



Art **IN THE AGE** *of* **GLOBALIZATION**

FAITH IN MOTION

HOW WERE RELIGIOUS IDEAS and images disseminated before the advent of mass media and the Internet? Explorers, merchants, tourists, colonists, pilgrims, and missionaries introduced their cultures and beliefs throughout the world via the small artifacts they carried with them. Often these travelers brought home souvenirs from the distant places they visited, thereby introducing their own people to the distant culture.

Portable art played a major role in the spread of religions throughout the world, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. Religious objects from each of these faiths are on view in this gallery. As demonstrated by their exquisite craftsmanship and intrinsic power, these small objects can elicit meaningful experiences.

Some of these artworks were carried around by practitioners to keep their faith alive, others were designed to play a role in conversion, and still others simply testify to the commingling and merging of religious and artistic traditions.

ROBERT AND MARLYSS WHITE GALLERY (281)

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PORTABLE FAITH

New Labels

<JLG; 8/16/12>

Attributed to Master of the Passion Diptych, French

Diptych with scenes from the life of Christ, c. 1375

Ivory

Gift of funds from Mr. and Mrs. John E. Andrus III, Atherton and Winifred W. Bean, and an Anonymous Donor 83.72

Elephant ivory has long been valued for carving. The material itself is attractive, being rare, exotic, sensuous, and fine-grained. The limitations of size imposed by the dimensions of usable ivory in a tusk serve as a challenge to the carver to create miniature works of art. This Gothic ivory diptych is an exquisite example of a devotional object that provided focus for private meditation, both at home and during travel.

During the first millennium, ivory from the African elephant reached Europe in small quantities mainly from the trans-Saharan trade. From the 13th century onwards, however, large amounts of the “white gold” were accessible through increased contact with the eastern Mediterranean, which was part of a trading network that reached all the way along the East African coast. The maritime and mercantile Swahili people who live there obtained the raw material from the African interior. Ivory thus constitutes one of the early “global commodities.”

Kongo culture

Crucifix, 19th century

Brass

Gift of Marc Leo Felix 92.36

The Kongo kingdom, a vast, centralized African state located on the Atlantic coast south of the equator, flourished from 1450 till 1700. Christianity was adopted as a state religion at the end of the 15th century. For the next two centuries, Portuguese missionaries introduced the culture to crucifixes, devotional objects, and figures of saints, which were copied by Kongo artists. Incorporated into local religious practices that combined the two traditions, objects like this small crucifix were potent aids to both piety and ritual.

Ethiopia

Icon polyptic and leather case, 18th or 19th century

Wood, cord, fabric, pigment, leather, string

The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund 98.244.4a,b

From an early age, the kingdom of Axum, precursor of today’s Ethiopia, came into contact with Christianity. Around 324 CE King Ezana adopted the new creed as a state religion – thus making Ethiopia one of the first Christian countries in the world. Christian images from various Middle

Eastern and Mediterranean artistic traditions were introduced, and many foreign artists worked at the court. Over time, Ethiopian icons developed their own characteristic style.

The use of small, portable icons became especially popular in the 18th century. This triptych consists of three panels, two of which are finely carved with crosses on the exterior. The remaining four sides are painted in vivid colors. The two that are visible show standard compositions: Mary holding Christ seated between archangels Michael and Gabriel, and Saint George, who is very popular in Ethiopia, slaying the dragon. An object of personal devotion, such an icon would also be worn around the neck to protect the traveler.

Persia (Iran)

The Qur'an, 19th century

Book

Gift of Carl A. Weyerhaeuser B.96.4.2

In the first decades of Islam, the divine revelation was transmitted by oral tradition. Following the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632 CE, the Qur'an had to be written down to secure it. For Muslims worldwide, Arabic, the language of the Qur'an, holds a special significance and is believed to be sacred. Regardless of what language they speak, Muslims are taught to read the Qur'an in Arabic. In this portable Qur'an from Persia, we see a beautifully ornamented double frontispiece with calligraphy in black, gold, and red. In conformity with Muslim avoidance of human and animal figuration, notably in religious contexts, the decorations consist of floral motifs and geometrical patterns.

Morocco

Torah pointer, c. 1900

Silver

Gift of funds from the Weiser Family Foundation 2003.165.2

The Torah pointer is used for reading the Torah (biblical) scroll, to avoid touching the sacred manuscript with the hand. The flat form of this pointer is typical of Morocco. Although primarily a Muslim country since the 7th century CE, Morocco has had Jewish communities for over two thousand years. The first Jewish Diaspora to that country dates back to the 4th century BCE, while the second large-scale immigration followed the expulsion of Spanish Jewry in 1492. Over the centuries, Jews in Morocco benefitted from official protection. They performed services for the sovereigns, including the collection of customs duty and diplomacy, and they were engaged in commerce and crafts, especially jewel-making for themselves and their Berber and Arab fellow-countrymen.

Kotyit (Cochiti Pueblo)

Necklace, c. 1900

Silver, coral, turquoise, jet, arrowhead

Bequest of Virginia Doneghy 90.58.180

Blending the distinct artistic traditions of both the Kotyit and Spanish colonists, this stunning beaded necklace is a study of religious assimilation. Introduced in the 16th century by Spanish missionaries, Catholic iconography inspired the work of subsequent generations of Pueblo artists. This distinct necklace style is characterized by its strong central pendant, a double-barred cross. Known to Catholics as the Cross of St. James (the patron saint of Spain), the icon was readily adopted by Pueblo artists who associated it with their own ancient symbol for the dragonfly. The cross sits atop a stylized Sacred Heart, a Christian symbol of Jesus' love and sacrifice. While the necklace is visually dominated by this central pendant and fringe of crosses, close inspection reveals the inclusion of three amulets. A polished jet square, a rough-edged turquoise disc, and a miniature stone arrowhead lend an extra element of strength and protection to this potent symbol of Christian faith.

Cambodia

Ganesha, 12th-13th century

Bronze

Gift of Michele and David Dewey 99.216.11

God of wisdom and remover of obstacles both visible and invisible, the elephant-headed Ganesha is invoked at the commencement of any new undertaking or journey. As the deity's spirit was thought to reside within its likeness, this small bronze statue would thus constitute a perfect traveling companion, guiding its owner towards wise decisions and safe paths.

A popular Hindu deity, Ganesha was introduced to Cambodian artists in the 7th century. Over the next five centuries, India's chubby elephant icon was transformed into a sleek, anthropomorphic figure. He sits meditatively in a classic lotus position, holding his own broken tusk.

Rachel McGarry
8/16/2012

Japan
Standing Kannon, 7th century
Gilt bronze
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard P. Gale 56.44

In Japan, Kannon are the most widely worshipped of all bodhisattvas, divine beings who deny their own passage into nirvana to help others achieve salvation. In its serene simplicity, this sculpture typifies an early style that flowered in Japan after Buddhism was introduced in the 6th century. The full, oval face and child-like proportions are related to Chinese and Korean prototypes. Such small gilt bronzes were easily transported, thus helping to spread Buddhism and Buddhist iconography throughout Asia.

China
“Nativity” Plate, c. 1745
Porcelain
Gift of Thomas A. Jamieson 82.45.1

This scene of Christ’s birth comes from a New Testament illustration by Dutch artist Jan Luyken. Most likely an engraving of the design was sent by ship to China, where this plate was made for the Dutch market. In addition to the Nativity, Chinese painters adapted Luyken's illustrations of the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension for various export goods.

Germany
Miniature Pendant with the Deposition of the Cross, Saint Roch, and Saint Sebastian,
c. 1550
Gold, enamel, stones, boxwood
Gift of Tony, Lois and Ruth Blumka in memory of Victoria Blumka 94.33

This exquisitely wrought religious pendant, a masterful combination of worldliness and spirituality, would have been worn on a chain around its owner’s neck. The central scene depicts Christ’s dead body being taken down from the cross. Spare wood, delicate carving, and miniature scale heighten the pathos and focus attention on the fragility of life. The luxurious exterior, rendered in gold, stones, and inlaid enamel shows two popular saints, Saint Roch in his pilgrim dress—a staff and traveling cloak with a scallop shell—showing his wounded thigh, and Saint Sebastian, pierced by arrows. Protectors of the sick, the two saints were frequently invoked against the plague and represented together in port cities, where epidemics like the Black Death struck first and most ruthlessly. Their presence here suggests that the pendant was intended for a

wealthy merchant or nobleman who lived near the sea, or traveled from port to port and needed special protection from disease.

Japan, Edo period

Zushi (shrine) with Kannon, 19th century

Wood, lacquer, paint, gilt

Bequest of John R. Van Derlip in memory of Ethel Morrison Van Derlip 35.7.234a,b

Buddhist statues in Japan frequently reside in *zushi*, which are wooden shrines or cabinets adorned with doors that can reveal or conceal the deity. These box-like altars represent a distinctly Japanese twist to Buddhist practice, and some scholars believe the tradition can be traced to Shintō shrines, where statues are rare and always concealed.

Enshrined in this miniature altar is Kannon, a bodhisattva of supreme compassion, flanked by painted images of Jizo_ (Kishigarara), a deity who tries to save condemned souls, and Fudo_, a wrathful deity who slashes humankind's deluded thoughts with his sword. The small scale of this shrine indicates that it was meant to be portable, so its owner could travel in the company of his or her chosen deity.

China

The Risen Christ Appears to His Disciples, 1637

Woodblock print

From Giulio Aleni's *Tianzhu jiangsheng zhuxiang jingjie* (Illustrated Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ), Jinjiang Church, Fujian Province, China, 1637

Gift of Herschel V. Jones, 1925 P.10,514

Giulio Aleni, an Italian-born Jesuit, lived in China for nearly four decades, arriving in 1613 and remaining there until his death in 1649. Mastering the Chinese language, Aleni wrote a number of religious and scientific treatises in China and founded several Christian missions there. These prints come from a book Aleni published in the Fujian Province to help in his conversion efforts.

China

The Annunciation, 1637

Woodblock prints

From Giulio Aleni's *Tianzhu jiangsheng zhuxiang jingjie* (Illustrated Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ) Jinjiang Church, Fujian Province, China, 1637

Gift of Herschel V. Jones, 1925 P.10,509

These illustrations, one time accompanied by Chinese text, are based on Jerome Nadal's *Images from the Gospels* (Antwerp, 1593), a sumptuously illustrated Latin treatise produced at the instigation of Saint Ignatius Loyola. The images are emblems, with key elements notated and explained in turn. For example, *A* represents God's declaration of Christ's incarnation, and *B* shows the angel Gabriel delivering the news to Mary. At the far right, *D* marks Mary's house in

Loreto, which became a pilgrimage site promoted by the Jesuits. (According to legend, angels carried Mary's house from Nazareth to the Italian town of Loreto in 1291.) Creation is depicted in the small vignette in the sky marked *F*, and the Crucifixion, as explained in note *G*, reminds the viewer of Christ's redemptive sacrifice.

For the most part, the Chinese woodblock cutters faithfully reproduced the original engravings, adopting many of the European pictorial conventions. Mary's prie-dieu, for example, appears convincingly three-dimensional, though the room behind her lacks depth. Reminiscent of Chinese art, the swirling clouds are described with bold calligraphic lines, to wonderful effect.



Jerome Wierix (Flemish, 1553-1619), *The Annunciation*, engraving
 From Jerome Nadal's *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (Images from the Gospels), Antwerp, 1593

Thomas a Kempis,
German, 1379/80 – 1471
The Following of Christ
Published by Henry Iaye, Mechelen (Flanders), 1616
Book
Gift of Mrs. John Washburn 30.1

After the Bible, *De Imitatione Christi* (The Imitation of Christ) ranks among the most popular Christian devotional works ever produced. It offers detailed instructions on spiritual devotion and explanations about Christian doctrine. Although the book was written anonymously between 1418 and 1420, Thomas a Kempis, an Augustinian monk living in the Netherlands, has long been credited as the author. It circulated in manuscript form for some 50 years before being published in Germany in 1471. Since then, well over 2,000 editions have appeared across the globe.

This rare copy was published in Flanders in 1616 for the English market, with the slightly amended title *The Following of Christ*. The pocket-sized scale made it convenient to carry around. The binding, luxuriously adorned in silver-embroidered red velvet has worn thin from frequent and fervent use, indicating how much its previous owner treasured it.

Artist Unknown
German, 15th century
Saint Veronica with the Sudarium, c. 1475
Woodcut
Bequest of Herschel V. Jones P.68.80

Devotional woodcuts are rare today because, ironically, they were such a common part of life in 15th-century Europe. Available by the thousands from peddlers at shrines and fairs, these mostly anonymous works were carried by pilgrims, tacked up for use as home altars, and sewn into clothing. Because they were so ordinary, they were not collected and preserved as fine art.

This fine hand-colored example depicts Saint Veronica. According to legend, Veronica pitied Jesus as he carried his cross to Calvary and offered him her kerchief, or sudarium, which miraculously retained the imprint of Jesus' face after she wiped his brow. The cloth presumed to have been Veronica's — her name means *vera icon*, or "true image" — was kept as a holy relic at Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome until the city was sacked in 1527. The church granted indulgences, that is, less time in purgatory, to those who prayed before the relic, a benefit that extended to images of it. This made the veil a popular subject in religious art until the Reformation, when such practices came under criticism.

Albrecht Dürer
German, 1471-1528
Sudarium Displayed by Two Angels, 1513
Engraving
The William M. Ladd Collection
Gift of Herschel V. Jones, 1916 P.139

The German Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer was a legend in his own time. His prints, marked with his famous AD monogram, were known in every corner of Europe, and his virtuoso technical skill has never been equaled. We can trace only part of the journey of this magnificent engraving since it left Dürer's studio in Nuremberg in 1513. Collector's marks on back of the print indicate it was in the Netherlands in the 17th century, England in the late 19th, and Portland, Oregon, in the early 20th. It arrived in Minneapolis in 1916.

Scholars have noted that the face of Christ closely resembles Dürer's own; the intensity and sadness of his gaze are remarkable, even at this tiny scale. Dürer, who would become a Protestant sympathizer, executed this print just four years before Martin Luther posted his 95 theses in 1517, critiquing, among many things, the practice of granting indulgences for praying to images like the sudarium.

Tibet
Rosary and Rosary box, c. 1830
Ebony, metal, beads, thread
Gift of funds from the Asian Art Council 98.119.2.1-2

The use of prayer beads (also called rosaries or malas) to foster meditation is common to many religions across the world—Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism. The religion scholar Joseph Campbell explains their effectiveness:

There is a form of meditation taught in Roman Catholicism where you recite the rosary, the same prayer, over and over and over again. That pulls the mind in. In Sanskrit, this practice is called japa, "repetition of the holy name." It blocks other interests out and allows you to concentrate on one thing, and then, depending on your own powers of imagination, to experience the profundity of this mystery.

This Tibetan rosary consists of 108 black beads, a number sacred to Buddhists. The main beads were used to count prayers and are punctuated by colored beads, brass symbols, and tassels. The round silver storage box is decorated with the eight precious symbols of Buddhism: a conch shell, vase, umbrella, knot, paired fish, wheel, lotus, and canopy.