

Welcome to Art Adventure

What is Art Adventure?

Art Adventure is a program that engages students with artworks from the Minneapolis Institute of Art's collection. Through the support of thousands of trained volunteers, Art Adventure brings visual arts into K–6 classrooms across Minnesota and beyond. The program encourages creativity, critical thinking, and global awareness through in-depth explorations of art across various cultures and time periods. Art Adventure is an opportunity for students to experience art up close and personal through reproductions, technology, and touch-and-feel props.

What does the Art Adventure Program do for students?

An evaluation of Art Adventure showed that, in addition to fostering an interest in art, the program fosters five major critical thinking skills. The skills and experiences students gain through Art Adventure will benefit them the rest of their lives.

5 Critical Thinking Skills

1. Describe what you see.
2. Notice details.
3. Understand how the parts form a whole idea or artwork.
4. Support interpretations with sufficient reasons.
5. Support opinions or preferences with sound reasons.

Who are Picture People?

You like being around and talking to children. You're happy to hear their ideas and are curious to know more about them. You think you might like art—or you know you love art! You might be a parent, a grandparent, or a community member with an enthusiasm for kids and the arts.

You're good at and enjoy

- Recognizing the value in others' unique perspectives.
- Learning about people and places new to you.
- Collaborating with other adults.
- Listening to students.
- Sharing information.

Things you don't have to be good at (but might worry are important)

You do not need to:

- Have classroom experience.
- Know about art, art history, or museums.
- Teach students about art historical periods and terminology.
- Know how to make art.

In this role, you will

- Introduce classroom students to a variety of preselected artworks from various cultures, places, and eras.
- Facilitate discussions using open-ended questions and reaffirm what you hear students say.
- Ask follow-up questions to enliven the conversation.
- Communicate with your school's coordinator.

Once You're in the Classroom

Relax!

The information provided in this booklet is intended as background material to help you feel confident when you share artworks with children. Don't feel you have to cover everything. Rather, choose two or three key ideas you think will be compelling. Kids love stories—what stories might you tell? What parallels can you draw to their lives?

Be sure everyone can see you and the reproduction.

Talk with the teacher to understand routines the class follows when gathering for a visitor. Aim for a setup that will get the students as close to the reproduction as possible. Keep the students' eyes on you, too, by making regular eye contact with everyone in the group.

Set up the students for successful exploration.

- Have the children wear nametags so you can call them by name.
- Set your own preferences aside to allow students to form their own opinions.
- Encourage the students to take turns speaking.
- Paraphrase what the students have said to let them know that you have been listening and help clarify each student's statement for the class.

Begin each discussion with a moment of silent looking.

Begin by introducing the lesson, yourself, and the reproductions. Review with the class what a museum is and what you'll be doing with them. You might build suspense by keeping each image hidden. Start by having the students observe the artwork in total silence. Model your expectations by spending time quietly looking, too.

Give students time to talk about what they have observed.

Introduce a key idea, then begin with a question. Each artwork has specific examples. Be sure to use your finger to point to the part of the picture the child is talking about. Paraphrase his or her words to clarify the observation for others. You'll be surprised how quickly students learn to justify their comments with evidence they can see in the picture! Asking "What else can you find?" or connecting historical content can help generate further comments.

Connect your key ideas to the students' observations.

When the students' observations begin to slow down, use what you've learned about their interests to steer the discussion toward your key ideas. Try to ask questions that will draw connections between what they have said and what you would like them to consider. If they pose questions you can't answer, admit it! Brainstorm ways you might find out together.

Keep the age of your class in mind.

Don't expect young children to be able to focus for longer than 20 minutes. Plan your presentations accordingly. Consider your grade level's ability to understand time—will students understand a date or phrase such as "colonial times" (fifth graders might) or should you stick with "a long time ago" or "about 100 years ago"? Keep in mind that younger children are more likely to accept the abstract than older students, who may want concrete content.

Talk to other Picture People.

Experienced Picture People have great ideas about how to capture the imagination of a class. Don't hesitate to borrow and adapt their suggestions, but remember to bring your own creativity along, too.

Talking about Art

Each artwork comes with key ideas and supporting questions. We encourage you to use them. If you want to develop your own, consider these non-specific questions, which encourage students to look closely and find their own meaning. This process helps develop the five Critical Thinking Skills (page 1). Please keep in mind that not every question will work for every artwork. Remember, if you ask a question, first share a key idea.

What do you see in this artwork?

What else can you find?

This is the best line of questioning to begin conversations with K-2 students. For students who seem ready to dive deeper ask, “What do you see that makes you say that?”

What’s going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

You’ll notice this question is different than “What do you see?” “What’s going on?” invites a consideration of relationships and interactions and taps into children’s natural interest to find stories. “What do you see that makes you say that?” focuses comments on the evidence in the artwork and helps kids explain their assumptions.

How would you feel if you were “in” this work of art?

What would you hear? How might this feel if you could touch it? What path would you take through the picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What might it smell like?

What does this artwork remind you of?

What would you use this object for? What about this scene is familiar or unfamiliar to you? What do you see that makes you say that?

What person or object in this picture do you think was most important to the artist?

What are people in the picture looking at?
Where are there bright colors? What is biggest?

How would the artwork be different if you could make a change?

What would happen if you changed a color?
Moved an object or person? Left something out?

How is this work of art similar to or different from another one you’ve seen in this set?

“Compare and contrast” encourages close looking and reinforces the theme. Get together with your fellow volunteers to coordinate some provocative pairs.

How does this work of art relate to the theme of the set?

Let the students pull it all together! What connections do they see between the theme and what they’ve noticed and learned about the work of art?

What do you like most about this artwork? Why? What do you like least?

If you could keep one artwork from this set, what artwork would you pick? Why?

Using Touch-and-Feel Props

Why props?

Students normally first encounter the Art Adventure artworks in their classrooms as reproductions. The works of art appear to be two-dimensional and similar in size. Props accompany many of the reproductions to help overcome this limitation. Touching a material similar to the artwork, seeing the technique used to create it, or looking at a photograph in which the object is being used adds another dimension to the experience. The use of props reinforces the understanding of all learners through hands-on experiences.

How should you use props?

Without careful planning, props will do little but distract your group. Use these helpful tips to lead a successful exploration:

- Present the prop alongside information about an artwork or to help answer a question about the artwork.
- There are a number of ways to use the prop:
 1. Pass the prop around to each student. Give the students a question to consider while they are waiting for the prop and one to consider after they have held the prop.
 2. Ask a single student to come forward and describe how it feels to the whole group.
 3. Hold the prop yourself and walk it around the group for the students to touch or look at closely.
 4. Hold the prop yourself to illustrate relevant parts of the discussion.
 5. Give everyone a chance to examine it more closely at the end of your presentation.
- Clear communication of your expectations is essential to keep the students focused on the activity. Let the students know that they will need to take turns, what they should do if it's not their turn, and how they should treat the props.
- After the students have explored the prop, refer to the experience as you continue the discussion.
- Don't forget to plan how you'll get the props back from the students! Schools are charged significant fees for missing or damaged props and reproductions.

People and Their Environments

People react to the world around them in everything they do. *People and Their Environments* focuses on six works of art that reveal some aspect of their creator's relationship with the natural and built environment. The objects may have been shaped by what materials were at hand for the artist to use, or a reaction to the uncertainties of the natural world. They may reveal an objective desire to record the look and feel of a place, or a sensuous pleasure in the landscape. They may capture the rapid change of the modern built environment, or the steady constancy of nature's truths. Considered together, the six objects in this set introduce us to various facets of our place in the world.

Prop Kit Contents

Work of Art	Prop	Replacement Cost
China, Rock garden	Detail from scroll depicting Chinese scholars in a garden (Exalted Gathering in the Green Woods, about 1620, Minneapolis Institute of Art)	\$10
Paul Gauguin, <i>Tahitian Landscape</i>	Photograph of the island Moorea, Tahiti	\$10
Berenice Abbott, <i>New York at Night</i>	Image of New York in 1920	\$10
Bamana, Mali	Photograph of antelope	\$10
Tyiwara headcrest	Photograph of aardvark and pangolin	\$10
	Photograph of headcrest being worn	\$10
Thailand, Asia Ceremonial Vessel	No prop	—
Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) or Nēhiyawak (Cree), Moccasins	Sample of beads	\$15
	Sample of beadwork	\$30
Artwork Reproductions (6)		\$50

Please make sure that you have enclosed all of the items on this list when you return the prop kit. You will be responsible for the cost of replacing any missing or damaged items. Thank you!

Contents

China, Jiangsu Province, Rock garden, 1700s	9
Paul Gauguin, <i>Tahitian Landscape</i> , 1891	13
Berenice Abbott, <i>New York at Night</i> , 1934	17
Thailand, Asia, Ceremonial vessel, 1000 BCE	21
Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) or Nēhiyawak (Cree), Moccasins, 1890-1910	25
Bamana, Mali, Tyiwara headcrest, first half of 20th century	29
Glossary	32
People and Their Environments: Self-Guided Tour	35

**China, Jiangsu Province, Lake Tai Region, Tang-li
Rock garden, replica of 1700s garden, tile, rock, and plants
Gift of Ruth and Bruce Dayton, 98.61.2
216 x 226 x 528 in. (548.64 x 574.04 x 1341.12 cm)**



The garden was an essential element of the lifestyle of the literati, China's upper class of scholar-officials. This rock garden occupied a small courtyard attached to the study of one such scholar. The study and garden created an environment in which to enjoy the scholarly pleasures of poetry, calligraphy, and painting as an escape from the strictly ordered world of official life. This small courtyard garden served to evoke the wildness of nature, just as a poem or painting might, in his and others' imaginations.

The Literati

When this garden was originally built in the 1700s, the tradition of the literati was well established in China. This prestigious class of scholars arose during the Tang [tahng] dynasty (618–907), with the institution of a rigorous civil service examination to select people who possessed the best minds for government positions. After years of study in philosophy, literature, and history, those who successfully passed the examination might become officials of the government. Whether they took an official position or not, the literati prided themselves on their cultivated interest in the arts, especially calligraphy, poetry, and painting.

An Escape for the Imagination

In their official duties, the literati conformed to the orderly hierarchies of Confucianism at the foundation of Chinese social structure. However, the contrasting philosophy of Taoism [DOW-ism] is at the heart of their scholarly pursuits and their interest in a garden like this one. Whereas Confucianism emphasizes the individual's place in society, Taoism speaks to the individual's unity with the natural world.

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The ideal Taoist was a recluse living in rugged isolation on a mountaintop, at one with the forces of nature. Such hermits were commonly the subject of the literati's poetry and paintings.

The Scholar and His Garden

Some scholars actually did give up their official duties to live as hermits in the wilderness; others evoked the experience by building gardens within the comfort of their own homes. As Ji Cheng [jee chung] wrote in the *Yuan Ye* [yu-en yeh], a 1634 treatise on the craft of gardens, the purpose of having a garden in the city was "to live as a hermit even in the middle of a marketplace." The traditional Chinese courtyard-style house made it entirely possible to achieve this sense of isolation. The courtyard complex consisted of small buildings clustered around open courtyards, all surrounded by high walls that kept street life far at bay. Some of the open courtyards were devoted to gardens. These gardens could be small little nooks, like this one, or very complex landscapes, with ponds, bridges, and small buildings.

A Passion for Rocks

Rocks were vital components of any garden, and the more unusual the better. Most of the rocks in this garden are Taihu [tie hoo] rocks from the bottom of Lake Tai. Taihu rocks were particularly desirable among literati. These limestone boulders have been worn away by water and sand over centuries to become complex shapes filled with curves and cavities. The great popularity of these rocks encouraged craftspeople to add to the natural supply by carving rocks to resemble the Taihu boulders and dropping them in the water to age for several years. These "artificial" rocks had much less value among rock connoisseurs, who collected rocks in the same way they might collect art. This garden also includes rocks known as "bamboo rocks" for their tall thinness. The passion for rocks ("petromania") peaked in

the Tang dynasty (618–907) and again in the Qing [ching] dynasty (1644–1911), the period from which this courtyard dates.

How to Build a Rock Garden

Garden design was an expression of the scholar's personal sensibilities. The *Yuan Ye* manual advises that the garden's design be approached as an artist would approach a painting: "Take the whitened wall [of the courtyard] as the painting paper, and paint it with rocks." Rocks might be configured to resemble a mountain scene. When skillfully arranged, rock clusters suggest the drama of nature.

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For example, a rock balanced so that it is wide on top and tapering toward the bottom to look "dangerous but without risk" was greatly admired. Also praised were rock forms with many holes and surfaces for the viewer to "pass through" in an imaginary stroll through this fantastic landscape. In the past, a mixture of glutinous rice and tung oil was used to bind the rocks together. Great care had to be taken in choosing rocks that fit together snugly and gracefully. Cement is used today, but great skill and care are still required to set the rocks.

The Meaning of the Rocks

The design of a garden is a means for the gardener's personal expression; likewise, viewers of the garden are expected to bring their own interpretations to it.

The design of a garden is a means for the gardener's personal expression; likewise, viewers of the garden are expected to bring their own interpretations to it. A grouping of rocks may remind one of an actual landscape, symbolize sacred mountains, or suggest the rocky island home of a Buddhist deity. Though usually suggestive of mountains, rock formations may also be appreciated as "natural sculptures" of animals, birds, or deities. The plants in a garden can also inspire interpretations. The bamboo in this garden, for example, might suggest the qualities of a noble man—"upright and modest, yielding but never breaking, enduring through winter days."

Recreating the Rock Garden in Minneapolis

In 1996, the Minneapolis Institute of Art purchased a Chinese scholar's study and attached courtyard garden to be rebuilt in its galleries. Although the primary rocks of the garden had disappeared long ago, the base rocks were still in place. Chinese craftspeople came to the United States to recreate the garden using authentic rocks collected from other abandoned gardens in the Lake Tai region. The craftspeople imagined different kinds of animals as they arranged the rocks; look for suggestions of a lion, a turtle, a dog, or a wild boar among the mountainous shapes. The craftspeople also erected a group of rocks outside the windows of the museum's lobby looking out toward 24th Street.

Paul Gauguin, France, 1848–1903
***Tahitian Landscape*, 1891, oil on canvas**
The Julius C. Eliel Memorial Fund, 49.10
26 ¾ x 36 ⅜ in. (67.95 x 92.39 cm) (canvas)
37 ⅛ x 47 x 3 ¾ in. (94.3 x 119.38 x 9.53 cm) (outer frame)



Paul Gauguin [go-GAN] spent all of his life trying to “return to nature,” first in the French countryside and then in the South Sea islands. Gauguin sought to be among people who lived close to nature. In the artist’s quest to express the true essence of his environment, he developed a style that was not concerned with painting places and things exactly as they appeared in nature, but rather to paint an emotional response to his surroundings.

Imagination, Emotion, and Spirituality

Gauguin went to Tahiti in search of a paradise untouched by urban capitalism, which he felt was artificial and spiritually bankrupt. He wanted to find a remote haven where he could live cheaply and work in nature. Like many artists of his time, Gauguin looked to pre-industrial cultures for artistic inspiration and a lifestyle that was believed to be simple and pure. Instead, Gauguin discovered a thoroughly colonized country whose native culture was fast disappearing as a protectorate of France. Ignoring this reality, Gauguin drew on his imagination to reveal the ideal Tahiti.

Rather than simply describe the natural world, Gauguin explored the realms of emotion, imagination, and spirituality. His paintings evoke an experience or idea in which the meanings cannot be literally represented but rather indirectly suggested. In *Tahitian Landscape*, Gauguin depicts this tropical site with simplified drawing, flattened space, and intense color, in a way that expresses feelings such as serenity and joy.

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Gauguin called his style “Synthetism,” because it synthesized observation of the subject in nature with the artist’s feeling about that subject.

Escape to the Tahiti

Tahitian Landscape dates from Gauguin’s first trip to Tahiti in 1891 and reflects the painter’s initial joy and happiness in his new surroundings, despite his disappointment that much of Tahiti had been colonized by the French. He immersed himself in what he believed to be the authentic aspects of the culture. Painted on the island of Moorea, *Tahitian Landscape* depicts a paradise of palm trees, mountains, and grassy meadows. The scene is rare in that it is one of the painter’s few pure landscapes; only a small, single figure and a dog are depicted in the center of the painting. Gauguin was profoundly affected by his new home; it was a respite from the activity, struggle, and tension of European life.

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He once said of his Tahitian paintings that he had been “eager to suggest a luxurious and untamed nature, a tropical sun that sets aglow everything around it ... the equivalent of the grandeur, depth, and mystery of Tahiti when it must be expressed in one square meter of canvas.”

Forging a Style for Expression

In order to express his highly personal feelings to the viewer, Gauguin developed a style that broke with centuries of artistic tradition. Based on the use of line and color for emotional rather than descriptive effects, this style combined abstraction, motifs drawn from a variety of traditional cultures, symbolism, and an intentionally naïve child-like drawing style to produce sensuous, evocative works. His work laid the foundation for the development of avant-garde art in the early 1900s.

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Tahitian Landscape, while more naturalistic than Gauguin's later works, is still an abstract representation of the scene. Gauguin conceived the landscape as a series of flat shapes superimposed one on top of the other and differentiated by color. Repeated shapes in the mountains, trees, and shrubs help to create a decorative effect and a unified composition. Gauguin carefully placed colors to heighten and intensify the beauty that he saw around him—gardenia, hibiscus, bougainvillea, and palm trees set against a backdrop of mountains and blue sky—to create an expression of harmony and calm.

The colors have been carefully placed to heighten and intensify the beauty that Gauguin saw around him.

About the Artist

Paul Gauguin was undoubtedly one of the most flamboyant personalities of his day. Born in Paris to a Peruvian mother and a French father, Gauguin lived in Peru until age 7. As a young man, he spent six years at sea with the Merchant Marine and the navy. These early experiences may have stirred the wanderlust that marked his life.

He lost his job in the stock market in 1882; shortly afterward, he left his wife and five children in hopes of finding an unencumbered lifestyle and to pursue his art full time. After sojourns in Brittany, Panama, Martinique, and Arles, Gauguin sailed for Tahiti in 1891. Though he returned to Paris for two years in 1893, he went back to Tahiti and later moved to the Marquesas, where he died in 1903.

A Legacy of Experimentation

A potter, sculptor, painter, and printmaker, Gauguin had a tremendous impact on the art of the 1900s. Thanks to his tireless experimentation, he has been identified with a range of stylistic movements; he has been called a Post-impressionist, a Symbolist, and a Synthesist. Toward the end of his life, Gauguin wrote, “The painters who reap benefits of this liberty today owe me something.”

Berenice Abbott, United States, 1898–1991
Publisher: Parasol Press Ltd., New York
***New York at Night*, 1934, gelatin silver print (printed 1982)**
Gift of the William R. Hibbs Family, 86.108.37
©Berenice Abbott / Commerce Graphics Ltd.
9 3/8 x 6 7/8 in. (23.81 x 17.46 cm) (image); 15 x 12 7/16 in. (38.1 x 31.59 cm) (mount)



Berenice Abbott dedicated herself to photographing the changing environment of New York City in the 1930s. *New York at Night* is one of many photographs Abbott took as a part of a 10-year project titled *Changing New York*. Abbott sought to capture the activity and energy of New York and the people who lived there.

Inspiration in Paris

Abbott found her inspiration in the French photographer Eugene Atget [At-ZHEY], whose photographs of Paris documented the city's changing environment at the turn of the century. Abbott met Atget in Paris at the beginning of her career and toward the end of his. Remembering the first time she saw Atget's photographs, she wrote, "Their impact was immediate and tremendous. There was a sudden flash of recognition—the shock of realism unadorned. The real world, seen with wonderment and surprise, was mirrored in each print." Abbott soon opened her own studio and began making portrait photographs. She was talented, successful, and photographed many famous people.

In 1927 she persuaded Atget to pose for a portrait. When she went to show him the prints, she found he had died. Afraid that his photographs would be lost, she purchased all his negatives and prints. In 1929 Abbott went back to America to publish a book about Atget and his Paris photographs. What started as a business trip ended up being a permanent move back to the United States.

A Changing New York

Abbott was fascinated by the contrast between the old and new ways of life in New York: "The new things that had cropped up in eight years, the sights of the city, the human gesture here sent me mad with joy." She photographed the contrast between the wealthy players of Wall Street and the poor people deeply affected by the Great Depression.

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She was also drawn to the contrast between the old and new architecture. During the eight years she had been in Paris, New York had experienced its second great skyscraper boom. In *New York at Night*, she has captured the contrast between the sleek forms of the new skyscrapers and the decorative ornamentation of the older buildings.

In this photograph, Abbott also emphasizes the contrast between the lights of the buildings and the darkness of the night sky. Abbott had just a few days out of the entire year to maximize this contrast. Only on the shortest days of the year in December would it get sufficiently dark to require office workers to turn on lights. Between 4:30 and 5 p.m. on December 20, 1934, she hung her camera off an upper floor of the Empire State Building. To capture the contrast of dark and light, she calculated the exposure at 15 minutes.

The Art of the Documentary Photograph

Abbott's photographs were both documentary and artistic. Pierre MacOrlan, a writer and friend of Abbott, said the art of documentary photography was capturing contemporary life "at the right moment by an author capable of grasping that moment." Abbott's keen sense of composition allowed her to "grasp" many such moments. We see her artistry in the unusual shift in perspective.

Abbott did not choose to show a city with a typical skyline view, but instead puts the viewer above this vibrant city.

Abbott did not choose to show a city with a typical skyline view, but instead puts the viewer above this vibrant city. In this way she succeeds in answering her own question, "How shall the two-dimensional print in black and white suggest the flux of activity of the metropolis, the interaction of human beings and solid architectural constructions, all impinging upon each other in time?"

Pursuing a Passion

Photographing New York was Abbott's passion, and she did it in the face of great odds. Documentary photography was not popularly admired in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and Abbott found it difficult to make ends meet. She was able to devote only one day a week to photographing her city, supporting herself with her portrait photography the other days. When the stock market crashed in 1929, Abbott didn't know how she would pay the rent, let alone continue photographing the city.

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When the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration was formed in 1935 to provide work for artists and craftspeople, she applied for a grant. Abbott later recalled that the day she learned her project was accepted was the happiest day of her life. She was now able to work full-time and get paid to photograph the city she loved.

The job of photographing the city could be strenuous. For this picture, Abbott rejected her smaller handheld camera in favor of a large-format camera, such as Atget had used in Paris. This type of camera, which exposes an 8 x 10-inch negative, was heavy and slow to operate, but the large format gave her added detail and more control.

Abbott took pictures from interesting and sometimes extreme camera angles.

Abbott took pictures from interesting and sometimes extreme camera angles. She would position herself precariously high up for a bird's-eye view, or down low to dodge pedestrians for a worm's-eye view.

Thailand, Asia

Ceremonial vessel, 1000 BCE, Earthenware with impressed designs

The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund, the Helen Jones Fund for Asian Art, and the Suzanne S. Roberts Fund for Asian Art, 2000.204.1

13 x 15 ¼ x 7 ¼ in. (33 x 38.7 x 18.4 cm)



Though the exact use of this vessel is a mystery, it was found in a grave, indicating it might have had a special purpose. Water buffalo are associated with prosperity; a loved one buried with this vessel could symbolize a rich afterlife.

Ceremonial Vessel

This vessel shaped like a water buffalo comes from the Lopburi region of South-Central Thailand. It is the largest known of its kind and era. In 1000 BCE, animal-shaped pottery was uncommon; instead, animal imagery was drawn onto ceramic vessels. It was not until about 300 BCE that animal vessels like this would be produced in large quantities. The vessel's ombre coloration, however, is typical of this period, with varied shades of gray/white and brown/red. Refining their pottery skills, artists began to use multiple colors on a single vessel and created vessels that stood on multiple feet.

This vessel is earthenware, which means it was fired using a method that waterproofed the vessel once it was glazed. Earthenware is fired at low temperatures in an open pit, instead of a kiln. One of the first pottery types to be developed, earthenware was popular for everyday vessels because it could be used for cooking and storing food. Some pots had a double-tiered neck, or opening, to keep ants and other insects out of the container.

This particular vessel was likely not used to store food or as decoration. We believe this is a ceremonial vessel that could have been used in religious rituals, or even in a burial. When archaeologists discovered the vessel, it was broken in several places. It could have broken naturally over time, or on purpose during a burial ceremony. Between 1000 BCE and 300 BCE, when this vessel was created, a popular burial method included the placement of broken potsherds (pieces) over and under the body, along with other precious possessions. Archaeologists have excavated objects ranging from pottery and iron tools to rare jade beads and bronze bracelets. These grave items can tell us a lot about the status of the person buried and what their life may have

been like. Scholars are still studying these objects today. Because this water buffalo vessel is rare, it is difficult to determine its exact use and value to its community.

Technique

To create this vessel, the artist would first collect clay and any tools needed to shape and carve it. One method of decorating pottery, called incising, was popular at the time. Incising involves cutting patterns into the surface of clay with a sharp tool. During this time period (1000–300 BCE), cord-marking was another decorating technique for ceramics. In this process, the artist would press a rope or textile onto the surface of wet clay and then drag it to create a rough, textured look. The vessel at Mia combines both techniques: incising and cord-marking. Incising is seen in the sharp lines outlining various shapes; cord-marking is seen where the texture changes from smooth to rough.

Water Buffalo

Since the Neolithic period, the water buffalo has been essential to rice and crop production in Thailand. These large mammals were domesticated to help humans plow rice fields. Between 1000 and 300 BCE, human settlements advanced with the help of water buffalo, and they remain integral to rice cultivation today. Their association with cultivation and bounty made them symbols of wealth and prosperity. The water buffalo would have pulled a wood plow, possibly tipped in iron. In this period, bronze and iron were used to create luxury items, such as bracelets, and everyday tools like axes and knives.

Background

Archaeologists have studied the early cultures of Thailand's Lopburi region since the 1960s. Their ongoing excavation of artifacts could change the way we think about the lives of creators of objects like this vessel. Right now, we know a few things about these earlier inhabitants of Thailand.

Environment played an important role in the way prehistoric people hunted for food and gathered materials to build villages. Geography influenced their diet, hunting and gathering techniques, shelters, and overall way of life. Archaeologists have identified four cultural regions within Prehistoric Southeast Asia: the mountains and coasts of Vietnam, the uplands in northern Thailand, the uplands surrounding the Gulf of Siam, and the Thai-Malaysian peninsula. The area around the Gulf of Siam is immediately south of the Lopburi region, where the water buffalo vessel was found.

Many excavations of very early settlements focused in and around caves; these areas were sheltered, which kept artifacts from theft, breakage, or damage from floods or acts of nature. It is likely that early inhabitants used stone tools and built these spaces out of bamboo. Inside would have been fire pits, constructed out of clay and stone materials to elevate them above the wet ground. They hunted small animals, including birds, in the nearby forest, and ate freshwater or saltwater fish. Some villages had access to both ocean and freshwater; others, such as those in the uplands of north Thailand, only had access to freshwater resources.

The three most significant time periods within Thailand's larger Neolithic and Bronze Age eras are the Early, Middle and Late periods. By compiling evidence found in several excavation sites, archaeologists have begun to understand how bronze artifacts were made and what pottery advancements occurred when. Though these findings are ever changing, we know a few things for certain about the Neolithic period.

The water buffalo vessel dates to the Middle period, 1000–300 BCE, when potters showed a preference for making cord-marked and incised ceramics over plain, undecorated pots. Artists of the period also began to polish their pottery, perhaps influenced by the onset of metalworking and bronze production. Meanwhile, metal artifacts, including iron axes, began to replace polished stone tools. Farming flourished, perhaps due to the invention of metal objects to cultivate rice and other crops, assisted by domesticated animals.

Burial practices extended from the Early period; the dead continued to be buried with broken pottery, the potsherds placed on top of and underneath the body. During the Middle period, potters made pots with thinner walls, making them easier to break when used for burial. During the Late period, about 300 BCE–300 CE, burial rituals using pottery fell out of favor. Potters built vessels with thicker walls, better suited for cooking and storage.

Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) or Nēhiyawak (Cree), United States, North America
Moccasins, 1890–1910, Hide, beads, cotton
The Frances M. Norbeck Fund, 2000.138.4a,b
2 ¼ x 4 ⅝ x 10 ⅜ in. (5.7 x 11 x 26.4 cm)



Key Ideas

These moccasins represent a blending of cultures. While museum records do not tell us who made them, they represent an innovative artist who combined traditional knowledge with fashion trends of the time. They do not literally show the environment of the time, but they do help us to understand the artistic and cultural environment of the Cree and Ojibwe.

Artist

A Native woman artist, likely Cree or Ojibwe, made this pair of moccasins. The style of the moccasins shows aspects of both Cree and Ojibwe [Oh-jib-way] art, a reflection of the often close relationships between tribes and individuals. It is not possible today to know with certainty how the artist identified herself.

Cree

There are many different groups of Cree: East Cree, Swampy, Plains Cree, West Main Cree, and Cree. “Cree” was a name given to the Nēhiyawak [Ne-he-a-wak] by the Europeans. It means “Cree people.” While identified with distinct groups, all Cree are bound by language and cultural traditions. Originating in Canada, the Cree spread across the country from the Hudson Bay to the Rocky Mountains. Owing to their environment, the Cree focused more on hunting and fishing than agriculture. In the United States, a small population of Cree historically lived from Lake Superior westward.

The West Main Cree, who are believed to have made these moccasins at the turn of the century, live on the western shore of Hudson Bay. Little is known about West Main Cree life and culture before their contact with Europeans in the 1700s. Excellent fur traders, the West Main Cree hunted and trapped moose, caribou, seals, hares, and beavers. They also made elaborate wooden decoys for hunting and gathering geese. All of this hunting, which largely benefited the North American fur trade, also affected their diet. Slipper-style moccasins by the neighboring Plains Cree bear similarities to those by the West Main Cree likely thanks to their geographic proximity.

Ojibwe

Ojibwe artists were influenced by Cree artwork and vice versa. The Ojibwe are one of the largest Native communities, and many live along the United States and Canadian border. Reaching from Michigan to Montana, the Ojibwe are seminomadic. This meant that they moved frequently to stay close to food sources. The “Ojibwe,” a name given to them by the Europeans, identify as Anishinaabe, which means “first” or “original people.” A group of Cree and Ojibwe (who identify themselves as Chippewa Cree) live on the Rocky Boy Reservation in Montana. Minnesota has seven federally recognized Ojibwe reservations.

Moccasins and Motifs

In general, the style of moccasins varies from Nation to Nation; however, for the Cree and Ojibwe there were usually two styles of moccasins. The first is made from a single piece of tanned leather that had a front seam covered by quillwork, beadwork, or embroidery. Given their durability, moose and caribou hide were common materials. The second type of moccasin from these groups also came from one piece of tanned leather, but had an insert over the instep. This piece is referred to as a “vamp.” These inserts would also be decorated with embroidery, beads, or quillwork. Quillwork is a type of decoration using the quills of animals, like porcupines or birds. Winter weather called for wearing tall moccasins, on which a cuff would be added to the top of the moccasin for protection from the snow.

The Cree acted as liaisons for the European fur traders and other Native peoples. They were exposed to European design motifs and artistic techniques, which shaped their own art. Before their contact with Europeans, Cree artists made

floral designs that were largely geometric and abstract. Afterwards, they became more figurative and naturalistic. This geometric style was also due in some part to their materials. Quills are not easy to bend into round or circular designs. European contact also meant trade, which introduced steel needles, silk embroidery threads, and seed beads. Seed beads are little glass beads that come in many colors and sizes. These beads allowed the artists greater flexibility in their work.

Floral designs were very common, and for the Cree, the rose was a particularly important flower. Roses, whose flowers and leaves are protected from harm by their thorny stems, were symbolic of the Cree woman's resilience. Flowers, berries, and plants provided healing through medicine and food. Native people studied the healing qualities of materials found in nature; out of respect, it is often beaded onto clothing and moccasins. Not only would the artists be exposed to flowers and fauna around them, but they also respected nature as a whole. In beading the roses on these moccasins, the artist was representing life, growth, and spirituality. Native people learned from and respected nature.

Moccasins

This particular pair of moccasins are a beautiful example of tradition and innovation coming together. Influenced by Cree, Ojibwe, and European artistic traditions, the floral moccasins are truly a work of art. Lined with cotton and decorated with red silk, the hide of these moccasins was given its fuzzy texture through the process of brain tanning. This method of preparing the hide is very complicated and incredibly laborious, but it uses all parts of the animal. Using the entire animal to make something is a sign of respect.

Considered to be "slipper-style" moccasins, the foot opening is surrounded by red silk. Acquired through trade, silk was a luxury good, and the red band is quite common across Cree moccasins. While some aspects of these moccasins are typical for Cree, other elements are typical of Ojibwe style. The pointed toe, metallic beading, and floral pattern are common for both artist groups. The flowing leaves growing out of the thorny stems lead to trefoil-shaped flowers. This means there are three lobes that form the petals. While each individual slipper has an asymmetrical pattern, when worn as a pair they create a blooming and blossoming symmetrical design.

Near the red silk opening, silver roots grow outward. Gold and green leaves branch out, connecting to buds and small blossoms that wrap around toward the wearer's heels. Thorns tick along the stem that extends all the way toward the toes. Each moccasin is topped with two large roses. On the inside of the wearer's foot is a light pink-petaled flower with a dark pink inside. The second rose, on the outside, is the near opposite. Both flowers are dotted with yellow centers. Incorporating a multi-colored design, the artist sewed small purple and blue buds along the pointed toe.

Bamana, Mali, Africa

Tyiwara headcrest, 20th century, wood, cowrie shells, thread

The Marguertie S. McNally Endowment for Art Acquisition, 2012.25

24 1/16 x 8 1/2 x 3 in. (61.12 x 21.59 x 7.62 cm) (including base)



This headcrest honors a legendary being named Tyiwara (chee WAH rah), who taught the Bamana people how to farm a long, long time ago. It was worn in performances that encouraged and celebrated farmers whose hard work allowed them to plant and harvest crops in a challenging environment.

Background

Bamana people live in communities across a wide expanse of the West African country of Mali. They share much in common with their neighbors throughout the Sudan region and are richly diverse in their beliefs and practices. Much Bamana art relates to traditional cults and associations with long histories in the region. At the same time, many Bamana people are Muslim and do not participate in these traditional associations.

Headcrests like this one are key components of lively performances that encourage farmers and honor Tyiwara, the legendary being who taught the Bamana to farm long, long ago.

Agriculture is at the heart of many Bamana communities. Because the land is susceptible to drought, religious practices concerned with promoting agricultural success developed over time, including masquerade performances. As more communities have converted to Islam and modernized, some practices, including some masquerade performances, have become less ritually significant.

Headcrests like this one are key components of lively performances that encourage farmers and honor Tyiwara, the legendary being who taught the Bamana to farm long, long ago. Tyi means “work” and Wara means “wild animal,” implying claws and fierceness. Tyiwara, who some believe was half antelope and half human, came down from the skies to teach humans how to plant seeds, tend crops, and harvest. After a few years, however, the people began to take Tyiwara and his lessons for granted. Tyiwara died, and humans began to have difficulties with

their crops. The people buried Tyiwara and vowed to honor him every year.

Bamana social structure includes numerous men’s associations, or societies, including one called Tyiwara. Traditionally, Tyiwara associations, some open to both men and women, taught members all aspects of successful farming and food production, which requires cooperation between the sexes. The men are responsible for taking care of artworks made for ritual Tyiwara performances, including headcrests.

Some rural Bamana people continue to rely on farming to feed their families and communities. For about half of the year, when and if there is sufficient rain for growing, farmers cultivate the low-quality soil. Given the environmental challenges, working the land and yielding harvests is incredibly difficult work and requires super-human strength and stamina. Farming is a highly valued profession.

Through the mid-20th century, performances honoring Tyiwara marked the beginning of the planting season. Today, artists continue to make headcrests for community performances, some of which are still ritually significant. In some communities the men’s associations become theater troupes and perform competitively. Even where the performances carry less religious import than they once had, the farming theme and celebration of productive cooperation remain important.

Performance

In Tyiwara performances, male and female headdresses appear together, emphasizing the role both sexes play in agricultural work and the all-important cooperation between them. The costumed

performers, however, are men. Their headdresses are attached to woven caps. From these flow fiber veils and costumes that hide the dancers' identities and create a powerful physical presence. The dancers, often leaning on large sticks, imitate movements of antelopes to invoke the blessing of Tyiwara.

The headcrests, which come in a wide variety of styles, express many levels of meaning, only some of which we can even begin to understand. The animals on some headcrests are composites of different species of antelope, the strong, graceful animal that embodies the ideal qualities of champion farmers. Other headdresses, like this one, incorporate aspects of various different animals admired by the Bamana for their adaptations and abilities that enable them to thrive in their environment.

Together the male and female characters represent those farmers who possess the highest physical and moral qualities needed to carry out all aspects of agriculture, ranging from clearing the land, tilling the soil, planting the seeds, and tending the plants, in a timely and efficient manner. According to some scholars, the male character symbolizes the sun and the female, the earth. The female headcrests frequently include a baby on her back, which, for some Bamana, represent humans. The flowing fiber costumes can symbolize water. In some performances attendants pour water over the fiber costumes to create the sensation of rainfall. Overall, the performances communicate the rich relationship between the Bamana people and their environment.

Tyiwara Headcrest

This Tyiwara headcrest incorporates aspects of several animals associated with farming and strength. To honor farmers the artist creatively put together the long horns of an antelope, the rounded, humped body of an aardvark, and the long body of a pangolin.

To honor farmers the artist creatively put together the long horns of an antelope, the rounded, humped body of an aardvark, and the long body of a pangolin.

Each animal had features valued in Bamana farmers. Farmers had to be strong and energetic like antelopes. They had to be able to dig deep into the earth like the pangolin and aardvark.

The style of this Tyiwara headcrest is abstract, meaning the animals are not shown realistically. Instead, the artist combined aspects of each animal to create a design that emphasizes forms, lines, open spaces, and dynamism. Yet, Tyiwara's snout, eyes, crest, horns, ears, back, and legs are all recognizable. The artist attached a cowrie shell at eye level and an additional decoration, now missing, at the ear. Decorations contributed to the special power of the headcrest as well as to its appearance when in motion.

Imagine the dramatic silhouette of this headcrest with the blue sky behind it. It was the artist's job to make an artwork that everyone in a crowd could see atop the dancer's head as he moved to the rhythm of drums and bent over to mimic the digging gestures of animals, signifying the backbreaking work of farmers.

The complex style of this Tyiwara headcrest tells us that it was produced in the central and southern parts of Bamana territory.

About the Artist

Among the Bamana and their neighbors, artists and craftspeople are very special people. They are not tied to a single community, but rather work across regions.

Among the Bamana and their neighbors, artists and craftspeople are very special people. They are not tied to a single community, but rather work across regions. Sculptors, also called blacksmiths, are

respected and feared because they have special knowledge of the spirit world and the technologies needed to carve and cast objects. Their knowledge of the source of metal ores, how to control fire, and how to make metal tools and weapons sets them apart. They live separated from their communities.

People come from long distances to commission works from renowned artists. This said, artists do not publicize their services since their work is closely tied to the spirit world. When carving an object, the blacksmith is inspired by a spirit and, therefore, does not claim sole authorship of the final sculpture.

Technique

The sculptor who made this headdress carved the complex figure from a solid piece of wood. His tools included sharp knives and a cutting tool, called an adze, which is kind of like an axe, but with its blade positioned perpendicular to its handle (like a hoe). He created the form by cutting away the wood. Next, he cut many small marks to create an uneven surface that reflects the sunlight when in motion.

Key Ideas

1. This African wooden sculpture is called a headcrest because it was made to be worn on a performer's head, attached to a woven cap.
2. The headcrest, which honors a legendary being named Tyiwara (chee WAH rah), was worn in performances that encouraged and celebrated farmers who planted and harvested crops in a challenging environment.
3. The Bamana artist who made this abstract sculpture included characteristics of a few different animals to show that Tyiwara possessed the strength and skill of all of them combined!

Questions

1. This wooden sculpture was made to be worn on a man's head. Imagine what it would look like if the bottom was firmly attached to a cap the man could tie onto his head. Look for the holes that fibers would have been woven through to keep it from falling. Close your eyes and think about what it might feel like to wear a heavy object attached to your favorite cap.
2. Look at the design of the sculpture of Tyiwara. It is an abstract design, which means that it is not realistic. Name the animal features or parts you see. What more can you find? What parts of the design do you wonder about?
3. The performers who wore headcrests like this one imitated the movements of human farmers as well as antelopes, aardvarks, and other animals. Imagine bending over as though you were digging in the dirt for a long time. If possible, stand up and make the movements that you would use to imitate digging with an aardvark snout. How would you show that you are as strong as an antelope?
4. The Tyiwara headcrest was made for a performance honoring farmers who had to overcome many environmental challenges to successfully grow food for their communities. What kinds of challenges do you think farmers in Minnesota (and Wisconsin) face?

Notes

Glossary

Abstract

Art in which the artist is more concerned with manipulation of the formal elements and principles of art than with naturalistic representation. Recognizable references to original appearances may be very slight.

Balance

The equal distribution of visual weight in a composition. When this equilibrium (generally between the left and right halves) is not present, the viewer senses a certain vague uneasiness or dissatisfaction. The simplest type of balance is SYMMETRY, sometimes called “formal” balance, in which shapes are consciously repeated in the same positions on either side of a central axis. The second type of balance is ASYMMETRY or “informal” balance, in which balance is achieved with dissimilar objects that have equal visual weight or equal eye attraction.

Color

The pigments used to create a visual illusion or design. Color has hue, value, and intensity or saturation. HUE is the name for the actual color, whether it is red, azure, or citron. VALUE refers to the lightness or darkness of a color, achieved by the amount of white or black added to it. INTENSITY refers to the relative purity of a particular color, its BRIGHTNESS or DULLNESS.

Colors are divided into three categories:

1. PRIMARY colors—red, yellow, blue—from which all other colors are mixed;
2. SECONDARY colors—orange, violet, and green— each made by mixing two primaries;
3. TERTIARY colors, which comprise the rest of the mixed color wheel. Hues are called COMPLEMENTARY when they appear opposite each other on the color wheel. Mixing complements together dulls them; placing complementary colors next to each other intensifies the brightness of each.

There are two basic ways that color is used in painting: as LOCAL color, reproducing the colors seen in nature (green grass, blue sky, red apples); or as ARBITRARY or NONLOCAL color, which ignores natural color for aesthetic or emotional reasons.

Colors may have any number of visual properties. BRIGHT colors are more noticeable to the eye and tend to advance in a composition. DULL colors tend to recede.

Similarly, WARM colors—red, yellows and oranges— normally advance while COOL colors—blue and related hues—recede. In addition, color may be used to help establish a certain mood in a painting.

Cityscape

A painting, drawing, or other depiction of urban scenery. Although figures or other objects may be included in a cityscape, they are of secondary importance to the architectural setting.

Composition

The arrangement of forms in a work of art.

Contrast

The use of opposing elements (colors, forms, lines, light and dark) in proximity to produce an intensified effect.

Gesture

A movement that shows an idea or a feeling.

Landscape

A painting, drawing or other depiction of natural scenery. Although figures or manmade objects may be included in a landscape, they are of secondary importance.

Line

The most familiar of all the elements of art, line is capable of infinite variety and is able to convey all sorts of moods and feelings. A major characteristic of line is its DIRECTION: a HORIZONTAL line implies quiet and repose; a VERTICAL line, strength and solidity. Both are stabilizers and tend to reduce any feeling of movement. DIAGONAL and SPIRAL lines are used to suggest movement and change.

Linear

Painting characterized chiefly by forms and shapes that are precisely defined by line. (Contrast with PAINTERLY.)

Motif

A decorative design or pattern.

Organic

Made of materials coming from living things.

Perspective

A system of representing three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface so that they look as if they were really being viewed from a given point. There are a number of different methods for indicating perspective, the two best known being LINEAR PERSPECTIVE and AERIAL PERSPECTIVE. Linear perspective renders depth through a scientifically arrived at series of actual or implied lines that intersect at a vanishing point on the horizon to determine the relative size of objects from background to foreground. AERIAL or ATMOSPHERIC perspective renders depth by changes of form, tone, or color with the recession of objects into background.

Painterly

Painting characterized chiefly by qualities of color, stroke, and texture rather than line. The Impressionists often worked in a painterly style.

Portrait

A representation of a person. Portraits can exist in any medium and can be full length, three-quarter length, half length, or show only the head and shoulders of the sitter (BUST). With the aid of the imagination or a mirror, an artist may execute a SELF-PORTRAIT.

Realism

Art in which the subject is presented as closely as possible to the way it is seen by the human eye.

Art Adventure

People & Their Environments

Self-Guided Tour

1



Tyiwara headcrest
Bamana (Mali)

Gallery _____

4



Tahitian Landscape
Paul Gauguin

Gallery _____

2



New York at Night
Berenice Abbott

Gallery _____

5



Rock garden
China

Gallery _____

3



Ceremonial Vessel
Thailand, Asia

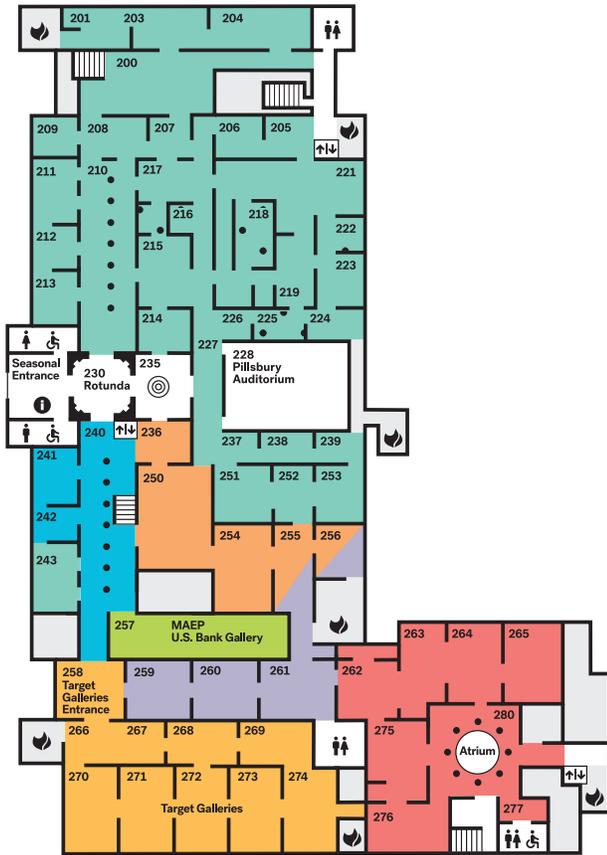
Gallery _____

6



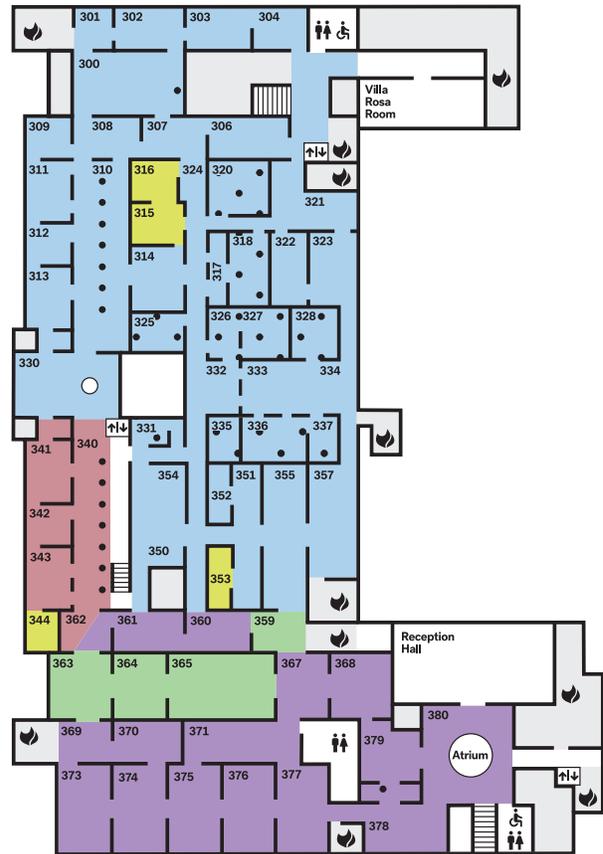
Moccasins
Anishinaabe
(Ojibwe) or
Nēhiyawak (Cree)

Gallery _____



2 Second Floor

- **Asia**
Galleries 200–227, 237–239, 243, 251–253
- **Modern & Contemporary**
Galleries 262–265, 275–277
- **Africa**
Galleries 236, 250, 254, 255
- **Ancient Art**
Galleries 240–242
- **MAEP, U.S. Bank**
Gallery 257
- **Americas**
Galleries 259–261
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3 Third Floor

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Galleries 300–337, 350–357, 362
- **Europe 1200–1600**
Galleries 340–343
- **Modern & Contemporary**
Galleries 359–361, 367, 369–380
- **Photography**
Galleries 363–365, 368
- **Prints & Drawings**
Galleries 315, 316, 344, 353
- Period Rooms**
Galleries 318, 320, 325–328, 331, 335–337
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