full set comprised 114 pieces and 39 unglazed white sculptures.

Pair of ewers, 1767
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Probably painted by Jean-Baptiste Tandar, active 1754 – 1800
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1043 – 44

The original model for this ewer was introduced in 1766, a period when many of the shapes and decorations were inspired by antiquity. This pair probably belonged to Jean-Baptiste de Machault d'Arnouville, who had been France's Minister of Finance from 1745 to 1754.

Fountain and basin, 1755 (fountain), 1786 (basin)
French, Vincennes and Sèvres Porcelain Factories
Painted by André-Vincent Vielliard, active 1752 – 1790 (fountain) and Pierre-Joseph Rosset, active 1753 – 1795 (basin)
Soft-paste porcelain and silver-gilt

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.993 – 94

This fountain was probably sold to a member of the royal family, perhaps Louis XV's son. We know that in 1756 his apartments were redecorated in blue and white, including the garde-robe (dressing area) where such a fountain would have been placed for hand washing. The basin, a later factory replacement, was bought in 1786 by Louis XV's grandson and heir, Louis XVI. In 1792 it was recorded in his map-making room at Versailles.

Madame de Pompadour

Madame de Pompadour became the official mistress of Louis XV in 1745. One of the most powerful and influential figures of the French court, she was an advisor to the king, and a patroness of art, literature, and drama. An early patron of the Vincennes-Sèvres factory, she encouraged the king to acquire it for the Crown in 1759.

Louis XV, c. 1770 (figure), c. 1770 – 80 (base)
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.958

This porcelain figure was originally designed for an elaborate table decoration for the 1770 marriage celebration of the future Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. The base was made to match that of Friendship, on the shelf below, and was perhaps commissioned by Madame de Pompadour's brother, the marquis de Marigny.

Mounted vase and cover, 1763
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1065

The silver and gold statuette of Louis XV that sits on this vase is usually hidden inside, designed to pop up when the cover is removed. It belonged to Madame de Pompadour until her death, and then to her brother, the marquis de Marigny.

Pair of sugar casters, c. 1735–36
French

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Lacquer on silver
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.288–89

These figures, carrying silver baskets formed as bundled sugar cane, were containers for confectioner's sugar. Their costumes are decorated to look like Asian lacquer. They may have belonged to Madame de Pompadour, who in 1752 had "two lacquered figures carrying canes of sugar" cleaned and restored.

Friendship, 1755
French, Vincennes Porcelain Factory
Model by Etienne-Maurice Falconet, 1716–1791
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.957

The figure in this allegory of friendship is Madame de Pompadour. She commissioned the model in 1755 to glorify her friendship with Louis XV after their amorous relationship ended. The factory made nineteen examples, all given to Madame de Pompadour. The Museum's figure once belonged to her brother, the marquis de Marigny, Louis XV's Minister of Culture.

Water jug and basin, c. 1753
French, Vincennes Porcelain Factory
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.965–66

Getting dressed in the mid-18th century French court was a lengthy process that involved consuming food. The water jug would have been set inside the basin on the dressing table and used for washing hands. This set may have belonged to Madame de Pompadour, who bought one matching this description in 1754.

Inkstand, 1759
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Painted by Jean-Baptiste Tandar, aîné, active 1754–1800
Soft-paste porcelain
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.1013

Made of porcelain or silver, inkstands were important accessories in the 18th century and would have been displayed on a writing table. This

inkstand was probably purchased by Madame de Pompadour in 1759.

Johann Zoffany
German, 1733–1810
Plundering the King's Cellar at Paris, 1794
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1984.49

Zoffany expressed his intensely critical view of the French Revolution through this painting, which shows French citizens storming the Tuileries Palace on August 10, 1792. On that day, Parisians raided the building and massacred the Swiss guards and servants. Zoffany transformed an event that was seen in France as a victory of the people into a horrific, anarchical tragedy. A grim commentary on his time, this painting stands out as one of Zoffany's most moving works. Although trained in Germany, the artist spent most of his career in England, where he was primarily a portraitist.

School of Jacques-Louis David
French, late 18th century
The Lictors Bringing to Brutus the Bodies of his Sons
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1934.34

Lucius Junius Brutus, the founder and ruler of the Roman republic, ordered the execution of his two sons for their part in a plot to overthrow the government. The brooding father watches as their bodies are brought home, while his wife and daughters cling to one another and cry in grief. David was the most important French painter of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This work, produced by his studio, is a smaller replica of one of his most famous canvases. With its topic of civic virtue held higher than family bonds, the painting was an enormous success and was often seen as a revolutionary statement.

Claude-Joseph Vernet
French, 1714–1789
The Storm, 1787

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Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1939.364

In *The Storm*, a ship is breaking up against the coast as survivors struggle to stay afloat by clinging to pieces of the mast, and spectators watch in horror from the shore. In his landscapes, Vernet typically portrayed nature in its varied, extreme states, and here the dramatic rendering of the storm illustrates eighteenth-century notions of the “sublime”—the sensation of terror before the overwhelming powers of nature. Such seascapes made Vernet one of France's most sought after artists. Because he often produced pairs, it is possible that *The Storm* was originally accompanied by another painting.

Mather Brown
American, 1761–1831
Louis XVI Saying Farewell to his Family, c. 1793
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1980.2

Brown was a gifted student of Benjamin West, the first American artist to gain international fame, and like his mentor held a royal appointment from George III. This painting illustrates the horror felt in England as revolutionary events unfolded in France. After being condemned in Paris by the “Revolutionary Commune,” Louis XVI was executed on January 21, 1793. In this emotion-filled scene, heightened by bright colors, the king bids a tearful farewell to his family. He draws the young prince to his side while Marie Antoinette gestures toward heaven for intervention.

Hubert Robert
French, 1733–1808
Jean-Antoine Roucher in Prison, c. 1797
Oil on canvas
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner
Collection Fund, 1937.1

This intimate portrait was unusual for Robert, who usually painted landscapes and ruins. However, in October 1794, during the height of the French Revolution, he was arrested. In prison he encountered his friend, the poet Roucher, and in January, they were both transferred to the prison of

Saint-Lazare. Robert was fortunately released, but Roucher was sent to the guillotine. Most likely, Robert was asked by the poet's family to paint this work as a memorial. Roucher is in his cell, his meager bag already packed, making a touching farewell to a portrait of his wife or daughter.

Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun

French, 1755–1842

The Duchesse de Polignac Wearing a Straw Hat, 1782

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, acquired in honor of Kate M. Sellers, Eighth Director of the Wadsworth Atheneum, 2000–2003, 2002.13.1

Born into an impoverished noble family, Gabrielle de Polastron married the influential Comte de Polignac in 1767. The couple became close friends of the royal family, and in 1780 the duchesse was given the prestigious duty of governess for the royal children. In 1782, Queen Marie Antoinette commissioned a portrait of her friend from Vigée Le Brun, who also made this replica. The queen urged the duchesse to flee France in 1789 to avoid the guillotine. The news of the royal family's execution in 1793 sent the duchesse into a deep depression, resulting in an early death.

The Eighteenth Century: Art and Love

Love, in all its forms, held a particular fascination for eighteenth-century artists. Images of women and scenes of romance and seduction were ever popular. Artists portrayed women of diverse character — virtuous, flirtatious, lustful, and even lazy. Depictions of romantic encounters, whether they were ambiguous, immodest, or cloaked in allegory or symbolism, were sought after by collectors of all classes. Lovers, in the guise of improbably dressed shepherds and shepherdesses, inhabited fanciful pastoral landscapes in paintings, sculptures, tapestries, and porcelains, which then adorned sophisticated urban settings. In some cases the line between art and life blurred, as the charms of country life were embraced by the likes of Queen Marie Antoinette who built a hamlet at Versailles to escape the formalities of the royal court. There she entertained friends while enjoying her cows, goats,

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and pigeons, and dining on the vegetables from her small kitchen gardens. Traditional scenes of sensual and sentimental love were also joined by images of family, motherhood, and children. The simple life, as celebrated in these works, was extolled as a virtue by Enlightenment philosophers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Edward Burne-Jones, English, 1833–1898

Saint George, 1873–77

Oil on canvas

The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1961.448

According to the legendary tale, Saint George saved a princess on the verge of being sacrificed to a dragon by slaying the beast. In this painting, his shield displays an image of her in the nude—emphasizing her vulnerability—encircled by the dragon. Many nineteenth-century artists explored subjects drawn from medieval literature and history, where they thought to find a superior world. Burne-Jones was affiliated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, who returned to a colorful style reminiscent of the art before Raphael. Here, Burne-Jones created an elaborate and fanciful vision of Saint George, clad in a suit of armor that would have been of little use to a real warrior.

Louis Marcy (Luigi Parmeggiani), Italian, 1860–1945(?)

St. Michael and the Dragon, c. 1880–1900

Parcel-gilt silver with semi-precious stones
The European Paintings and Sculpture Purchase Fund, 2006.4.1

This medieval-looking sculpture was made as a forgery. After being trained as a jeweler in Italy, Marcy settled in London where he sold several of his fakes, including this St. Michael, to notable museums and collections as original art from the Middle Ages. These works were much sought-after until the 1920s when scholars started to question them. Now they are considered independent works of art because of the skilled craftsmanship. In fact, Marcy's designs were never direct copies, but rather clever transformations from one material to another, such as wood into metal.

Vase or umbrella stand, probably 1886 English,
Lambeth, Doulton Ceramic Factory
Probably designed by W. Edward Dunn English,
active 1882–1895
Salt-glazed stoneware
The European Decorative Arts Purchase Fund,
2014.6.1

The mid-19th-century English taste for stylized Egyptian motifs was fueled by excavations of Egyptian tombs and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. By the second half of the century, designers had liberated Egyptian ornament from strictly archeological representations and used an assortment of motifs in highly original combinations. The function of this object is not yet identified; it could have been a vase, urn, or umbrella stand. However, it was most likely intended for the Victorian interior of an owner who was keen on decorating his home in the latest fashion.

Platter, mid-17th century German, Hamburg
Hans Lambrecht III, German, active 1630–1670
Silver-gilt
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.273

In the 17th century, display platters generally featured a single grand design on only one side and were made for exhibition, not for serving. Meant to be viewed in an upright position, they would decorate a buffet during banquets. Pieces were admired for their complex form and intricate ornament because of the emphasis on display over function.

Cup, c. 1670–75, German, Augsburg Matthäus Schmidt German, master c. 1659,
died 1696
Silver and parcel-gilt
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.265

Welcome cups were used to serve guests a drink upon arrival at courtly ceremonies and banquets held by towns and guilds throughout Germany and Switzerland. They were crafted in a variety of fantastic forms. This cup features a detachable head which allowed the body to be filled with wine that would pour through a small tube in the lion's jaws into the shell-shaped bowl.

Tankard, 1650–70 German, Augsburg, Circle of Leonhard Kern, 1588–1662
Mounts by Hans Jakob Mair German, c. 1641–1719
Ivory and silver-gilt
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.306

Tankards carved in ivory and mounted in precious metals were very fashionable in the 17th and early 18th centuries. Decorated with putti, these “Children’s Bacchanalia” tankards were a signature product of Southern Germany. The putti usually accompany the wine god Bacchus who appears as the child on top of the cover. His followers often represent allegories like the Four Elements here.

Platter, c. 1652 German, Augsburg David Bessmann German, active 1640–1677
Silver, partially gilded
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.255

The scene on this platter depicts Alexander the Great bowing before the dead body of his opponent Darius, the king of the Persians. The rim of the platter is decorated with highly sculptural scrollwork, made up of fantastic octopus-like creatures.

Jug, 1688
Swiss, Rapperswil Heinrich Dumeisen, Swiss, 1653–1723
Silver-gilt
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.283

The citizens of Baden, Switzerland gave this ceremonial jug to their mayor, Johann Bernhard Silbersen, who from 1661 to 1688 was director-in-chief of castle construction and town fortifications. The base reproduces the panorama of Baden in 1688. Such bird’s eye views, new in the previous century, served both as promotional statements and sources of topographical information. The lion, a symbol of strength, vigilance, and bravery, sits among measuring tools and other architectural implements, alluding to Silbersen’s role in Baden’s development. The head of the lion can be removed in order to pour wine from its body.

Tankard, possibly 1692, German, Gdansk (now Poland)
Probably Christoph Maucher German, 1642–after 1705
Mounts probably by Johann Ernst Kadau, German, Gdansk (now Poland), died 1711
Ivory and silver-gilt
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.308

The workshops of ivory carver Maucher and goldsmith Kadau teamed up for several of these display vessels. The tankard was clearly not intended for drinking purposes. Its elaborate design would have been appreciated by collectors and patrons. The ivory work depicts the Queen of Sheba paying homage to King Solomon.

Tankard, before 1702, German, Gdansk (now Poland) Andreas Haidt German, Gdansk (now Poland), active 1686–at least 1735
Silver-gilt
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.285

The relief on this tankard depicts a victorious Alexander the Great displaying generosity toward the conquered. It was commissioned by Christoph Kochen, whose coat of arms is inside of the lid. A Swedish noble, Kochen was his country's commercial attaché in Moscow, where Gdansk goldsmiths' work was greatly admired.

Late Nineteenth-Century Art

The late nineteenth century was a period of rapid modernization and social transformation. With increasing opportunities for artists without academic training and the general public becoming more directly involved, the art world changed. Beginning in the 1860s, a group of artists shocked the academic establishment with their paintings of everyday life rendered in vivid colors directly from nature. Ignoring rules, Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Alfred Sisley, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and others depicted reality as they saw it. Landscape and modern life, in all its different facets, became their prime subjects. These Impressionists gradually won the acceptance and support of the public and critics thanks to their regular exhibitions which began in 1874. The Impressionists were considered innovative for their painting technique, which

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consisted of short, loose brushstrokes and often unblended colors that they applied to create off-centered compositions. A younger generation went further by experimenting with the division of color, the breaking up of surfaces, and exotic imagery. Rather than representing the natural world, they were interested in expressing emotions and ideas. Their new perspectives on painting opened the door to Modernism in the early twentieth century.

Pablo Picasso's Blue Period

More than any other artist in the twentieth century, Picasso continuously reinvented his art. From 1901 to 1904, the painted works that address complex allegories of life and death, executed only in different shades of blue. *La Vie* is considered his most ambitious work from what is known as his Blue Period. In this phase, Picasso radically simplified form and content as he focused on bohemian figures from the fringes of society. Although other artists, such as Paul Gauguin, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Théophile Steinlen (all represented in this gallery), influenced Picasso in the choice of his subjects, he eventually found his own visual language with a new style that is distinguished by its monumentality and idealization.

Japonisme in Ceramics

In 1853, Japan reestablished trade with the West after a long hiatus, and soon Japanese imports poured into Europe. Artists and collectors were captivated by all things Japanese (and some things Chinese), and the Minton and Worcester factories in England fully embraced this fascination. Plates were decorated with fans, banners, oriental-style plants, and other Asian motifs, arranged asymmetrically in the Japanese fashion. Some had turquoise backgrounds with repetitive, flat patterns, inspired by Chinese cloisonné enamels. Occasionally the turquoise was combined with panels of European figures or landscapes, adding compositional contrast. Elephants were in vogue, and the lotus flower became almost as common as the sunflower.

The Royal Worcester Porcelain Factory

The Royal Worcester Porcelain factory excelled at making ornamental pieces in the Japanese style. They often used a material called Ivory Porcelain--a glazed bisque known as Parian that was designed to imitate marble. Because it was fired at lower temperatures, the body was not hard or translucent enough to be called true porcelain. Its creamy tone resembled Japanese pottery, especially Satsuma wares, and Worcester artists decorated it with Japanese designs and motifs, often in various shades of gold.

Satsuma-style Ceramics

Satsuma ceramics are characterized by their eggshell-colored bodies and finely cracked transparent glaze, decorated with over-glaze enamels and gold. Named after the province in which it was produced, Satsuma ware caused a sensation in the West from the 1860s, aided by its inclusion in world's fairs and exhibitions. Its enormous success led to the rise of Satsuma-style workshops all over Japan, which produced one of the most recognized and profitable Japanese export products of the second half of the nineteenth century.

Bowl, late 19th century, Japanese
Earthenware
Bequest of Mrs. Constance S. Mead, 1918.987

The medallion featured on this bowl is a Japanese emblem called a mon, which was used to identify an individual or family. This mon in the form of three hollyhock leaves inside a circle belonged to the Tokugawa shoguns

Crystalline Glazes

Zinc oxide and potash are the fundamental components of crystalline glazes. The crystals form when the kiln in which the ware has been fired is allowed to cool very slowly. At first, such effects were probably created accidentally, but in the late nineteenth century potters and ceramic chemists exploited the result as a decorative feature.

Pair of bearded vultures, 1904, German, Meissen
Porcelain Factory
Hard-paste porcelain

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Gift of Alice Ross Gold, 2011.10.1-2

Typical of Meissen's Art Nouveau figure style, these birds are powerfully sculpted with ornamentation consisting only of stylized feathers, piercing eyes, and sharp talons, all painted before the clear glaze was added. The birds sit atop undecorated rock-like perches, high-lighting the brilliance of the unpainted porcelain itself.

Vase, 1900
French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory Stoneware
The Evelyn Bonar Storrs Trust Fund, 2007.14.1

This hand-thrown vase is decorated with high-fired glazes that contribute both color and texture to its organic Art Nouveau form. Stoneware vessels like this reflect the influence of the French art pottery movement and artists such as Taxile Doat.

Taxile Doat

One of the most gifted studio potters of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Doat began his ceramic career at the Sèvres Porcelain Factory, where he worked from 1877 to 1905. From the 1880s, he also maintained his own private studio where he created porcelain and stoneware objects decorated with high-fired copper-based red (flambé) and crystalline glazes. He left the Sèvres factory in 1905, and from 1909 to 1914 led the School of Ceramics of the Peoples University in University City working from his studio in the town of Sevres.

Vase, 1907, French, Sèvres Taxile Doat,
French, 1851-1939
Porcelain
The Evelyn Bonar Storrs Trust Fund, 2007.5.2

The rich, marbled surface of this vase was probably made by superimposing glaze mixed with borax over or between thick coats of colored glaze. The borax caused the glazes to flow so that the colors mixed in unexpected ways. The glaze contrasts dramatically with the carefully executed ornaments with Classical-style figures that hang from the neck like jewelry.

Vase, 1897–98, French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory
Hard-paste porcelain
Bequest of Reverend Alfred Duane Pell, 1925.453

Sèvres artists of the late 19th century often looked to Japan for inspiration, as was the fashion all over Europe during this period. They decorated their works with stylized floral motifs, often asymmetrically arranged. The rose-ground vase has delicate flowering branches moving freely across its surface, while the powder-blue vase combines Japanese plum blossoms with stylized ornament typical of Art Nouveau design.

Vase, 1917, French, Sèvres Porcelain Factory,
Léonard Gébleux, French, active 1883–1927
Stoneware
The Goodwin Art Purchase Fund, 2006.23.1

This vase is a rare survival from a very difficult period for Sèvres. The factory created the model in 1916, during World War I. Called vase l'Adour, it was named for a French river, as were all new vase shapes at that time. Its naturalistic, asymmetrical decoration reflects the influence of Japanese art and design. The vase is made of stoneware, a hard ceramic body that is dense and non-porous due to its high-firing temperature (1280°C). Because it was resistant to the acids used in making explosives, Sèvres produced more stoneware containers for munitions factories during the War than it did porcelain.

Henri Le Sidaner
French, 1862–1939
Façade at Twilight, 1897
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Merrill, 1972.93

In this painting Le Sidaner did not concentrate on any particular object, but rather focused on creating a mysterious atmosphere through the use of a subtle but impressive gradation of color. The light from the interior is diffused through the mist of the oncoming night. The empty setting evokes intimacy and isolation at the same time. The view seems to be randomly chosen, an effect created by a slight asymmetry within the strong compositional geometry. Le Sidaner created a number of enigmatic

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paintings at the end of the nineteenth century. Here, he combines the mystical elements of Symbolism with the broken brushstrokes of the Impressionists.

Wilhelm Lehmbruck
German, 1881–1919
Head, 1910
Cast stone
Bequest of James Thrall Soby, 1980.69

Lehmbruck explored not only the whole human body but also its individual components and often took sections from his larger works and produced them separately. This head is part of a full-length standing sculpture of his wife. It is cast from a mixture of stone dust and cement, a material with which Lehmbruck liked to experiment.

Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux
French, 1827–1875
Portrait of Antoine Watteau, c. 1868
Plaster
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, and
Purchased through the gift of James Junius
Goodwin, 2010.2.1

Born in Valenciennes in northern France, Carpeaux proposed and then created a statue of the town's most famous citizen, the eighteenth-century painter Antoine Watteau. This plaster model was used as a reference for casting the head of the life-size bronze sculpture that towers above a monumental fountain in the city

Aristide Maillol, French, 1861–1944
Pomona, 1925
Bronze
Purchased with an Anonymous gift through the
courtesy of Phoenix State Bank and Trust Company,
1956.476

Maillol's art centered on one sole subject: the female body. In his portrayal of Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit trees and orchards, Maillol did not want to tell the story of the goddess, but rather was interested in simplifying the form of her body. Pomona appears statuary with her extremities close to her body. Her straight silhouette adds monumentality and serenity.

Emile-Antoine Bourdelle
French, 1861–1929
Hercules–The Archer, 1908–09
Bronze

Purchased through the gift of Henry and Walter
Keney, 1926.1259

In order to earn immortality, the mythological hero Hercules completed twelve labors, one of which is depicted here. For this labor, he had to defeat man-eating, monstrous birds, which he did with thunderous noise and bow and arrow. Bourdelle portrayed Hercules in heroic posture, drawing his bow. The chiseled modeling of Hercules's muscles amplifies the tension of this critical moment.

Frederic Lord Leighton, English, 1830–1896
The Sluggard, 1890
Bronze
The European Paintings and Sculpture Purchase
Fund, 2006.7.1

Leighton, better known as a painter, made only three independent sculptures during his career. He created this informal motif after seeing one of his models stretching during a break between poses. This bronze is a small version of an original life-size sculpture. Reproduced for domestic use, it became one of the most popular statuettes of the era.

Auguste Rodin, French, 1840–1917
Study for the Monument to Bastien-Lepage, c. 1887
Bronze
Gift of Samuel P. Avery Jr., 1920.976

This is a study for Rodin's funerary monument to Jules Bastien-Lepage, a French painter and friend of Rodin who died at age thirty-six. The monument was erected in 1889 in Lepage's native town of Damvillers. Rodin depicted Bastien-Lepage with his palette trying to steady himself on a rocky hill in order to paint outside.

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and beautiful objects. Imagine you are the European collector living in the seventeenth century who created this immersive environment, a place for the curious, for the inquisitive, for the lover of knowledge. Cabinets like these were created in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as places of study. The diversity of objects—natural specimens, great works of art, scientific instruments, and exotic curiosities—represents the search for universal knowledge. These were the museums of their time, offering the visitor first-hand knowledge of the world through objects they could see with their own eyes and touch with their own hands. At the same time, these collections served to glorify their owners, whether a ruler or a private citizen, reflecting their taste, learning, and preeminence in the world. Each Art and Curiosity Cabinet was unique in both content and organization, depending on the individual collector. We have arranged ours into four thematic sections: Belief, Antiquity, Exploration and Artistry. Discover information about each treasure through our Field Guide and mobile app. Create your own virtual cabinet using our interactive touch screen. Come in and explore.