

Crossing Boundaries/ Making Connections



MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum
Lower Lake Road
South Hadley, MA 01075
www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum

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Introduction

As a teaching institution, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum develops the collection in response to its educational mission to support not only art and art history, but subjects across the curriculum. This exhibition showcases new acquisitions by pairing them with long-standing objects from the permanent collection in new and unexpected ways. Typically, works are grouped based on artist, culture, and time period, but by looking beyond those categories, new appreciation and insight can be found.

In this exhibition, represented here in a slightly abridged form, nine groups of objects from different cultures and of varied media are organized around a common theme or subject. Such recurrent subject matter across geography and time is not coincidental. Visual representations of certain themes or ideas repeat because they are born from common experiences, such as need for food and water, having or being a mother, and a desire to explain the unknown. Beyond the themes that spring from shared necessity, some visual elements which repeat throughout cultures—like hybrid creatures and demons—may be surprising and imply certain less apparent human universals.

Comparisons not based on the traditional categories are also effective in helping to understand and appreciate the nuances of art, especially subtleties of style or medium. To the untrained observer, the particular line quality of a woodblock print or the effect created by

perspective may be indiscernible without a contrasting example lacking those elements. The medium used by the artist also strongly impacts the final product. Certain materials can be extremely expressive on their own and greatly aid an artist to imbue meaning into a piece. Different media have the power to evoke a range of emotions and sensations; as this exhibition shows, the use of charcoal, pen and ink, or woodblocks drastically affects the rendering of a subject. While the artist has some freedom of choice, the materials he employs often depend on the intended use of the object, cultural preference or tradition, and available technology or resources. Questioning the material can thus lead to better comprehension of how, where, and why a work was created.

In the following pages, you will encounter nine groups of images each with a series of questions, to which there may be no right answer, followed by more in-depth explorations of the featured topics. As you go through the groups, we encourage you to think of different ways the works could be reconfigured and look for commonalities or differences beyond those discussed. Consider applying these practices to art you find in other galleries and museums and see what new connections you can make.

Sadie Shillieto
Art Advisory Board Fellow

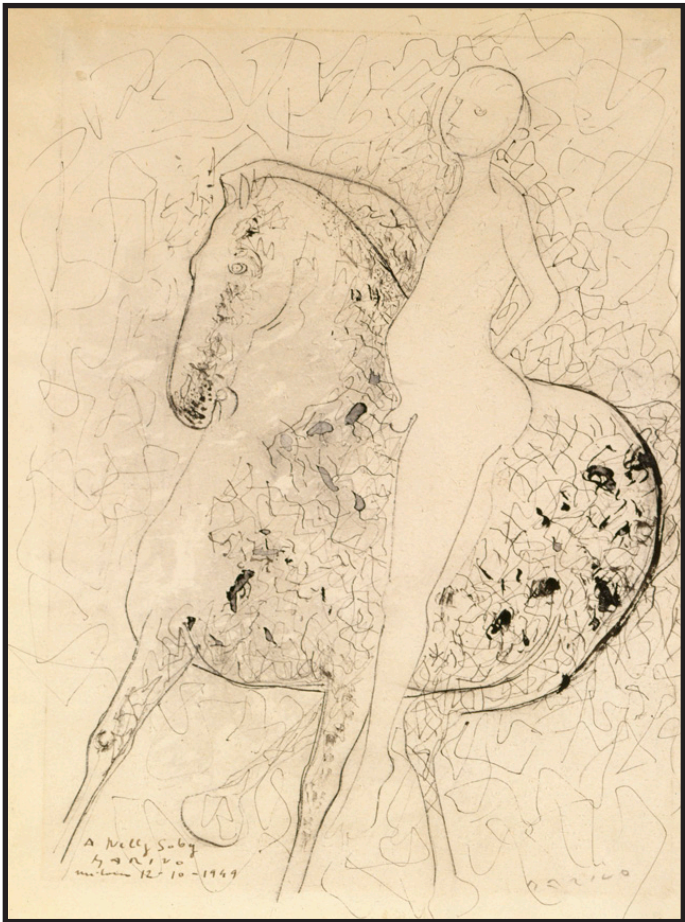


1



2

How do the manipulation of proportion and the form of the horse alter the message?
What roles have horses played in various cultures? Do the methods used by the artists change how you interpret each work?



3



4

The figure of the horse has a long history in art, starting with prehistoric cave paintings and developing into early Greek bronzes such as #2. Focusing on the relationship between the human figure and the horse, the four artists represented here communicate powerful and diverse messages with minimal lines and shading. The interaction between figures can be carefully controlled, for example, by the artist's manipulation of proportion. #1, a preparatory sketch by 19th-century French artist Charles Angrand may have been created with radical socialist views in mind, evident in his portrayal of a worker who seems powerless against the strength of the large animals.

Although a modern drawing, in #3, Marino Marini employs the same simplistic form as #2, an ancient Greek bronze, yet uses the pen to create a sense of freedom and motion with the human figure in command. In comparison, consider the physical actions required to make the other works and the results of those movements. Albrecht Dürer created #4 from a woodblock, which requires a laborious carving process, but hundreds of prints could be pulled from the single block. While the subject matter is simple and, with the exception of Dürer, #4, the compositions are sparse, these works portray four vastly different schools of thought conveyed in what each artist felt was the most expressive medium for his respective purposes.

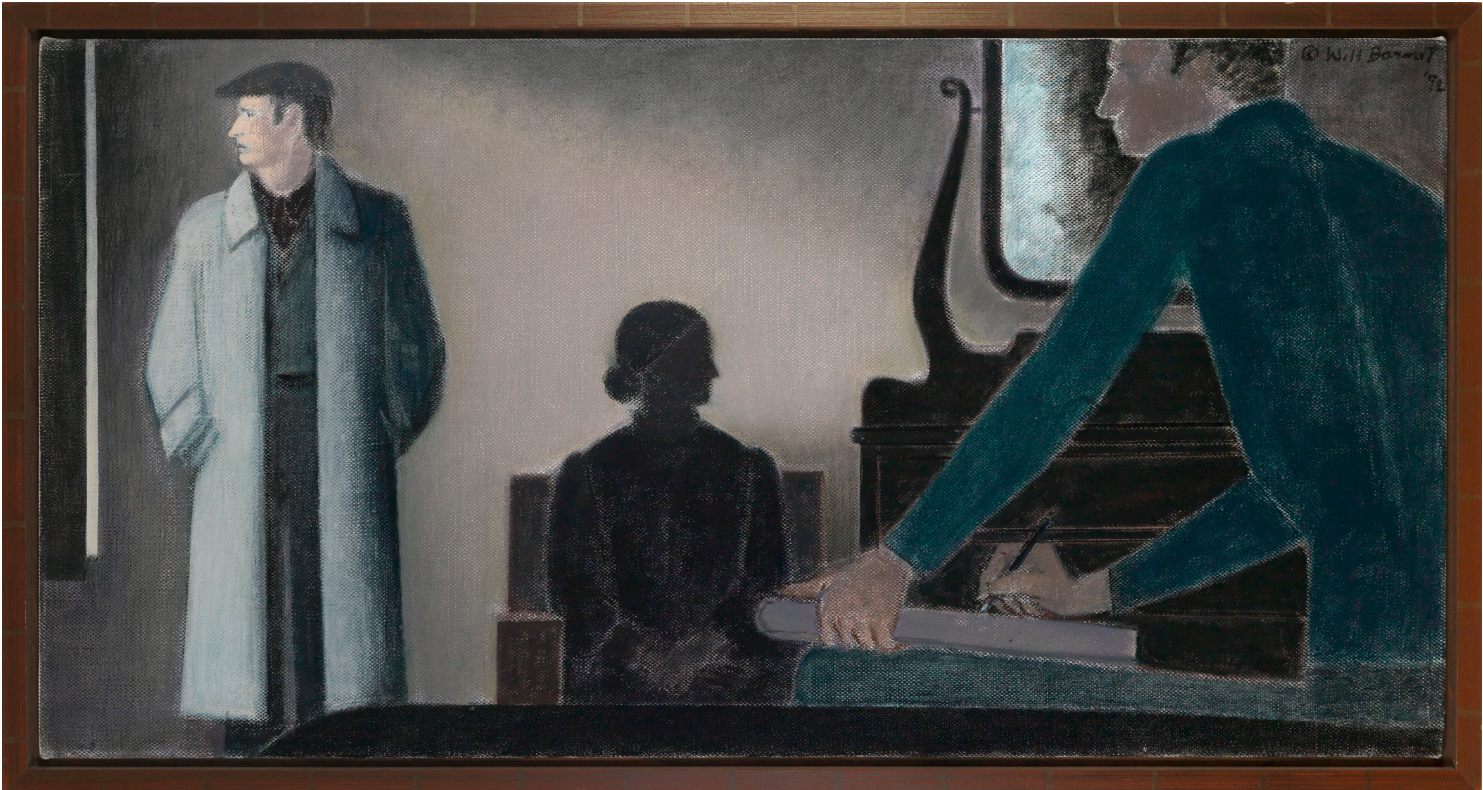
1. Charles Angrand (French, 1854-1926)
Chevaux (Horses)
Charcoal, ca. 1907
Anonymous gift in honor of Pierre Angrand

2008.16.1
2. Artist Unknown, Greek, Geometric period
Horse
Bronze, late 8th century BCE
Purchase with the Mary Gilmore Williams Fund

1948.2.B.OI
3. Marino Marini (Italian, 1901-1980)
Horse and Rider
Black ink, 1949
Gift of Peter Soby in memory of Eleanor Howland Bunce (Class of 1926)

2009.13
4. Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471-1528)
Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse
Woodcut, ca. 1497-1498
Lent by Priscilla Joyce Engle

1974.L1.2



1

What symbols are used to portray motherhood and how do you interpret them? Do any of these works of art lack symbols? How is meaning conveyed without them?



2



3



4



5

Symbolism is one of the most important factors in visual communication, resulting in the association of many images with experiences that are common or widely represented, such as mothers and motherhood. In the West, Christianity was the source of the majority of symbols for many centuries. Although many of them are still in use today, they are not as widely understood as in pre-Reformation Europe. The image of the Virgin Mary, for example, varies depending upon which role the artist was depicting. Not just a cornerstone for the Catholic Church, Mary herself has such a strong link to the highly personal subject of motherhood that it is difficult not to associate any image of mother and child, in even the most secular setting, with the Madonna. In #4, Lucas van Leyden presents Mary as a spiritual vision, denoted by the circle of light encompassing her whole figure. Her portrayal as a vision and not as a person is reinforced by the crescent moon beneath her feet, which is how she appeared to St. John the Evangelist.

In comparison, #5, the Mexican fertility figure conveys a more earthly idea of motherhood. Although she possesses useless limbs, her build is conducive to child-bearing, significantly different from the Virgin's, which is completely obscured beneath the many folds of her drapery. Rather than being accompanied by descriptive attributes, the physical body of the fertility figure is manipulated in order to communicate meaning. Likewise, contemporary American artist Will Barnet illustrates in #1 how lighting and body language can evoke emotions and create a narrative. The artist renders himself drawing his elderly mother and an unidentified man, but leaves his mother's form in silhouette, allowing viewers to fill in the details with their own stories.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Will Barnet (American, b. 1911)
The Mother
Oil on canvas, 1992
Gift of Elena and Will Barnet

2008.14.1 | 4. Lucas van Leyden (Dutch, ca. 1494- 1533)
Madonna Standing on Crescent Moon holding the Christ Child
Engraving, 1523
Gift of Lilian M. C. Randall (Class of 1950)

2005.13.1 |
| 2. Utagawa Kuniyoshi (Japanese, 1797-1861)
From the series: Stories of Chaste and Virtuous Women
Woodcut, 1843–1844
Gift of Mrs. Louis C. Black

1973.327.Q.RII | 5. Artist Unknown, Mexican
Fertility Figure
Terracotta, 400 BCE-200 CE
Bequest of Mary Ryan Orwen (Class of 1935)

2006.3.6 |
| 3. Roger Stivers (American, b. 1953)
Pregnant Woman with Dog
Gelatin silver print photograph, 1990
Gift of Holly and James Bogin

2006.27.1 | |



1



2

Why do half-man/half-beast creatures manifest in the religions, myths, and folklores of so many cultures? Are they scary or objects of worship? Or both?



3



4

The origins of mythical hybrid creatures are as diverse as the cultures from which they come. Although often highly symbolic of an aspect of human nature or embodying the power of good or evil, what stands out the most in their depictions is not the allegory so much as the narrative. It is not simply the creature, god, or what they represent that is so fascinating, but how they came into being and their subsequent exploits. For example, the Classical myths incorporate centaurs in many stories, and the Minotaur is one character in a long and involved saga illustrating the complex relationship between mortals and gods as well as the themes of human triumph and folly.

#1, which comes from India, does not represent the typical combination of human and animal anatomy, but like the Greek and Roman stories of hybrids, serves to illustrate one episode in the complex tale of the formation of the Earth. The story presented is that of the goddess Durga, who as a woman was the only one able to kill the demon Mahisha. In battle, Mahisha transforms into a buffalo and rushes at Durga, only to be pinned down and killed as he changes back to his natural form. Therefore, the image is not of a hybrid creature, but a demonic god caught between two forms as his destructive rampage over the world is brought to an end. Although the imagery is stylized and stiff, the artist's decision to depict the moment of transformation adds motion and a stronger sense of narrative to the scene.

For the Egyptians, whose written language was based on stylized pictures known as hieroglyphs, communication through visual symbols must have been second nature. On #4, the fragment of Egyptian cartonnage—a material used as the outer wrappings for mummies—is painted a god who is not only a hawk and human hybrid, but also a composite of two gods. Known as Re-Horakhty, the hawk-headed god Horus is combined with the solar disk of Re enclosed by a protective cobra. The artist has combined the attributes and representations of two gods to build a complex meaning to which there are few equivalents from other cultures or eras.

1. Artist Unknown, Indian
Durga killing the buffalo demon Mahisha
Gouache and ink, 19th century
Gift of Ellen P. Reese

1986.37.21

4. Artist Unknown, Egyptian
Fragment of cartonnage
Pigment, substrate, cloth, 525-343 BCE
Gift of Jean Lewis Keith

2005.19.7

2. Salvator Rosa (Italian, 1615-1673)
Glaucus and Scylla
Etching and drypoint, ca. 1661
Purchase with the John Martyn Warbeke
Art Fund

2008.4.2

3. Max Klinger (German, 1857-1920)
Intermezzi, Opus IV, Bl. 5: Kampfende Centauren (Fighting Centaurs)
Etching and aquatint, 1881
Purchase from the Tomlinson Collection

1974.22



1

Why do people represent evil in art? What different visual forms does it take in various cultures? Do you find the realistic or simplistic depictions of demons and devils more interesting?



2



4



3



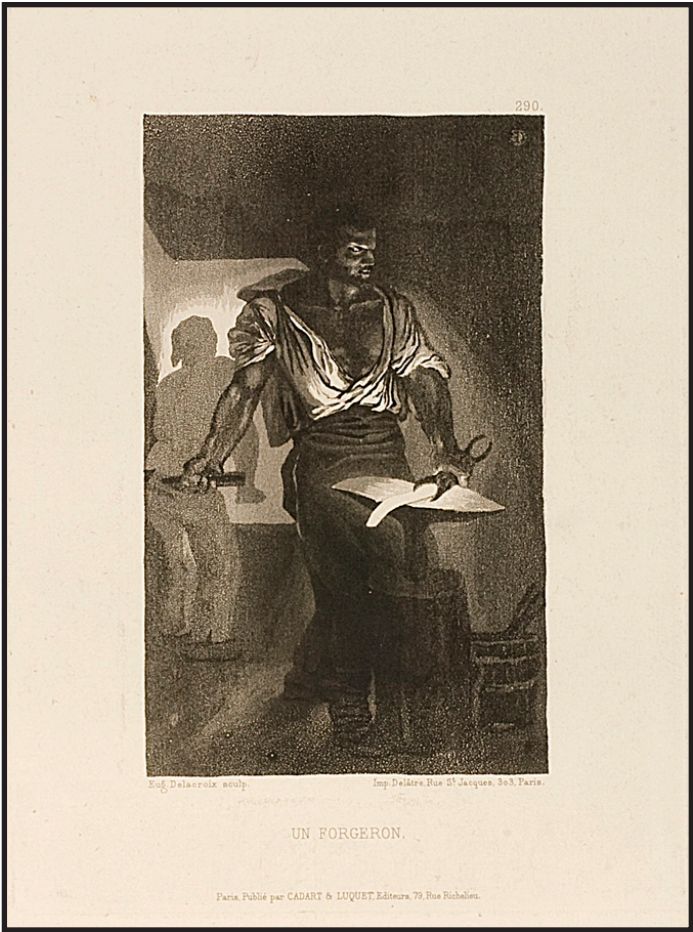
5

Many cultures find ways to visualize and give form to evil, usually taking the shape of demons or devils. While representing a subject that is conceptual and also highly imaginative, the artist most often takes one of two approaches: he either gives the viewer every ghastly detail or simply a suggestive minimum, allowing the viewer’s imagination to provide the rest.

Saint Anthony was one of the first Christian hermits, and his long battle with temptation and the torment it caused has been a favorite subjects for artists. #1 is a more traditional representation of the hermit painted by Flemish painter David Ryckaert III in 1649. Ryckaert clearly delighted in the details of his imaginative creatures and portrays them as very real, physical manifestations. Three-hundred years later American artist Leonard Baskin made #2, a woodcut print. An expert with the medium, he creates a captivating form providing just enough detail to reveal the demon more as a psychological parasite, either directly entering or departing from St. Anthony’s head.

Many cultures have different personifications of wickedness, with specific names and characteristics. #3, depicts a type of ogre-like demon from Japan known as *oni*, which appears as nothing more than a small pest in the hands of the Demon Queller, Shōki. The Japanese print, a 19th-century reproduction of an 18th-century original woodcut, uses the same medium as Baskin to a similar effect, yet in a different style. Although the artist provides just a minimum of detail, the lines possess an expressiveness and create a sense of motion that is unrivaled in Western art.

1. David Ryckaert III (Flemish, 1612-1661) The Temptation of Saint Anthony Oil on copper, 1649 Purchase with the Warbeke Art Museum 2009.2.2	4. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (French, 1864-1901) Pour toi!... (for cover illustration of <i>Les Vieilles Histoires</i>) Lithograph, 1893 Gift of Mrs. Myron Black 1978.5.5
2. Leonard Baskin (American, 1922-2000) Temptation Woodcut, 1952 Bequest of Helene Brosseau Black (Class of 1931) 1991.4.588	5. Félix Hilaire Buhot (French, 1847-1898) Le diable imprimeur (The Printer's Devil) Etching, 1878 Purchase with the Teri J. Edelstein Art Acquisition Fund 2008.7.2
3. Artist Unknown, Japanese The Demon Queller Woodcut, 19th-century version of 18th-century original Gift of Mrs. Louis C. Black 1973.207.Q.RII	



1



2



3

Why did the artist choose metal as the medium for these objects? Beyond the subject matter, do you see any similarities between the works on paper and the objects in the case? How was each created and where do you think they originated?



4



5 (closed)



5 (open)



6

The ability to work metal has long been an indicator of human progress, and the craft has been applied to the making of a wide range of both utilitarian and artistic objects. The progression of civilization can be traced through the different applications of metal, beginning with tools and progressing into markers of an economic system, religion, and social refinement. Just as movable metal typeface was integral to printing many treasured books and consequently revolutionized the exchange of knowledge, it is also the foundation of many works of fine art printed on paper.

German gold- and silversmiths in the 15th century were the creators of the earliest etched prints. In order to check for uniformity and keep a record of designs, metalsmiths would make an impression of their work of art on paper. They applied ink to the etched metal, wiping the smooth surface clean and allowing the ink to remain in the etched grooves, and then pressed it into paper, leaving an image behind. In this way, the same methods used to create #5, a pomander, which stores spices in its eight compartments, gave rise to new print technology. Once etching became popular as a print medium, it was not uncommon for printmakers to design patterns for metalworkers, resulting in objects such as #4, by Sebald Beham. There are many ways of printing from a metal plate, including #1, an aquatint, made by using acid to etch into a metal plate. The artist, Eugene Delacroix, is simultaneously employing a precise and scientific method of manipulating metal and illustrating the intensely physical work of a blacksmith, which is by no means the end of the relationship between art and metal.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Eugene Delacroix (French, 1798-1863)
Un forgeron (A Blacksmith)
Aquatint, 1833
Purchase with the Susan and Bernard Schilling (Susan Eisenhart, Class of 1932) Fund

2009.5.2 | 4. Sebald Beham (German, 1500-1550)
Double Goblet with Genii
Engraving, 1531
Purchase with the Warbeke Art Museum Fund

2006.11.2 |
| 2. Artist Unknown, Korean
Kichijōten figure
Bronze, 7th-9th century
Anonymous loan

1975.L1 | 5. Artist Unknown, German
Pomander
Silver gilt, 1580-1590
Bequest of Josephine Purtscher Fellows (Class of 1924)

1986.33.127 |
| 3. Artist Unknown, Hellenistic
Coin of Lysimachos
Silver, 360-281 BCE
Gift of the Estate of Nathan Whitman

2004.13.1 | 6. Artist Unknown, European, possibly German
Fork
Metal and ivory, late 16th century- 17th century
Gift of Odysia A. Skouras (Class of 1954) in honor of S. Lane Faison, Jr.

2007.5 |



1

What are the different perceptions of war portrayed by these artists? Why and how has the perception of war changed? Are all of these objects art? Are they documentary?



2



3

War is a common subject for artistic interpretation and representation. The portrayal of war tends to fall on two extremes: either a romanticized activity taken up by the noble and filled with ideals of valor, glory, and righteousness; or the epitome of human devastation and destruction. Particularly in modern times, the artist plays the role of social commentator, calling attention to atrocities and cases of injustice. Photography has been especially useful for the latter purpose because of the documentary nature of the medium.

The events portrayed in #1, a lithograph by George Bellows, can be easily dismissed as artistic invention, created by the human hand; however, the accuracy of the photograph, recorded by a machine, is deceptive. Alexander Gardner, the artist responsible for #2, is known on occasion to have moved the bodies of fallen soldiers to improve the composition and resulting effect of the image. While today we expect photos to be created instantaneously and with a camera easily carried in a pocket, for Gardner, one of the earliest field photographers, making a photograph required long exposures and a lot of equipment. This necessitated composing an image much as one would a painting.

A completely imagined Biblical scene is portrayed in #3, made in the late 15th century. The treatment of war and death is much more stylized, due to its purpose as a narrative or illustration rather than as a factual account. Although the image was initially printed onto the vellum, it has been heavily painted over and illuminated with gold, highlighting the artist's primary desire to create a lavish and beautiful object for religious use rather than accurately portray a historical event.

1. George Wesley Bellows (American, 1882-1925)
The Barricade
Lithograph, 1918
Purchase with the Elizabeth Peirce Allyn (Class of 1951) Fund

2008.17.1

2. Alexander Gardner (American, b. Scotland, 1821-1882)
Incidents of the War, Ruins of Arsenal, Richmond, VA.
Albumen print photograph, April 1865
Purchase with the Art Acquisition Endowment Fund

2009.7.6

3. Publisher: Simon Vostre; Printer: Philippe Pigouchet (French)
Leaf from a printed book of hours with illustration of the Death of Uriah
Woodcut with gilding and ink on vellum, early 16th century
Gift of James and Florence Tanis in honor of Marjorie Martha Tanis (Class of 1987)

1989.5.3



1



2



3

What are the different conceptions of nature portrayed by these objects? Are they cultural views or personal ones? Who is the target audience for each work and how can you tell? Why are prints and photographs the chosen media for these objects?



4



5



6

Jeannette Klute, the 20th century photographer responsible for #2, believed that while humans are separate from nature, our shared experience of it binds us together, even if our opinions vary. In contrast is #5, a late-17th century print by Cornelis Dusart which illustrates humanity intertwined with nature as the seasons and their accompanying chores or pastimes change. The print reflects little of either the scientific or the spiritual approaches to nature seen in the other works. While Klute takes a spiritual view that nature, though external to us, unites us all, Dusart demonstrates an absence of distinction between people and nature that existed prior to the modern age. Nature as a concept is a relatively new one, developing in response to advancements of civilization that can make nature seem as though it can be transcended altogether.

The evolution of nature as a concept also reflects the changing technology employed for both scientific exploration and artistic expression. #1 is a page from a 16th-century book by the German physician Adam Lonicer documenting plants and their uses. Lonicer was one of several individuals who took advantage of the relatively new printing press to publish a guide to herbs in his vernacular, making it accessible to a broad range of people. This gives the book a surprising parallel to the works of 20th-century photographer Jeannette Klute. Klute, a woman ahead of her time, tested film for the Eastman Kodak Company and was a pioneer of color photography for both art and science. Her work, seen here in #2, was included in *Woodland Portraits*, a book published because of her love for the outdoors and a desire to inspire everyone to seek fulfillment in nature. Modern thought generally places a decisive line between art and science, but the two still tend to go hand in hand, as can be seen in the most recent microscopic imaging technology to the ever clearer photos of far off galaxies.

1. Adam Lonicer (German, 1528-1586) Printed page from the herbal book Kreuterbuch Letterpress and hand-colored woodcut, 1582 Gift of Ellen P. Reese 1986.37.14	4. Charles Bierstadt (American, b. Germany, 1819-1903) El Capitan, Yosemite Valley Pair of albumen print stereoscopic photographs, 1872-73 Gift of Lewis Shepard 2007.2.1
2. Jeannette Klute (American, 1918-2009) Milkweed , from the series Woodland Portraits Dye transfer color photograph; print, 1954 Gift of Dr. Mark Reichman 2006.28.3	5. Stephen Shore (American, b. 1947) Cabin, Badlands National Monument, South Dakota Chromogenic print photograph, ca. 1973 Purchase with the Art Acquisition Endowment Fund 2009.7.2
3. Utagawa Hiroshige I (Japanese, 1797-1858) Higo, Tsuzumi no taki (Higo Province: Hand- drum Falls) Woodcut, 1852 Gift of Mrs. Louis C. Black 1973.271.Q.RII	6. Cornelis Dusart (Dutch, 1660-1704) July (from the series The Twelve Months) Mezzotint, between 1685 and 1704 Gift of Lisa Carbone Carl (Class of 1981) and William P. Carl 2008.20.2

Objects are actual size.



1

2

Why are these items small? How does their size change your perception of them? Are they more or less useful because of their dimensions?



3



4



5

In the creation of an object, the artist must consider the role size plays in its perception or use. An object is altered by making it useful for a specialized purpose, such as travel-sized items, or by creating a novelty with no real use other than display. #3, is an engraving made by an artist who was part of a group known as the Little Masters, a name that does not denote their artistic rank, but rather the size of their work. Prints such as these were meant to be tacked to walls or pasted inside books, essentially letting the buyer choose the role of the images, making their size both practical as well as admirable.

In the 15th and early 16th centuries a Book of Hours such as #5 was essential to any laity who wished to recite prayers at the eight canonical hours. Although designed to be portable, the books were commissioned with lavish decorations by the wealthy, transforming them into objects of prestige and signifying both piety and an elevated social standing. The same analysis could be applied to #2, the silver traveling paint set. Perhaps the owner was an avid plein-aire painter, but the case is made out of silver, an unnecessary extravagance, especially considering that its size is not practical for extensive use. On the other hand, the miniature portraits, such as #1, while still a class symbol, are rendered more useful to their owners due to their small scale and precise details. Diminutive objects often blur the line between novelty and practicality as well as the boundary between personal use and public display.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Florence Sims (American)
Jennie Gilbert Jerome
Watercolor on ivory, ca. 1923
Gift of Jennie Gilbert Jerome (Class of 1911)
in memory of her grandmother, Elizabeth
Gilbert Jerome</p> <p>1964.5.2.I(b).SIV</p> | <p>4. Jan Luyken (Dutch, 1649-1712)
Egyptian landscape with figures
Ink and wash, late 17th century
Gift of Lisa and Leonard Baskin</p> <p>1992.14.1</p> |
| <p>2. Artist Unknown, British
Traveling Paint Set
Silver, 1797
Bequest of Josephine Purtscher Fellows
(Class of 1924)</p> <p>1986.33.60a,b</p> | <p>5. Artist Unknown, Flemish
Book of Hours
Opaque watercolor on vellum with leather
binding, 15th century
Gift of Mrs. John Martyn Warbeke</p> <p>1964.7.L.PI</p> |
| <p>3. Georg Pencz (German, ca. 1500-1550)
Seven Works of Mercy: To Give Drink to
the Thirsty
Engraving, ca. 1534
Gift of Melissa Lord Palmer (Class of 1949)</p> <p>2009.8.2c</p> | |



1

How were these containers used? What do the shapes tell you about the objects' functions? How does each container communicate information about the culture of the maker?



2



3

The ability to prepare and store food is a basic requirement for human survival; therefore the vessels required to do so provide abundant opportunity for embellishment. Whether the vessels were designed for everyday use or reserved for royalty, a culture's values are customarily reflected in the decorations of their food containers. They also often reflect the ingenuity of the makers and their unique world view. The ancient Roman glass, #3, for example, was made by blowing the glass in a square mold and adding the handle afterward, which along with the rim is clearly designed not just to be functional but also aesthetically pleasing. Glass that is blown without a mold results in a round bottle—a form to which we are accustomed today. Square bottles, however, are much more efficient and easy to transport in boxes.

Possibly made within a hundred years of the Roman glass bottle is the Nazca pot, #1, from Peru. Unlike the other objects, this pot came from an isolated culture, whose pottery changed little over hundreds of years. Without the aid of a written language, the meaning behind the images remains obscure. Warriors adorned with cat-like masks holding weapons and trophy heads, seen in this object, are common iconographic images. The level of anthropomorphism of these figures varies, often lacking human legs and instead possessing whale or lizard-like bodies.

The teapot, #2, itself both an object of practicality and embellishment, was made by a female silversmith, Hester Bateman, known for producing tasteful and elegantly proportioned silver at a modest price. While the silver teapot is not representational of the majority of Georgian utilitarian containers because its use is limited and its value restricts it to one socio-economic group, the heavily decorated Peruvian pot appears to have been the norm for the Nazca people. The objects here not only have the power to please one's aesthetic senses, but also to communicate a great deal of information which, as the Nazca pot proves, can be quite difficult for the uninformed viewer to decipher. These containers all go beyond the necessity of their functions, showing that once basic needs are met, people share a natural inclination for ornamentation.

1. Artist Unknown, Peruvian, Nazca
Jar with mythological figures
Earthenware with color slip, 300-700 CE
Gift of Sarah A. Nunneley (Class of 1963)

2009.14.2

2. Hester Bateman (British, 1709-1794)
George III Teapot
Silver and wood, 1781
Gift of Gaynor Wynne Richards (Class of 1945) and
Gaynor R. Strickler (Class of 1973) in memory of Thomas Wynne

2005.17.1a, b

3. Artist Unknown, Roman
Square mold-blown bottle with ribbed handle and rolled rim
Blown glass, 3rd century CE
Purchase with the Belle and Hy Baier Art Acquisition
Fund and by gift of Anne Gay Chaffee Hartman (Class
of 1955) and Barbara Adams (Class of 1955) and bequest
of Mary Ryan Orwen (Class of 1935)

2006.23.1

To see these and other works please visit the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum open Tuesdays through Fridays from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. or weekends from 1 - 5 pm. Admission is free.

If the work you would like to see is not on view, please contact the Museum at (413) 538-2245 to arrange a viewing appointment. The collection is searchable via an online database accessible from the Collection page of the Museum's website: www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum

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