

Making It In America, October 11, 2013-February 9, 2014

More than 100 outstanding works of painting, sculpture, and decorative arts from the RISD Museum's collection illuminate connections between American ambitions and the making of art in *Making It in America*. The exhibition's title is a double entendre: just as individual accounts of American life revolve around searches for freedom, fulfillment, and identity, these stories are also embedded in the creation of works that comprise the history of American art.

This show features objects from pre-Revolutionary times to the early 20th century, including John Singleton Copley's grand manner portrait of Governor Moses Gill, George Bellows' rugged painting of New York's North River in winter, finely designed furniture with hand-carved motifs from Newport's Townsend and Goddard workshops that rivaled European examples in the 18th century, and the glorious excess of monumental silver works by Providence's Gorham Manufacturing Company that represented the city's ambitions into the 19th and 20th centuries.

Making It in America is designed by Thomas Jayne, renowned decorator and decorative arts historian. Jayne, who trained in the Winterthur Museum's graduate program for American Material Culture, incorporates historic—and unexpected—patterns and colors to create a stunning installation that highlights the evolution of color and pattern in American design.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Winslow Homer
American, 1836-1910
On a Lee Shore, 1900
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 01.003

Homer focused his attention on the rocky shores near his studio at Prout's Neck, Maine, during the final decades of his career. In this view of a sailing ship in the crashing Atlantic, the somber palette, aggressive brushstrokes, and open, square format address human vulnerability in the face of nature's dominating presence. The title refers to leeward winds that blow towards the coastline; a craft that cannot alter its course to windward risks being run aground or dashed upon the rocks. This dramatic composition was one of the first important American paintings to enter the RISD Museum's collection.



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American

Bombé Chest of Drawers, ca. 1755-1795

Mahogany, white pine and tulipwood, with brass

Bequest of Mr. Charles L. Pendleton 04.079

The dramatic double-serpentine curvature visible side to side and top to bottom on the front and sides of this chest is known as *bombé*, taken from the French verb *bomber*, meaning to bulge. A great feat of woodworking skills, the piece would have been costly to make and rare even in its own time. Adding to the scarcity of this bold form, *bombé* or kettle chests were unique to eastern Massachusetts, specifically Boston and Salem, affordable to only the wealthiest of clients, namely those who were part of the successful mercantile industry.



Attributed to Thomas Affleck

American b. Scotland, 1740-1795

Side Chair, ca. 1760-1780

Mahogany, pine

Bequest of Mr. Charles L. Pendleton 04.127

This side chair illustrates three important mid-18th-century design trends—Chinese, Gothic, and French Rococo—all popularized by English cabinetmaker Thomas Chippendale in his highly influential design handbook, *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*. The curvature and carved asymmetrical scrolls of the seat back reflect the undulating line of French Rococo, which contrasts with the front seat rail's geometric octagonal border, a motif derived from Chinese design. The legs are carved with arched lancets and quatrefoils, following a Gothic trend.



A Scottish immigrant and the likely maker of this chair, Thomas Affleck is known to have owned a copy of Chippendale's *Director*; here, he adeptly combined multiple stylistic elements to create an American classic.

Chinese

Punch Bowl with Cantonese Hongs, 1785-1800

Porcelain with enamel

Gift of Mrs. Hope Brown Russell 09.343

This bowl is both a physical product and pictorial documentation of 18th-century global commerce. It depicts the Canton waterfront, where an American flag flies high among those of European countries including England, France, and Holland, heralding the United States'



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successful international trade with China beginning in 1784. A series of buildings known as hongs encircles the bowl's exterior. Operated

by Western nations, these served as storehouses for the China trade, a lucrative venture that brought tea, silks, porcelain, lacquerware, and other luxury articles to Western shores.

An individual studio potter today has little in common with the artisans who produced this bowl. Can it speak to us now? Look closely at the intricate decoration on the exterior. Note not only the number of enamels used, each representing years of experimentation, but also the many techniques of application and depth of color. Some lines flow like watercolor while others are sharp as a knife's edge. Dozens of specialists, each executing one part of the process, labored on this bowl. Each had a particular expertise and yet the collaboration achieved a resonant harmony that could only come from a shared commitment to perfection. Such a virtuoso display of technique is an inspiration. It reminds me of the day my Japanese teacher turned sharply to a student who had complimented his talent for brushwork decoration, saying, "No, no, it is technique, not talent. You must practice, practice, practice!"

Deborah Diemente, potter and RISD Museum registrar

James Abbott McNeill Whistler
American, 1834-1903
Harmony in Blue: The Duet, ca. 1874
Oil on panel
Jesse Metcalf Fund 14.083



After brief careers as a West Point cadet and a surveyor, Whistler studied painting in France. His personal style referenced the sparseness and asymmetry of Japanese art and equated color ranges with musical forms.

Here Whistler introduces three characters from the *commedia dell'arte*—a humorous theatrical presentation with stock characters—who enact a dreamlike performance. Harlequin plays the violin while Pierrot and a companion sing a duet, enveloped in a hazy blue light. The result is a union of theme, color, and setting, a key tenet of the Aesthetic style, which promoted the creation of a harmonious environment.

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George Wesley Bellows
American, 1882-1925
Rain on the River, 1908
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 15.063

Bellows rendered urban landscapes with a bold technique that appealed to early 20th-century critics. In this view from a rocky ledge above Riverside Park, he surveys a freight train making its way down New York Central's Hudson River route. The string of cars reinforces a rushing diagonal that skirts the riverbank and culminates in a great puff of steam. Against the fog-shrouded backdrop, a pedestrian scurries across a rain-slicked path and coal scavengers fill a horse-drawn cart. Writing to RISD president Eliza Radeke, Bellows called *Rain on the River* "one of my most beautiful things."

Can a landscape be epic? Bellows answers Yes, approaching the canvas at various speeds: quick abbreviations in the right-hand dock, slower development in the smoke and the important color shapes. Divided into quadrants of rain, river, industry, and park and rimmed with close-cropped rocks, the painting presents balance and dynamic action. A powerful range of tonal progressions is interrupted by linear sequences of trees and soil. Smoke, rain, mist, stone, and trees heighten the sense of touch. Human activity is represented in cool greens, warm grays, and touches of ochre gleaming through. Color reinforces the weather and the particularity of view. The painting evokes cities on rivers and artists who seek the outside experience as a home to subjective experience.

Nancy Friese, painter-printmaker and RISD professor (Graduate Studies)



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Nabby Martin

American, 1775-1864

Sampler, 1786

Linen plain weave with silk and metallic-wrapped yarn embroidery

Museum Appropriation Fund 17.361

Made with painstaking attention to detail, an embroidered sampler demonstrated a young girl's talent in needleworking and was regarded as a commendable accomplishment in 18th-century America. Beginning around 1785, students could hone their stitching skills at the Mary Balch School in Providence, Rhode Island, where a recognizable local style developed.

This richly rendered sampler by 11-year-old Nabby Martin exemplifies the school's characteristic composition of verses, the alphabet, floral

motifs, animals, and fashionable figures amidst idealistic settings. It also depicts important buildings in Providence, including the Old State House and the College Edifice, Brown University's first and oldest building, now known as University Hall.

Hiram Powers

American, 1805-1873

Eve Disconsolate, ca. 1850

Marble

Gift of Mrs. James B. Ames 19.216

The leading American neoclassical sculptor working in Florence, Italy, Powers specialized in subjects from history, mythology, and religion. At a time when American collectors were uncomfortable with representations of the nude, his idealized figures represented the spiritual beauty of the "unveiled soul."

Powers offered patrons the choice of various versions of his sculptures, from full-size figures to bust-length editions, such as *Eve Disconsolate*. To meet demand, he worked from plaster models, using measuring devices to make copies and employing studio assistants to execute the carving. His hallmark was a special finishing process applied to fine-grained Seravezza marble to suggest the luminosity and softness of human flesh.



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Ezekiel Burr

American, 1765-1846

Pair of Shoe Buckles, ca. 1780-1800

Silver

Gift of The Wunsch Americana Foundation 1986.076.3



As a material from which coins are minted and beautiful works of art fashioned, silver possesses a dual identity in signifying success. Status, wealth, education, and elegance were readily conveyed in personal adornments and the silver amassed on the family sideboard, and because sterling was literally worth its weight, it could easily be converted to cash in hard times. Fortunately, these pieces survived. The cup commemorated Captain John Crawford's marriage to Amy Whipple in Providence in 1715—note the newlyweds' initials inscribed on the side—while the tankard's inscriptions indicate its significance, beginning in the 18th century and continuing through the 20th century, as an heirloom of the Ellery family of Newport. The teapot belonged to Mrs. Ebenezer Pemberton, whose portrait hangs on the wall.

Attributed to James Halyburton (Haliburton), cabinetmaker

American, active 1790-1800

Card Table, ca. 1795 - 1800

Mahogany, maple and pine

Peter and Daphne Farago Purchase Fund 1986.120



These finely constructed card tables demonstrate the refinement and skill possessed by craftsmen outside of highly urbanized regions during early 19th-century America. Detailed inlays of contrasting woods, seen in the trailing bellflowers or husks on the legs and front of these tables and the fan on the tabletops, are typically associated with the Pawtuxet School of cabinetmaking, located just outside of Providence.

The tables' lightweight construction and folding design allowed them to be mobile and multifunctional: when closed, they served as side tables that could be compactly stored against a wall, while in the open position they could be used as card tables.

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Herter Brothers
American, 1864-1906
Side Chair, 1877-1879
Ebonized cherry with light wood inlay
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1990.057

Eastern aesthetics and Western form are united in this chair, with ebonized cherry resembling Japanese lacquer and a stylized floral design of intricate inlays, distinctive of Herter Brothers' furniture. Founded by German immigrants Gustav and Christian Herter, Herter Brothers was associated with the incorporation of Japanese decorative arts in American design in the 1880s. The firm quickly made a name for itself, garnering impressive commissions such as designing William Henry Vanderbilt's Fifth Avenue mansion, decorating the White House Red Room for Ulysses S. Grant, and renovating the White House East Room for Theodore Roosevelt.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-
Tea and Coffee Service, ca. 1859
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.215

Although this service's design pattern was conceived circa 1859 and acquired by Mary Lincoln for the White House in 1861, this particular service was made during the Great Depression, when Gorham launched an innovative program to keep their silversmiths employed, maintain traditional silversmithing skills in the face of modern design,



and recreate examples of their most important work for future generations.

Gorham was the first American silver company to employ mechanization in their production, thus securing the company's success. In 1852 Gorham ordered the first steam-powered press made to stamp flatware; the first pattern the press produced was Josephine, which was also owned by President and Mrs. Lincoln. Not only had Gorham made their mark in the industry, but they also garnered cultural status with important commissions and clients.

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Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Hair Brush, ca. 1890

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.239

The task of getting ready for the day often requires an array of devices, including a mirror for surveying the results. This dressing set with ornate silver handles was used to groom hair and clothes, fasten buttons, and file nails in grand style. The finishing touch might be a piece of jewelry, which could be kept safe in a box like this Renaissance Revival example featuring an alfresco feast.

Enameled silver wares were very popular at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where the Gorham Manufacturing Company earned seven awards for their enamel work. The company hired Hungarian artist G. de Festetics to create designs that were executed by a predominately American and female team of enamellers.

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Clothes Brush, ca. 1890

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.240

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Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Whisk brush, 1890-1890

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.243

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Gorham Manufacturing Company

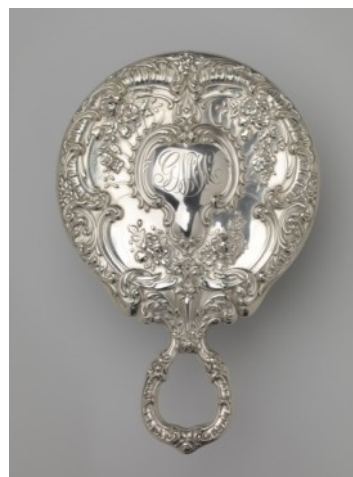
American, 1831-

Hand mirror, ca. 1890

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.244

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Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer

American, 1831-

Tongs, 1869-1869

Silver and gilding

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.25

As explorers made tracks within and beyond the boundaries of the United States, artists followed, with new discoveries making their way into contemporary design. Silvery icebergs, polar bears, and moose



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adorn this ice bowl, one of several versions made by the Gorham Manufacturing Company beginning in the 1870s. Its iconography relates not only to northern expeditions, but also reflects the expansion of America's borders with the 1867 purchase of Alaska from Russia.

Back home, Bostonian Frederic Tudor, known as the Ice King, had perfected the process of harvesting New England ice and shipping it worldwide. This bowl, encircled with hanging icicles, accompanied by tongs formed as two rope-entwined harpoons, provided an impressive presentation.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-
Water Pitcher, 1878
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.48



After Commodore Perry of the U.S. Navy pressed Japan to open trade with the West in 1854, a flood of Japanese decorative arts reached American shores. A mania for Japanese design followed, and in the 1870s and 1880s played a significant role in the development of the American Aesthetic movement. The simplicity, exoticism, and naturalism found in Japanese design were considered particularly avant-garde and innovative in 19th-century America.

The exterior decorations of the pitcher and cups cleverly refer to its contents, depicting a watery lower half which is swimming with fish and turtles while the sky above is populated with butterflies and dragonflies.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-
Cup, 1878
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.49.1



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-
Cup, 1878
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.49.2

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Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-
Tray, 1878
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.50

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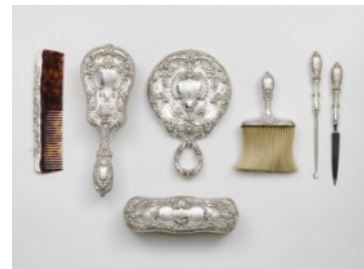
Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-
Ice Bowl, ca. 1875
Silver and gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.54



As explorers made tracks within and beyond the boundaries of the United States, artists followed, with new discoveries making their way into contemporary design. Silvery icebergs, polar bears, and caribou adorn this ice bowl, one of several versions made by the Gorham Manufacturing Company beginning in the 1870s. Its iconography relates not only to northern expeditions, but also reflects the expansion of America's borders with the 1867 purchase of Alaska from Russia.

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Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Dressing set, ca. 1890
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.599



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Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Comb, ca. 1890
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.599.1



Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Buttonhook,
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.599.2



Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Nail File, ca. 1890
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.599.3



RISD MUSEUM

Attributed to Thomas Pairpoint, designer
American, 1838-1902
Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-
Plateau, 1876
Silver with gilding and mirrored glass
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.79.1



Elizabeth A. Williams, curator of decorative arts: Drawing the best of everything from around the globe, world's fairs allowed companies to display their finest work in the hope of garnering international acclaim. It was at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia that the Gorham Manufacturing Company made its major-exposition debut with stunning works including this epergne, or table centerpiece.

Lead designer Thomas Pairpoint deftly combined motifs from the popular Renaissance Revival style, showing scenes of the Roman sea god Neptune. This monumental piece is also decorated with an adaptation of the equestrian frieze from the Greek Parthenon, as well as truly American iconography. This includes Columbia, the female personification of the United States, who reigns over all.

Joost During, silversmith: Look closely at the plaque in front and note the very subtle but beautiful texture on the skin of the four figures. The direction and depth of this texture define and enhance the shape of their bodies. As a silversmith, I love looking at work done by other metalsmiths, especially when they are as talented as those who worked at Gorham in its heyday. These were not only incredible craftsmen, but also great artists in their own right. The designers who

imagined this kind of piece on paper relied heavily on the craftsmen they worked with to bring their vision to life. For me, it is very exciting to see such an excellent example of cooperation between several people with different but amazing skills.

The Furber Service

Made for Chicago businessman Henry Jewett Furber, the Neptune Epergne is one of 740 pieces of silver made to serve 24 people. Most likely the largest commission received by the Gorham Manufacturing Company, the service was produced between 1873 and 1879. Although many of the pieces were made in the Renaissance Revival style seen in the epergne, the Furber service is a visual testimony to the confidence of Gorham's designers in freely appropriating and boldly combining styles from different eras and cultures, including those of ancient Egyptian and Japan.

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Thomas Pairpoint, designer
American, 1838-1902
Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-
Epergne, 1872
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.80



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Louis Comfort Tiffany, designer
American, 1848-1933
Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, manufacturer
American, active 1892-1932
Favrile Vase, ca. 1900
Glass with enamel
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Nash Davis 1991.176.1

These works celebrate organic form and exemplify the philosophy of designer Louis Comfort Tiffany: "Nature is always right. Nature is always beautiful." Introduced in 1893 after years of experimentation, Favrile glass was inspired by Tiffany's interest in ancient glass made iridescent by its absorption of minerals in the soil in which it had been buried. Tiffany's craftsmen finally achieved this lustrous sheen by mixing metallic oxides with molten glass. He described Favrile glass as "distinguished by brilliant or deeply toned colors, usually iridescent like the wings of certain American butterflies, the necks of pigeons and peacocks, the wing covers of various beetles."

Glassmakers have a long history of saving, re-imagining, and re-creating. Did the tall flower-shaped glass with the organically shaped top begin as a mistake? As an experiment? As a response to Art Nouveau's ever more fluid organic forms? Tiffany learned a great deal from and was inspired by his team of highly skilled glassblowers, metalsmiths, chemists, and other craftspeople. The "peacock feather" vase is perfectly resolved in form, color, size, and decoration. Created using an adaption of an ancient Egyptian technique, it features Tiffany's hallmark iridescent surface. Half a century later, the process was determined to be highly toxic, and rarely has been used in recent years.

Toots Zynsky, glass artist

James Earl
American, 1761-1796
Portrait of Abigail Congdon Packard, ca. 1795
Oil on canvas
Gift of Elizabeth Packard White Salisbury, William Gerald White, and Charlotte Bowen White Spellman 1993.049

In this portrait, intended as a pendant to her husband's, Abigail Congdon Packard wears a fashionable silk gown and a fine linen cap and fichu, matching him in both style and status. A few years later, she inherited a portion of her father's estate in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, where the family built a house and later expanded their land holdings.



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Recognizing her privilege, Abigail helped establish the Providence Female Charitable Society, an organization aiding indigent women and children.

Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, retailer
American, active 1892-1932
Louis Comfort Tiffany, designer
American, 1848-1933
Favrile Cup, ca. 1900-1920
Glass
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Armknecht 1996.110.2



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RISD MUSEUM

Willard LeRoy Metcalf
American, 1858-1925
The White Veil, 1909
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.293

Metcalf used a limited tonal range, small broken brushstrokes, and flattened Japanese perspective to create this quiet view of snow falling on a Cornish, New Hampshire, landscape. Each element, including the softly gilded frame designed by Charles Dudley Murphy, contributes to the unified presentation of his subject.



Metcalf trained at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and then in Paris, where he studied the methods of French Impressionist painters. He shared these interests with a group of American painters known as The Ten, who organized annual group exhibitions that took into consideration the choice of wall colors and the compatibility of frames.

Louis Comfort Tiffany
American, 1848-1933
Favrile Vase, ca. 1900-1910
Glass
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.349

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Theodore Russell Davis
American, 1840-1894
Haviland & Company, manufacturer
French, 1842 -
Limoges, manufacturer
*Seafood plate, from the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Service*ca.
1880
Porcelain with enamels and gilding
Gift of Christopher Monkhouse 2003.111



A chance meeting in the White House between First Lady Lucy Hayes and illustrator and journalist Theodore Davis produced a most extraordinary dinner service. Mrs. Hayes was selecting fern samples to be used as decoration on the presidential service, which had already been contracted with Haviland, and Davis suggested that she use depictions of flora and fauna native to North America, celebrating the country's natural bounty. Davis became the designer of the service, producing 130 distinct decorations for 562 pieces made for nine courses. Each decoration was drawn by hand, etchings were made to transfer the outlines, basic colors were applied via chromolithographic and decalcomania processes, and enamel details and gilding were added by hand.

The designs ornamenting each piece of this service not only echo the era's interest in nature and America's spirit of nationalism—they also often indicate the type of food they were to serve. The turkey striding from a background radiating beams of light and the lobster riding in the surf leave little doubt as to what the diner would soon enjoy. As the ice cream melted, the gilded snow shoe would appear to be covered with snow. The ice cream dish is marked as part of the original service delivered to the White House, whereas the 1880 patent date of the other two pieces indicates that they were part of a limited number of pieces made by Haviland for public sale.

RISD MUSEUM

David Williams

American, 1769-1823

Patent Timepiece, ca. 1815-1820

Mahogany, pine, reverse-painted glass, 8-day brass movement

Museum purchase: Bequest of Eliza Taft, by exchange 2003.74

Typically referred to as a banjo clock due to its similarity in shape to the musical instrument, this style of wall clock was developed by brothers Aaron and Simon Willard, who patented the design in hope of securing all profits. However, as this more affordable and compact form gained popularity over traditional tall case clocks, banjo clocks were soon made by other makers. Far from direct copies, banjo clocks by Rhode Island makers, including David Williams of Newport, were made with improved internal mechanisms for superior performance.

A true celebration of American symbols, the clock's reverse-painted glass panels (verre églomisé) feature an eagle, a Federal shield, and a scene of a waterfront mansion, while the whole is crowned by a gilded eagle.

Frank Lloyd Wright, designer

American, 1867-1959

Library table, 1915-1916

Walnut, poplar, oak, and brass

George D. Gannett Fund 2004.28

This table is an example of the Prairie School style, a uniquely American aesthetic which shared the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement but rejected historical revivalism. The Midwest's vast, open, and flat topography is celebrated in the Prairie School's strong horizontal planes, with architect and designer Frank Lloyd Wright passionately promoting this balanced relationship between nature and the built environment.

Commissioned for the Sherman Booth House in Glencoe, Illinois, the table mimics the architectural vocabulary of the residence: the cantilevered top over square legs and the intersection of the table top with the center cabinet echo the spatial relationship of the Booth House with its central chimney.



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Florentin Antoine Heller, designer
French, 1839-1904
Mythologique Flatware Design Samples, 1894
Silver



Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42

These flatware design samples combine intricate detailing wrought from hours of modeling by hand with the evidence of a drop press's mechanized brute force. They also testify to the desire 19th-century Americans felt for designs derived from the past as they simultaneously embraced the industrial processes that would guarantee the country's future. The polished refinement of Antoine Heller's 24 handle designs, each depicting different mythological figures and scenes, contrasts with the utensils' unfinished lower sections—note the untrimmed excess metal left between the fork tines (lower left and right).

In the Victorian dining room, the ability to manage dozens of implements, from a pickle fork to an oyster ladle, attested to a diner's command of complicated social rules and expectations, and therefore his or her status.

RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for salad fork and spoon, Diomedes Devoured by His Horses, Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.1

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

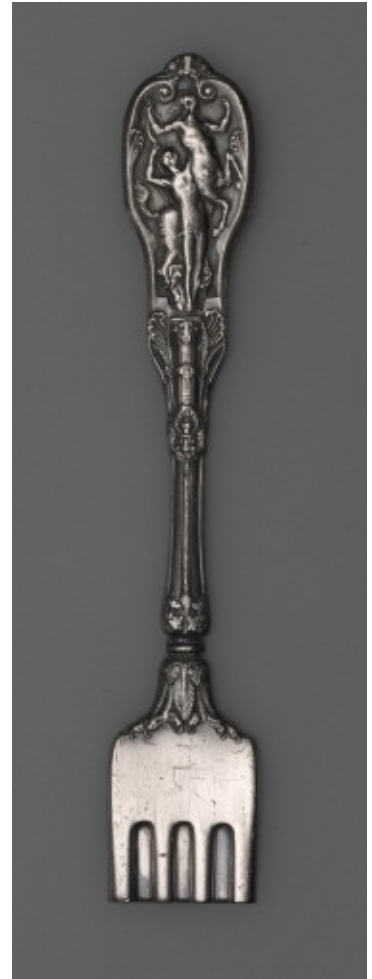
Pattern for dessert fork, "Chiron and Achilles", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.10

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

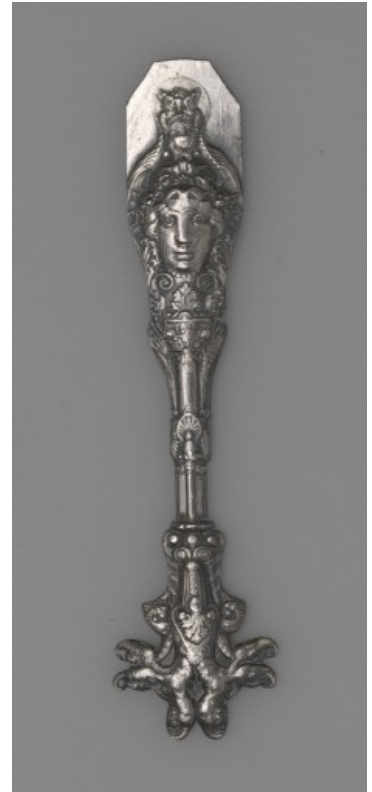
Pattern for sugar tongs, "Minerva (Pallas), (Athene)", Mythologique,
1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.11

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern backside for gravy ladle, large sugar sifter, cold meat fork, preserve spoon, tablespoon, large cheese spoon, and pea spoon, "Vulcan Presenting Thunderbolts to Jupiter", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.12

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for crumb knife, asparagus fork, berry spoon, vegetable spoon and fork, and fish knife and fork, "Apollo Crowned by the Muses", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.13

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Florentin Antoine Heller, designer
French, 1839-1904

Pattern for for bonbon spoon, coffee spoon, berry fork, and salt spoon, "Aeneas and Anchises", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.14

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for dessert knife, "Ceres (Summer)", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.15

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for gravy ladle, large sugar sifter, cold meat fork, preserve spoon, tablespoon, large cheese scoop, and pea spoon, "Vulcan Presenting Thunderbolts to Jupiter", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.16

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

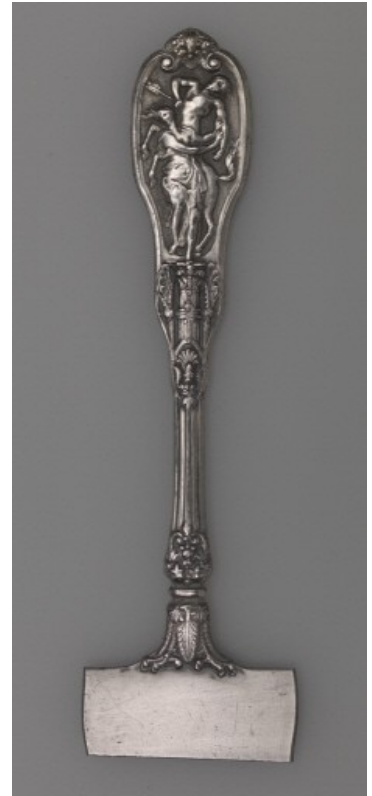
Pattern for ice cream fork, lettuce fork, and small teaspoon, "Death of the Centaur Nessus", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.17

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern backside for cream ladle, jelly spoon, waffle knife, pie knife, and dessert spoon, "Nessus Carrying Off Dejanira", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.18

These flatware design samples combine intricate detailing wrought from hours of modeling by hand with the evidence of a drop press's mechanized brute force. They also testify to the desire 19th-century Americans felt for designs derived from the past as they simultaneously embraced the industrial processes that would guarantee the country's future. The polished refinement of Antoine Heller's 24 handle designs, each depicting different mythological figures and scenes, contrasts with the utensils' unfinished lower sections—note the untrimmed excess metal left between the fork tines (lower left and right).

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for cake knife, individual fish knife, dessert knife, and ice cream slicer, "Perseus with the Head of Medusa", Mythologique, 1894

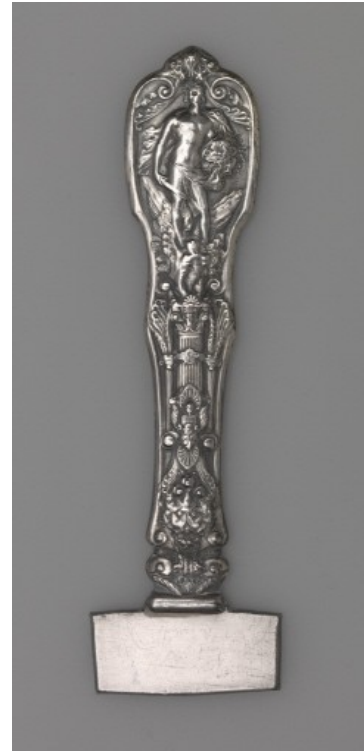
Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.19

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for pickle fork and sardine fork, "Childhood of Marsyas",

Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.2

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

*Pattern for asparagus server and game carving knife and fork,
"Pomona (Autumn)", Mythologique, 1894*

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.20

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for meat carving knife, fork, and sharpening steel, "Cybele (Winter)", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.21

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

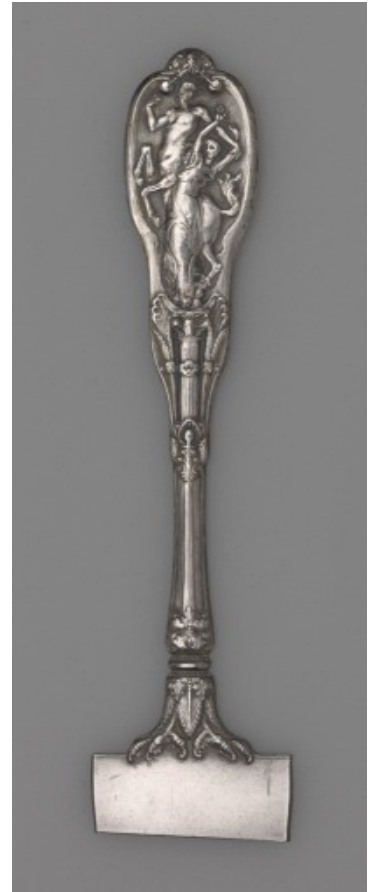
*Pattern for cream ladle, jelly spoon, waffle knife, pie knife, and
dessert spoon, "Nessus Carrying Off Dejanira", Mythologique, 1894*

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.22

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Florentin Antoine Heller, designer
French, 1839-1904

Pattern for small berry spoon and small teaspoon, "Minerva Springing from the Brain of Jupiter", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.23

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

*Pattern backside for table fork, "Charon Ferrying Souls to Hades",
Mythologique, 1894*

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.24

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern backside for pickle knife, teaspoon, orange spoon, pap spoon, ice cream spoon and sugar spoon, "Penelope Recognizing Ulysses", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.25

These flatware design samples combine intricate detailing wrought from hours of modeling by hand with the evidence of a drop press's mechanized brute force. They also testify to the desire 19th-century Americans felt for designs derived from the past as they simultaneously embraced the industrial processes that would guarantee the country's future. The polished refinement of Antoine Heller's 24 handle designs, each depicting different mythological figures and scenes, contrasts with the utensils' unfinished lower sections—note the untrimmed excess metal left between the fork tines (lower left and right).

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Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

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French, 1839-1904

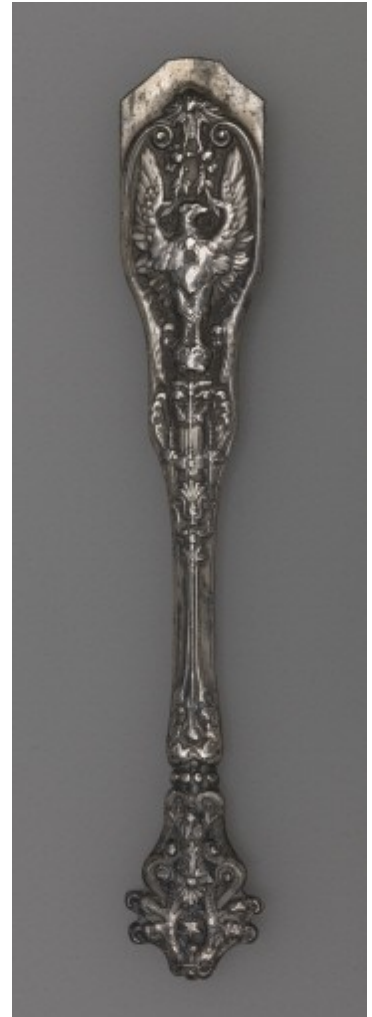
Pattern for bonbon tongs, "Jove's Eagle", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.26

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for medium knife, "Vertumnus (Spring)", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.27

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Florentin Antoine Heller, designer
French, 1839-1904
*Pattern for table fork, "Charon Ferrying Souls to Hades",
Mythologique, 1894*
Silver
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.28

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

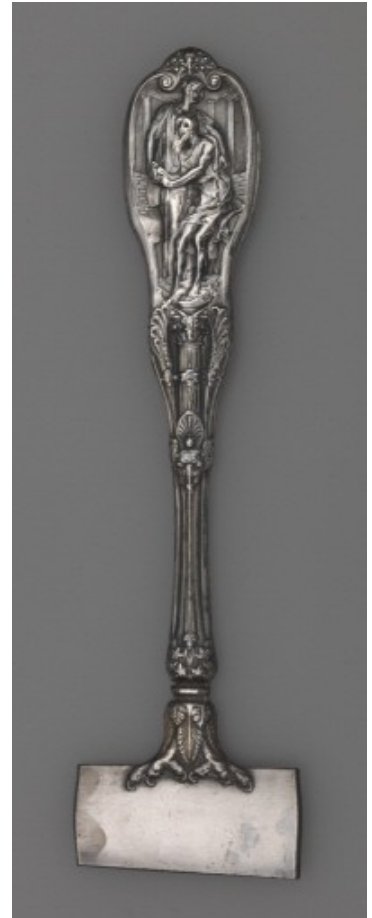
Pattern for pickle knife, teaspoon, orange spoon, pap spoon, ice cream spoon, and sugar spoon, "Penelope Recognizing Ulysses", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.29

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Florentin Antoine Heller, designer
French, 1839-1904
*Pattern for tea fork, "Vulcan Presenting the Shield to Minerva",
Mythologique, 1894*
Silver
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.3

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for soup ladle, "Saturn and Phoebus Apollo", Mythologique,
1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.4

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Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

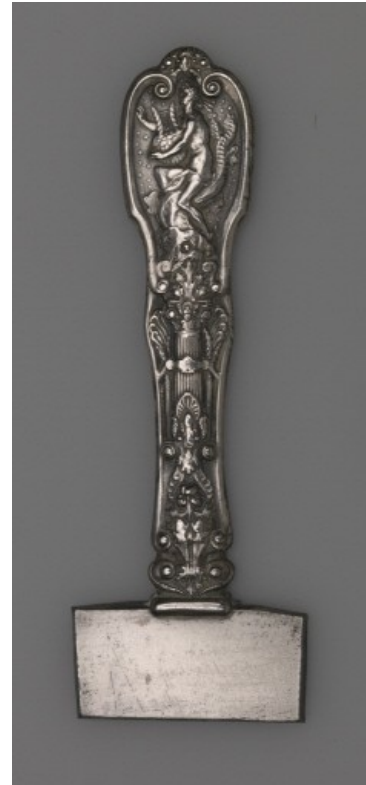
*Pattern for butter spreader and tea knife, "Arion Saved by a Dolphin",
Mythologique, 1894*

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.5

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Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for punch ladle, oyster ladle, and gravy spoon, "Amphitrite and Neptune", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.6

These flatware design samples combine intricate detailing wrought from hours of modeling by hand with the evidence of a drop press's mechanized brute force. They also testify to the desire 19th-century Americans felt for designs derived from the past as they simultaneously embraced the industrial processes that would guarantee the country's future. The polished refinement of Antoine Heller's 24 handle designs, each depicting different mythological figures and scenes, contrasts with the utensils' unfinished lower sections—note the untrimmed excess metal left between the fork tines (lower left and right).

In the Victorian dining room, the ability to manage dozens of implements, from a pickle fork to an oyster ladle, attested to a diner's command of complicated social rules and expectations, and therefore his or her status.



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for butter knife, cheese knife, individual large salad fork, beef fork, large pastry fork, and individual large fish fork, "Oedipus and the Sphynx", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.7

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

*Pattern backside for soup ladle, "Saturn and Phoebus Apollo",
Mythologique, 1894*

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.8

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RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company

American, 1831-

Florentin Antoine Heller, designer

French, 1839-1904

Pattern for olive spoon, butter pick, olive fork, mustard spoon, and oyster fork, "Childhood of Bacchus", Mythologique, 1894

Silver

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42.9

These flatware design samples combine intricate detailing wrought from hours of modeling by hand with the evidence of a drop press's mechanized brute force. They also testify to the desire 19th-century Americans felt for designs derived from the past as they simultaneously embraced the industrial processes that would guarantee the country's future. The polished refinement of Antoine Heller's 24 handle designs, each depicting different mythological figures and scenes, contrasts with the utensils' unfinished lower sections—note the untrimmed excess metal left between the fork tines (lower left and right).

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N. McDermott

American, active 1890s

Helen Adelia Rowe Metcalf, ca. 1895

Watercolor on ivory, lock of hair, in 14kt gold case

Gift of Stanley Weiss in honor of his wife, Beth 2012.107

In 1876, Mrs. Helen Adelia Rowe Metcalf returned from the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia with a civic and economic message that good design education was good for business. With support from community leaders, she helped found Rhode Island School of Design to train artists and artisans and to advance public art education.

In private life, Mrs. Metcalf was the mother of five and wife of textile manufacturer Jesse Metcalf. This portrait miniature, inscribed on the back with her life dates and name and enclosed with a lock of her hair, was probably commissioned as a keepsake for a family member.



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-
Count Gyula de Festetics, enameler
Hungarian, 1846 - 1922
Jewelry Box, ca. 1890
Silver and enamel
Gift from the M. F. Collection 2013.120.2



Edward Mitchell Bannister
American, 1828-1901
Portrait of Christiana Carteaux Bannister, ca. 1860
Oil on canvas
Gift of the Edward M. Bannister Foundation 2016.38.1



Bannister, a founder of the Providence Art Club, became the first African American artist to win a major national award when he received a medal at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. Critics described his winning landscape as a “simple composition, quiet in tone but with strong oppositions”—characteristics that apply to this portrait of his wife.

Professionally known as Madame Carteaux, Mrs. Bannister was a Rhode Islander of African American and Narragansett descent. She was a successful hairdresser and entrepreneur, active in both artistic and abolitionist circles. In 1864, she organized an important fundraising fair to benefit the African American cavalry regiments of Massachusetts.

John La Farge
American, 1835-1910
Japanese Crackle Pottery with Camellias, 1879
Watercolor on paper
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 21.469



Painter and decorator John La Farge places camellias, roses, and a daisy in a three-handled Japanese crackle pottery container whose form resembles a wooden pail. Even before his first visit to Japan in 1886, he had assembled an extensive personal collection of Japanese objects.

La Farge employed the transparency and vibrancy of watercolor to develop ideas related to his stained glass compositions. His still lifes of flowers often represent the saturated and opalescent effects that he achieved in the design of ornamental windows.

RISD MUSEUM

James Earl
American, 1761-1796
Portrait of Captain Samuel Packard, ca. 1795
Oil on canvas
Bequest of Miss Louise B. Bowen 21.485

Seated casually in a Windsor chair, Samuel Packard signals his social and professional role in the new republic. The plush drapery, the decorative column, Packard's fashionable bright-hued waistcoat all suggest that is a man of wealth. The ship in the distance and the spyglass refer to his interests in maritime trade.

A merchant and talented mariner, Packard owned 39 vessels that sailed from Providence. Around the time of this portrait, Packard had completed missions abroad for George Washington, so the ships may also allude to Packard's diplomatic travels.



Gutzon Borglum
American, 1867-1941
Mares of Diomedes, 1904
Bronze
Gift in memory of John S. Holbrook 29.086

Born in Idaho of Danish Mormon immigrants, Borglum studied sculpture in Paris before launching a career in New York. *Mares of Diomedes* is a smaller version of his monumental bronze acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1906. Cast by the Gorham Company, it represents the moment Hercules causes Diomedes's man-eating horses to flee their stable and stampede to the sea.



Borglum is best known for the colossal granite sculpture of four U.S. presidents at Mount Rushmore National Memorial, in the Black Hills region of South Dakota.

RISD MUSEUM

American

Looking Glass, ca. 1785-1815

Mahogany, pine, mahogany veneer

Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 31.144

As America began to form visual representations of its chosen philosophical values, it looked to ancient Greece and Rome for inspiration. Architecture and art of all forms incorporated classical elements, seen in the broken pediment with scrolls ending in rosettes at the top of the mirror. Known as the Federal style in the United States, the adaption of ancient design into American decorative arts flourished between 1780 and 1830. A classical urn filled with elegant foliage crowns this looking glass, while the three-dimensionally rendered gilded bell flowers that descend the mirror's side echo the inlaid versions on the card tables' legs below.



American

Locket, 1800s

Gold with enamel, pearls, hair, photograph and glass

Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 31.387

A lock of hair was often cherished as a tangible remembrance of a deceased loved one; this bright blue enameled locket incorporates a lock of hair and a small photograph. The practice of incorporating hair into jewelry began in Europe as early as the 16th century, and by the 19th century became an art of its own, with instructional manuals detailing the latest patterns and techniques.

The hair in these pieces was braided using a method that employed weighted bobbins to produce hollow tubes or solid lengths of woven hair, which were made into various forms of jewelry.



RISD MUSEUM

American

Windsor Armchair, 1780-1800

Oak, ash or hickory, maple, and poplar

Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 31.427

Colonial furniture makers appropriated the basic form of the Windsor chair from English designs and developed an American classic. Similar to the Elastic chair on the (right/left), this Windsor chair utilizes bentwood technology, noticeable in the dramatically curved back which seamlessly becomes the delicate arms. The green painted finish covers and unifies the numerous woods used in the chair's construction and underscores its versatility both indoors and out. This chair communicates the duality of traditional form with progressive design, challenging industry and material properties with bentwood technology.



American

Child's Windsor High Chair, 1800-1820

Pine and hickory

Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 31.465

Designs for children's Windsor furniture, such as this highchair with bamboo-style turnings, were often small-scale versions of full-sized pieces. That a family would invest in quality chairs or cradles for their children suggests not only prosperity but also perhaps the desire to celebrate the survival of their offspring in an era of high infant mortality.



The charming red, green, and white flowers and trees painted on the cradle's bright yellow ground are stylistically similar to Pennsylvanian German folk art and stylized calligraphy, suggesting that the piece originated from that tradition.

RISD MUSEUM

American

Locket, 1800s

Gold with enamel, diamond, pearls and glass

Anonymous gift 33.033

A lock of hair was often cherished as a tangible remembrance of a deceased loved one; this bright blue enameled locket incorporates a lock of hair and a small photograph. The practice of incorporating hair into jewelry began in Europe as early as the 16th century, and by the 19th century became an art of its own, with instructional manuals detailing the latest patterns and techniques.

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John Coddington, silversmith

American, 1690-1743

Cup, ca. 1715

Silver

Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth 36.005

As a material from which coins are minted and beautiful works of art fashioned, silver possesses a dual identity in signifying success. Status, wealth, education, and elegance were readily conveyed in personal adornments and the silver amassed on the family sideboard, and because sterling was literally worth its weight, it could easily be converted to cash in hard times. Fortunately, these pieces survived. The cup commemorated Captain John Crawford's marriage to Amy Whipple in Providence in 1715—note the newlyweds' initials inscribed on the side—while the tankard's inscriptions indicate its significance, beginning in the 18th century and continuing through the 20th century, as an heirloom of the Ellery family of Newport. The teapot belonged to Mrs. Ebenezer Pemberton, whose portrait hangs on the wall.



RISD MUSEUM

American
Bracelet, 1850-1899
Hair and gold
Gift of the Honorable Charles F. Stearns 39.049

A lock of hair was often cherished as a tangible remembrance of a deceased loved one; this bright blue enameled locket incorporates a lock of hair and a small photograph. The practice of incorporating hair into jewelry began in Europe as early as the 16th century, and by the 19th century became an art of its own, with instructional manuals detailing the latest patterns and techniques.

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Albert Bierstadt
American, 1830-1902
Westphalian Landscape, 1856
Oil on canvas
Gift of Miss Ellen D. Sharpe 40.188

In this view of rural Germany, Bierstadt evokes the sensation of soft mist rising from fields on a summer morning. Accurate draftsmanship and "truthful" rendering of natural forms were stressed in the art academies and studios of Düsseldorf, a city that attracted Bierstadt and other young American painters in the 1850s. Bierstadt applied these skills in his early artistic practice, gathering sources for his paintings by carefully sketching local activity and dress and noting distinctive effects of atmosphere and light. In later years, he applied the same acute observation to monumental renderings of the American West.



American
Earrings, early 1800s
Hair and gold
Gift of Phoebe S. Kendrick in memory of her mother, Ruth E. Kendrick and her aunt, Jane E. Kendrick 42.034ab



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RISD MUSEUM

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Gillinder & Sons

American, 1867 - 1930

Westward Ho! Covered Dish, ca. 1879

Glass

Gift of Miss Priscilla H. Leonard in memory of her uncle, Mr. Edward E. Leonard 42.152



As America's population grew, many believed that westward expansion was inevitable and sanctioned by God, a concept known as Manifest Destiny. This dish, created in celebration of both expansion and the natural bounty of America, offers an ironic portrayal of history. American Indians, like the one kneeling on top, were forced west as they were relocated to reservations, and increasingly industrialized production techniques were used to fashion the naturalistic scenes of log cabins, deer, and bison ornamenting the compote. Press molding—a revolutionary process invented by American glass manufactories, by which glass was forced into a mold via mechanization—effectively eliminated the human glassblower.

American

Pair of Cuff Links, early 1800s

Hair; gold

Gift of Eleanor S. Upton 42.259ab



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RISD MUSEUM

Thomas Crawford
American, 1814-1857
Morning Star, 1856
Marble
Gift of Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin 42.299

Morning Star combines the mythological and astrological identities of Venus and personifies love, beauty, and fertility. Gowned in clinging drapery, the goddess rises from the sea and lifts one arm to shield her eyes from the sun. The star on her forehead is emblematic of the planet Venus, which shines brightest at daybreak and sunset.

Crawford was the first American sculptor to settle permanently in Rome, where he studied antique and live models. The majority of his sculptures, whether private commissions or public monuments, were intended for American audiences; this included *Morning Star*, which was owned by the coal, iron, and banking investor Adrian Georg Iselin.

Thomas Crawford brought a block of marble to life, beginning with a model made as a map for use throughout the carving process. Dimensions and scale were transferred to the stone using measuring instruments. Then, with masterly blows of mallet to chisel, stone was removed to release the figure inside. Chisels have been the same for hundreds of years: point chisel for form, toothed chisel for shaping, flat chisel and rasp for finishing.

With a conscious play of light and dark, Crawford turned stone into something fluid. The lift of the figure's fingers and the drapery that surrounds her head and defines her body add to this lightness, as if she were moving.

Tracy Mahaffey, stone carver

American
Cradle, 1820 - 1830
Pine with paint
Gift of Mrs. Henry Vaughan 44.519.10A

Designs for children's Windsor furniture, such as this highchair with bamboo-style turnings, were often small-scale versions of full-sized pieces. That a family would invest in quality chairs or cradles for their children suggests not only prosperity but also perhaps the desire to celebrate the survival of their offspring in an era of high infant mortality.



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J. & E. Norton
American, 1785 - 1894
Jug, 1850-1859
Stoneware with salt glaze
Museum Works of Art Fund 46.360

Early German settlers brought to America salt-glazed stoneware vessels, safe and sturdy containers which were used for storing a range of foodstuffs and liquids. Salt glaze is made by throwing common salt into the hot kiln; the sodium acts as a melting agent, reacting with the clay's silica and causing a slightly textured glaze to form on the surface of the objects.

The jug's stamps reveal that it holds four gallons and was made by J. & E. Norton, a prolific pottery in Bennington, Vermont. The soft beige body is embellished with a cobalt-oxide decoration of a deer in a forest setting, one of the company's most sought-after designs.

Samuel Vernon
American, 1683-1737
Tankard, ca. 1720
Silver
Bequest of Henry Renwick Sedgwick 46.557

As a material from which coins are minted and beautiful works of art fashioned, silver possesses a dual identify in signifying success. Status, wealth, education, and elegance were readily conveyed in personal adornments and the silver amassed on the family sideboard, and because sterling was literally worth its weight, it could easily be converted to cash in hard times. Fortunately, these pieces survived. The cup commemorated Captain John Crawford's marriage to Amy Whipple in Providence in 1715—note the newlyweds' initials inscribed on the side—while the tankard's inscriptions indicate its significance, beginning in the 18th century and continuing through the 20th century, as an heirloom of the Ellery family of Newport. The teapot belonged to Mrs. Ebenezer Pemberton, whose portrait hangs on the wall.



RISD MUSEUM

Elie Nadelman
American (b.Poland), 1882-1946
Fawn, ca. 1915
Bronze
Bequest of Miss Ellen D. Sharpe 54.147.18

Paintings of animals in the prehistoric caves of Lascaux in Dordogne, France, heavily influenced the construction of *Deer* and *Fawn*, whose contours and movements are evoked by sweeping curves. Rejecting the theory that art imitated nature, Nadelman preferred to draw and sculpt only with what he called the “freshness and force” of the curve. He studied in Warsaw, Krakow, Munich, and Paris before immigrating to America to escape the growing crisis of World War I.

In 1920, Eliza Radeke, president of the Rhode Island School of Design, became the first to place Nadelman’s work in an American art museum.

Elie Nadelman
American (b.Poland), 1882-1946
Deer, ca. 1915
Bronze
Bequest of Miss Ellen D. Sharpe 54.147.19

Paintings of animals in the prehistoric caves of Lascaux in Dordogne, France, heavily influenced the construction of *Deer* and *Fawn*, whose contours and movements are evoked by sweeping curves. Rejecting the theory that art imitated nature, Nadelman preferred to draw and sculpt only with what he called the “freshness and force” of the curve. He studied in Warsaw, Krakow, Munich, and Paris before immigrating to America to escape the growing crisis of World War I.

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Benjamin West
American, 1738-1820
King Lear, ca. 1789
Oil on panel
Museum purchase: Gift of the Honorable Theodore Francis Green
56.084

Benjamin West rose from a modest Pennsylvania upbringing to become the president of Britain’s Royal Academy. His early skill as a draftsman attracted support of Philadelphia patrons who oversaw his



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education and sponsored his travel to Italy. In 1768 he settled in England, eventually winning an appointment as history painter to King George III. A highly influential teacher, West advised many American artists who traveled abroad to study under him.

This scene from *King Lear* served as a prototype for an engraving published by Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery in London. As Lear rages over his treatment by his two eldest daughters, his madness is mirrored in the surging storm and by Edgar (right) and the Fool (left). A monumental version of this painting is in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-

William Christmas Codman, designer
English, 1839-1921

Joseph Edward Straker, silversmith
English, 1843-1912

Franz Ziegler, modeler
German, 1869-1934

Potter and Company, cabinetmaker
American, fl. 1878-1910

Writing Table and Chair, 1903

Ebony, mahogany, boxwood, redwood, thuya wood, ivory, mother-of-pearl, silver, mirrored glass, and gilded tooled leather
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick B. Thurber 58.095ab



Elizabeth A. Williams, curator of decorative arts: Commanding as much attention now as when they debuted at the 1904 World's Fair, this writing table and chair were conceived as showstoppers in a crowd of stunning objects made by Gorham's competitors. More than 10,000 hours of labor, 75 pounds of silver, and a panoply of exotic materials make up this unique set, which deftly melds sinuous European Art Nouveau floral and figural motifs, 18th-century French Rococo forms, and traditional Hispano-Moresque designs. Intricately wrought symbolism—seen in the daytime poppies and the night owl below the mirror and the decoration of the legs, each representing one of the four seasons, with female masks surrounded by lilies, roses, chrysanthemums, and pine cones—attest to the complexity of Gorham's design, which brought them the Grand Prize in silversmithing.

Burr Sebring, designer and silversmith: This writing table and chair represent a golden age for Gorham. In 1899 the company moved into a new plant, and with the new design direction from William Christmas Codman, Gorham enjoyed a perfect matrix of leadership and artistry. Codman turned over his rather cursory sketches for the

RISD MUSEUM

silversmiths, chasers, modelers, inlayers, leather carvers, and cabinetmakers to interpret and execute in three dimensions. Remarkable skill and collaboration is particularly evident in the leaves on the desk's surface, where the ebony and rosewood, which are very challenging woods, were carved away to allow the inlay of silver.

As the director of design at Gorham from 1973 to 1983, I always felt that we were working in the shadow of this moment, which was characterized by outstanding dedication to craftsmanship, hard work, and the time required to create what had never been made before.

Jacob Hurd
American, 1702-1758
Teapot, ca. 1735
Silver and wood
Gift of Mr. F. Huntington Babcock 60.019



As a material from which coins are minted and beautiful works of art are fashioned, silver possesses a dual identity in signifying success. Status, wealth, education, and elegance were readily conveyed in personal adornments and the silver amassed on the family sideboard, and because sterling was literally worth its weight, it could easily be converted to cash in hard times. Fortunately, these pieces survived. The cup commemorated Captain John Crawford's marriage to Amy Whipple in Providence in 1715—note the newlyweds' initials inscribed on the side—while the tankard's inscriptions indicate its significance, beginning in the 18th century and continuing through the 20th century, as an heirloom of the Ellery family of Newport. The teapot belonged to Mrs. Ebenezer Pemberton, whose portrait hangs on the wall.

Mary Cassatt
American, 1844-1926
Simone in a Blue Bonnet, ca. 1903
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth 60.095



After moving to Paris to acquire advanced artistic training, Cassatt became the only American to participate in the groundbreaking French Impressionist exhibitions of the 1870s and 1880s. Her female models were often members of her Paris household or neighbors from her nearby country home.

Cassatt made numerous studies of a little girl named Simone, frequently posing her in colorful bonnets. In this unfinished portrait, she skillfully models the child's face then sketches her hair and costume with thick strokes of paint. She projects the figure forward

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from a dark background, but otherwise preserves the natural brightness of the canvas, an Impressionist technique that assured a light overall tonality.

American
Mourning Brooch, mid 1800s
Hair and gold
Gift of Mrs. Hannibal Hamlin 62.086.4

A lock of hair was often cherished as a tangible remembrance of a deceased loved one; this bright blue enameled locket incorporates a lock of hair and a small photograph. The practice of incorporating hair into jewelry began in Europe as early as the 16th century, and by the 19th century became an art of its own, with instructional manuals detailing the latest patterns and techniques.

The hair in these pieces was braided using a method that employed weighted bobbins to produce hollow tubes or solid lengths of woven hair, which were made into various forms of jewelry.

American
Earrings and Brooch, ca. 1875
Gold, enamel, and pearls
Gift of the Estate of William E. Brigham 63.011.35

Adornments made of precious materials have served as outward displays of status since ancient times, but inventiveness and technology have often provided less expensive alternatives. These earrings and brooch were made not from solid gold, but from "rolled gold" or gold fill, which bonded a layer of gold to a base metal. This was one of the many innovative techniques integral to Providence becoming a center of jewelry production in the late 18th-century and well into the 20th century.



RISD MUSEUM

Chinese

*Teapot, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain with enamel gilding

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.1

This service comprises pieces of Chinese export porcelain, made specifically for the Western market. In the 17th century, European markets—followed by American markets in the 18th century—began importing large quantities of porcelain fired in the kilns of Jingdezhen, where orders for large services adorned with family crests and decorative motifs were produced.

This richly enameled and gilded service is the sort that would have been brought back by John Brown when his ship *George Washington* returned from China to the port of Providence on July 5, 1789. Brown was the first Rhode Islander to engage in the China trade, launching from Narragansett Bay six decades of voyages that brought prosperity to the area's merchants and luxury goods to its residents.

Chinese

*Cup, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain with enamel and gilding

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.14

This service comprises pieces of Chinese export porcelain, made specifically for the Western market. In the 17th century, European markets—followed by American markets in the 18th century—began importing large quantities of porcelain fired in the kilns of Jingdezhen, where orders for large services adorned with family crests and decorative motifs were produced.

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RISD MUSEUM

Chinese

*Coffeepot, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain with enamel gilding

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.2

This service comprises pieces of Chinese export porcelain, made specifically for the Western market. In the 17th century, European markets—followed by American markets in the 18th century—began importing large quantities of porcelain fired in the kilns of Jingdezhen, where orders for large services adorned with family crests and decorative motifs were produced.

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Chinese

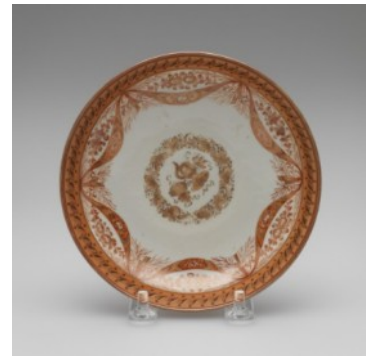
*Saucer, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain with enamel gilding

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.26

This service comprises pieces of Chinese export porcelain, made specifically for the Western market. In the 17th century, European markets—followed by American markets in the 18th century—began importing large quantities of porcelain fired in the kilns of Jingdezhen, where orders for large services adorned with family crests and decorative motifs were produced.

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RISD MUSEUM

Chinese

*Saucer, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain with enamel and gilding

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.27

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Chinese

*Covered Sugar Bowl, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain with enamel and gilding

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.3

This service comprises pieces of Chinese export porcelain, made specifically for the Western market. In the 17th century, European markets—followed by American markets in the 18th century—began importing large quantities of porcelain fired in the kilns of Jingdezhen, where orders for large services adorned with family crests and decorative motifs were produced.

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RISD MUSEUM

Chinese

*Creamer, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain with enamel gilding

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.4

This service comprises pieces of Chinese export porcelain, made specifically for the Western market. In the 17th century, European markets—followed by American markets in the 18th century—began importing large quantities of porcelain fired in the kilns of Jingdezhen, where orders for large services adorned with family crests and decorative motifs were produced.

This richly enameled and gilded service is the sort that would have been brought back by John Brown when his ship *George Washington* returned from China to the port of Providence on July 5, 1789. Brown was the first Rhode Islander to engage in the China trade, launching from Narragansett Bay six decades of voyages that brought prosperity to the area's merchants and luxury goods to its residents.



Chinese

*Bowl, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain with enamel gilding

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.40

This service comprises pieces of Chinese export porcelain, made specifically for the Western market. In the 17th century, European markets—followed by American markets in the 18th century—began importing large quantities of porcelain fired in the kilns of Jingdezhen, where orders for large services adorned with family crests and decorative motifs were produced.

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Chinese

*Dish, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain with enamel and gilding

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.41

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Chinese

*Tea Canister, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.5

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Chinese

*Cup, from Tea and Coffee Service*ca. 1780-1785

Porcelain with enamel and gilding

Gift of Harold A. Sweetland 69.135.7

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Attributed to Thomas Seymour

American, 1771-1848

Attributed to John Seymour, cabinetmaker

American, ca.1738-ca.1818

Lady's writing desk, ca. 1795-1800

Mahogany, pine, light and dark wood inlays, ivory, brass and enamel hardware

Estate of Martha B. Lisle, by exchange 71.075

Made in Boston, this lady's writing desk includes highly popularized French design elements, such as tamboured doors, elegant proportions, and slender tapered legs, and reflects the influence of the French Neoclassical style on late 18th-century and early 19th-century design, known in America as the Federal style. Federal furniture is characterized by intricate inlays, a skill at which New England cabinetmakers excelled. The drawer fronts are framed by thin strips of inlaid light wood, a technique known as stringing, while the legs and stiles are inlaid with cascading bellflowers. Further embellishments include the precisely formed ivory keyhole escutcheons and the royal blue and white enameled brass handles.



Louis Comfort Tiffany, designer

American, 1848-1933

Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, manufacturer

American, active 1892-1932

Favrile Vase, ca. 1908

Glass

Museum Collection 73.028

These works celebrate organic form and exemplify the philosophy of designer Louis Comfort Tiffany: "Nature is always right. Nature is always beautiful." Introduced in 1893 after years of experimentation, Favrile glass was inspired by Tiffany's interest in ancient glass made iridescent by its absorption of minerals in the soil in which it had been buried. Tiffany's craftsmen finally achieved this lustrous sheen by mixing metallic oxides with molten glass. He described Favrile glass as "distinguished by brilliant or deeply toned colors, usually iridescent



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like the wings of certain American butterflies, the necks of pigeons and peacocks, the wing covers of various beetles.”

Glassmakers have a long history of saving, re-imagining, and re-creating. Did the tall flower-shaped glass with the organically shaped top begin as a mistake? As an experiment? As a response to Art Nouveau’s ever more fluid organic forms? Tiffany learned a great deal from and was inspired by his team of highly skilled glassblowers, metalsmiths, chemists, and other craftspeople.

The “peacock feather” vase is perfectly resolved in form, color, size, and decoration. Created using an adaption of an ancient Egyptian technique, it features Tiffany’s hallmark iridescent surface. Half a century later, the process was determined to be highly toxic, and rarely has been used in recent years.

Toots Zynsky, glass artist

Alexandre Roux, cabinetmaker

French; American, fl. 1837-1881; 1813-1886

Cabinet, ca. 1866

Rosewood, light and dark wood marquetry, ebonized and gilt trim, porcelain, and gilt bronze

Jesse Metcalf Fund 78.052



The prosperity of 19th-century Americans and the fondness they held for eclectic design are readily exemplified in the furniture of Alexander Roux, a French immigrant who established an upscale company in New York. Roux’s furniture designs included costly materials, as seen here in the elaborate gilt metal mounts, ebonized wood, marquetry, and Sèvres porcelain panel. Reflecting lavish European aesthetics and popular with leading architects and their clients, Roux’s work came to be directly associated with wealth and accomplishment, and was considered a status symbol.

John Singer Sargent

American, 1856-1925

A Boating Party, ca. 1889

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mrs. Houghton P. Metcalf in memory of her husband,
Houghton P. Metcalf 78.086



Sargent painted *A Boating Party* during a late summer vacation on England’s River Avon. During the extended holiday with his sister Violet and friends Paul and Alice Helleu, he experimented with Impressionist composition and technique. The unfinished background at the upper right shows that he had not yet mastered the use of broken brushstrokes, but his confidence is apparent in the placement of figures, the reflections in the water, and the asymmetric

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organization of the boats. With an amusing sense of photographic cropping, Sargent keeps the flat red punt from slipping out of the picture by anchoring it with lanky Paul Helleu's leg.

American
Cabinet, 1875-1880
Ebonized cherry with gilding
Abby Rockefeller Mauze Fund, by exchange 81.010

This cabinet reflects the eclecticism of the American Aesthetic movement. The tight gilded floral design incised into the surface and the large brass strap hinges allude to neo-Gothic influences, revived by English furniture designer Charles Eastlake. The influence of Japanese decorative arts can be seen in the choice of ebonized wood, which simulates Asian lacquer, and the carved lower cabinet doors featuring stylized jaguars. This type of cabinet was popularized in the United States by the New York firm Kimbel & Cabus, whose work was shown at the 1876 world's fair exhibition in Philadelphia and circulated through trade publications.



Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Tureen, 1884
Silver
Gift of Mrs. Pierre Brunschwig 81.072ab

Looking as if they were plucked from the nearby Narragansett Bay, these salad servers are encrusted with shells, sand, crabs, and strands of seaweed tangled with fish. Rhode Island's waters and marine life so inspired the designers of the Gorham Manufacturing Company that the anchor from the state seal was adopted as part of the Gorham maker's mark.

Fish jump from the roiling ocean of the tureen's surface, with the handles resembling knobby branches of coral, on which a pair of crabs rests. Realism like that seen in the tureen's sea-urchin finial was often achieved through live casts of sea creatures.



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Theodore Russell Davis, designer

American, 1840-1894

Haviland & Company, manufacturer

French, 1842 -

Ice Cream Dish, from the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Service 1879

Porcelain with enamels and gilding

Gift of Daphne Farago 82.022



A chance meeting in the White House between First Lady Lucy Hayes and illustrator and journalist Theodore Davis produced a most extraordinary dinner service. Mrs. Hayes was selecting fern samples to be used as decoration on the presidential service, which had already been contracted with Haviland, and Davis suggested that she use depictions of flora and fauna native to North America, celebrating the country's natural bounty. Davis became the designer of the service, producing 130 distinct decorations for 562 pieces made for nine courses. Each decoration was drawn by hand, etchings were made to transfer the outlines, basic colors were applied via chromolithographic and decalcomania processes, and enamel details and gilding were added by hand.

The designs ornamenting each piece of this service not only echo the era's interest in nature and America's spirit of nationalism—they also often indicate the type of food they were to serve. The turkey striding from a background radiating beams of light and the lobster riding in the surf leave little doubt as to what the diner would soon enjoy. As the ice cream melted, the gilded snow shoe would appear to be covered with snow. The ice cream dish is marked as part of the original service delivered to the White House, whereas the 1880 patent date of the other two pieces indicates that they were part of a limited number of pieces made by Haviland for public sale.

James E. Wall

American, active 1881-1917

Armchair, ca. 1886

Bamboo with lacquer

Gift of N. David Scotti 82.111.3



An embodiment of the rising influence both of Asian decorative arts and American global power, this armchair was designed and assembled in Boston with bamboo imported from the East. One of three chairs purchased by Providence banker Henry Pearce for his summer house in Warwick Neck, this amalgamation of East and West carries on the legacy of the China Trade, initiated in the late 18th century by New England sea merchants such as Pearce's own ancestor, Captain Nathaniel Pearce.

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Louis Comfort Tiffany, designer
American, 1848-1933
Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, manufacturer
American, active 1892-1932
Favrile Vase with Stand, ca. 1900
Glass and bronze
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph K. Ott 83.160

These works celebrate organic form and exemplify the philosophy of designer Louis Comfort Tiffany: "Nature is always right. Nature is always beautiful." Introduced in 1893 after years of experimentation, Favrile glass was inspired by Tiffany's interest in ancient glass made iridescent by its absorption of minerals in the soil in which it had been buried. Tiffany's craftsmen finally achieved this lustrous sheen by mixing metallic oxides with molten glass. He described Favrile glass as "distinguished by brilliant or deeply toned colors, usually iridescent like the wings of certain American butterflies, the necks of pigeons and peacocks, the wing covers of various beetles."

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Toots Zynsky, glass artist



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Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Narragansett Salad Set, ca.1885
Silver with gilding
Museum purchase: Bequest of Ida Littlefield 84.060.1

Looking as if they were plucked from the nearby Narragansett Bay, these salad servers are encrusted with shells, sand, crabs, and strands of seaweed tangled with fish. Rhode Island's waters and marine life so inspired the designers of the Gorham Manufacturing Company that the anchor from the state seal was adopted as part of the Gorham maker's mark.

Fish jump from the roiling ocean of the tureen's surface, with the handles resembling knobby branches of coral, on which a pair of crabs rests. Realism like that seen in the tureen's sea-urchin finial was often achieved through live casts of sea creatures.



Gorham Manufacturing Company
American, 1831-
Narragansett Salad Set, ca.1885
Silver with gilding
Museum purchase: Bequest of Ida Littlefield 84.060.2

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Gorham Manufacturing Company, manufacturer
American, 1831-
Coffeepot, ca. 1890
Copper with silver and ivory
Mary B. Jackson Fund 84.161

This hammered copper coffee pot follows a Turkish form while its applied silver designs recall Katsushika Hokusai's *Manga*, a collection of the artist's sketches of Japanese flora, fauna, and figures, known to be part of the Gorham Manufacturing Company's design library. The array of exotic wares displayed at world's fairs in the late 19th-century helped fuel the mainstream development of the American Aesthetic movement, which eschewed popular historicized revivalism in favor of Japanese and other design influences, and American Orientalism, a style reflecting a Western construct of the "Orient," a nebulous geographic location including Moorish, Indian, Islamic, Near Eastern, and Persian lands.



Henry Ossawa Tanner
American, 1859-1937
The Wailing Wall, ca. 1898
Oil on canvas
Gift of Paula and Leonard Granoff 84.234

The son of an African Methodist Episcopal bishop, Tanner studied with Thomas Eakins in Philadelphia before acquiring advanced training in Paris. He established an international reputation in 1897 when one of his biblical scenes was awarded a medal at the 1897 Paris Salon and was purchased by the French government. Later that year, Tanner traveled to Palestine to assure the accuracy of his historical narratives through firsthand observation of landscape, costume, and customs. In this study for a larger composition, devout Jews gather at the Western Wall, a remnant of the Second Temple of Jerusalem and the holiest place of prayer in the Jewish world.



Attributed to James Halyburton (Haliburton), cabinetmaker
American, active 1790-1800
Card Table, ca. 1795-1800
Mahogany, maple, pine
Bequest of Lyra Brown Nickerson, by exchange, bequest of Martha B. Lisle, by exchange; Ida Ballou Littlefield Fund, Mary B. Jackson Fund and additional funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. George M. Kaufman and J. J. Smortchovsky 85.015



These finely constructed card tables demonstrate the refinement and skill possessed by craftsmen outside of highly urbanized regions during early 19th-century America. Detailed inlays of contrasting

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woods, seen in the trailing bellflowers or husks on the legs and front of these tables and the fan on the tabletops, are typically associated with the Pawtuxet School of cabinetmaking, located just outside of Providence.

The tables' lightweight construction and folding design allowed them to be mobile and multifunctional: when closed, they served as side tables that could be compactly stored against a wall, while in the open position they could be used as card tables.

Samuel Gragg

American, 1772-ca. 1855

Elastic Armchair, 1808 (patented)

White oak, hickory, soft maple, beech

Gift of the Wunsch Americana Foundation, Inc. 85.024

Based on the ancient Greek klismos form, this chair incorporates bentwood lamination, a technique using steam to shape wood into graceful curves. Patented in 1808, Gragg's design and construction process benefitted from his experience using this technique to make Windsor chairs, an example of which is on the (right/left). Inspired by the proportions and lightweight construction of the Windsor chair, Gragg fused the classical past with the industrialized future. The chair is adorned with motifs that date to antiquity, such as the painted peacock feathers along the chair back, the acanthus leaves on the seat rail, and the carved hoof feet.



The Elastic chair has an anachronistic energy, with the design and construction appearing far more advanced than the skills and mindset typical of its era. The process by which the chair was made can be read in its form, which makes it wonderful teaching example. Construction included steaming straight-grained wood, bending the malleable wood in a jig to dry, and merging the pieces together with straight or dovetail joints that vary from each other in size and angle due to the gentle compound curvature of the back. My favorite aspect is the delicate and surprising hoof-like feet. This chair communicates substantial information about its making and offers a great model for designing furniture today.

Alicia Valencia, RISD (furniture design) / Brown BA student, 2015

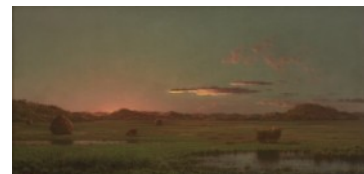
Martin Johnson Heade

American, 1819-1904

Newburyport Marshes, Sunset, ca. 1875-1880

Oil on canvas

Collection of James G. Mumford EL002.80



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Heade created more than 100 paintings of marshes and meadowlands near the New England coast, varying them through close attention to season, atmosphere, and light. In this scene of dusk at Newburyport, Massachusetts, he records information with meticulous brushstrokes while limiting the expanse of the view. A horizontal format suited the low-lying subject, as did Heade's use of a tonal palette to express mood and indicate time of day. He bathes the composition in clear light, picking out shapes and reflections that animate the landscape without compromising its intimacy.

Theodore Russell Davis, designer

American, 1840-1894

Haviland & Company, manufacturer

French, 1842 -

Turkey Platter, from the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Service, ca. 1880

Porcelain with enamels and gilding

Lent by the family of Myra Kendall Roberts EL013.84

A chance meeting in the White House between First Lady Lucy Hayes and illustrator and journalist Theodore Davis produced a most extraordinary dinner service. Mrs. Hayes was selecting fern samples to be used as decoration on the presidential service, which had already been contracted with Haviland, and Davis suggested that she use depictions of flora and fauna native to North America, celebrating the country's natural bounty. Davis became the designer of the service, producing 130 distinct decorations for 562 pieces made for nine courses. Each decoration was drawn by hand, etchings were made to transfer the outlines, basic colors were applied via chromolithographic and decalcomania processes, and enamel details and gilding were added by hand.

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William Ordway Partridge
American, 1861 - 1930
Peace, 1904
Marble
Lent by Mrs. Joseph K. Ott TL143.2013

In this serene white marble head of a young woman, Partridge demonstrates his interest in the expressive surfaces of the French sculptor Auguste Rodin. The work conveys the emotion and character of Peace, emphasized by the contrast between the smooth planes of the face and the roughly hewn block from which it emerges.

Partridge was born in Paris of American parents but pursued university studies in New York before returning to Europe for academic training in sculpture. Although primarily known for public commissions and portrait busts that demanded realistic treatment of the figure, he was interested in more abstract developments in modern sculpture.



James Earl
American, 1761-1796
Portrait of Dr. Amos Throop, ca. 1795
Oil on canvas
Lent by Rhode Island Medical Society, Providence TL157.2012

With a warm smile, a powdered wig, and a background of books, Throop is portrayed by Earl as a gentleman and scholar. The book titles announce Throop as an adherent of the Enlightenment-era understanding of medicine as a learned science. In 1812 Throop was recognized for his leadership in the medical community and was elected the first president of the Rhode Island Medical Society. The doctor's civic interest extended beyond his medical practice: in his role as Providence's representative to the state General Assembly, Throop encouraged the staunchly anti-Federalist state to ratify the new Constitution.



Paul Manship
American, 1885-1966
Indian and Pronghorn Antelope, 1914
Bronze
Lent by the Estate of Mrs. Joseph K. Ott TL178.2015

Indian and Pronghorn Antelope is infused with movement and expression. As the lean, muscular hunter kneels, draws his bowstring, and pauses, the antelope rears up with arched neck. Drawn from nature, these tooled, incised, and polished figures are emblems of the



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American past, reimagined in bronze as ornaments of the Machine Age.

Manship had studied at the American Academy in Rome and was inspired by the formal simplicity of archaic Greek sculpture. He applied a modern, streamlined aesthetic to his own sculptures of classical and mythological figures, combining academic form with decorative surface effects.

Henry Benbridge
American, 1743-1812
Portrait of Anne Brindley, 1776
Oil on canvas
Gift of the Wunsch Foundation, Inc. 1991.142

Returning from study in Italy and London, the Philadelphia-born Benbridge used letters of reference from well-known Americans abroad, Benjamin West and Benjamin Franklin, to attract patrons in his newly adopted home of South Carolina. Anne Brindley was six years old when her parents commissioned this portrait. Her direct gaze and pointing hand refer the viewer to something beyond the frame, most likely a pendant portrait of her twin sister, Mary.



The rabbit on Anne's lap may be a pet or an emblem. Signifying fertility and love, rabbits were popular motifs in colonial American portraits of children.

Gilbert Stuart
American, 1755-1828
Portrait of Samuel Dunn, 1809-1815
Oil on canvas
Museum Appropriation Fund 31.272

The daughter of a successful brass-foundry owner, Sarah Cutler was 14 years younger than Samuel Dunn, a former seaman and ship's captain, when they married in 1799 at Trinity Church, Boston. Stuart portrays Mr. Dunn as plump, scrubbed, and properly dressed; Mrs. Dunn is stylish in a turban and Kashmir shawl, and looks rather pleased with herself.



Like Sarah's father, Samuel was a grandmaster of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts Freemasons, and his more sober representation may intentionally emulate Stuart's Athenaeum portrait of George Washington, America's most distinguished Freemason. A version of the Athenaeum portrait hangs nearby.

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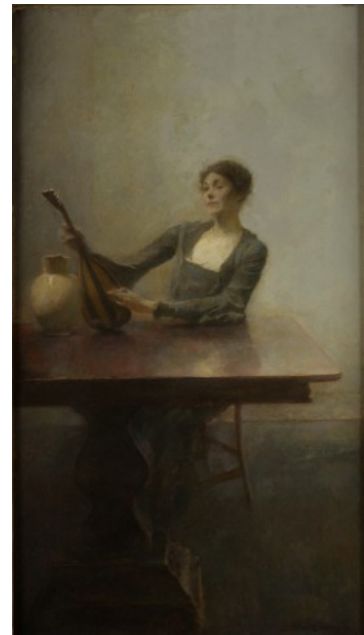
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Thomas Wilmer Dewing
American, 1851-1938
Lady in Gray, ca. 1910
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 12.014

The 19th-century concept of "art for art's sake" aspired to harmony in all aspects of design. In *Lady in Gray*, diffused light, the suggestion of music, and the use of a dominant gray tone create a sense of reverie. Dewing and others in his circle extended the decorative effect of their paintings by placing them in custom-designed frames. This example, in Renaissance Revival tabernacle style, was designed by Dewing's friend, the architect Stanford White. The frame's ornamentation, including Corinthian capitals and classical moldings, mediated between the painting and the decorated room in which it would have hung.



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Augustus Saint-Gaudens
American, 1848-1907
Amor Caritas (Angel of Love), 1898
Bronze
Museum Collection 48.352

Amor Caritas is a smaller version of a gilded sculpture that Saint-Gaudens created at his studio in Cornish, New Hampshire. The draped angel was one of his signature themes, evolving from a figure he first invented for a private tomb and later transformed into mantelpiece caryatids for Cornelius Vanderbilt's New York mansion. Saint-Gaudens learned relief carving—sculpting projected forms from a background support—through an early apprenticeship with cameo makers. Later formal training at Cooper Union, the National Academy of Design, and the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, led him to an appreciation of Renaissance sculpture, whose humanizing of classical figures is evident in this “angel of love.”



Childe Hassam
American, 1859-1935
The Messenger Boy, 1903
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 03.002

While studying in Paris in the 1880s, Hassam acquired an appreciation of the French Impressionists' fresh palette and broken brushstroke. He applied these techniques in his landscapes and city views, including some of Manhattan, where he spent his winters.

In this snowy street scene, a courier trudges past storefronts, carrying documents from one business to another. The subject is unusual for Hassam, who had little interest in depicting the grittier conditions of urban life. Even here he remains primarily concerned with composition and with the evocative weather conditions that veil the street in blue and yellow light.



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John Wollaston
American, 1736 - 1767; fl. 1733-1775
Portrait of Mrs. Ebenezer Pemberton, ca. 1750
Oil on canvas
Gift of Donald S. Babcock 57.038

Catherine Harris Smith was a widowed mother of one son when she married Reverend Ebenezer Pemberton, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of New York City. Her personal wealth, inherited from her parents, included a parcel of land that is now part of City Hall Park. As the wife of a prominent churchman, she had social obligations to entertain visiting clergymen. Her refined costume suits the restraint and piety expected of a minister's wife, but its sumptuous silk—a specialty of Wollaston, who had recently arrived in New York from England—effectively projects her social status.



Horace Pippin
American, 1888-1946
Quaker Mother and Child, ca. 1935-1940
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 44.094

A self-taught artist, the grandson of slaves, and the son of a laborer and a domestic worker, Horace Pippin came to painting in his mid 30s. His right arm was crippled during service in France in 1917, but he wrote that the wartime experience “brought out all the art in me.” His subjects, ranging from childhood memories to religious narratives, were first composed in his imagination: “I do over the picture several times in my mind,” he said, “and when I am ready to paint it I have all the details I need.” As a result, Pippin’s work is characterized by clarity, selection, and order.



Eastman Johnson
American, 1824-1906
Sugaring Off, ca. 1861-1866
Oil on canvas
Museum Works of Art Fund 45.050

Johnson traveled to Europe to acquire the skills needed to become a great figure painter. His reputation in America later surged with the popularity of his detailed paintings of 19th-century rural life. In the early 1860s he began a series that chronicled maple-sap harvesting at a camp at Fryeburg, Maine.

In this lively, unfinished version, Johnson’s preparatory drawings and expressive under-painting indicate groupings planned for the final scheme. Poses, gestures, and details of costume contribute to a



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convincing enactment of communal engagement at time when the country was recovering from the devastating conflict of the Civil War.

Johnson chose a humble subject, but this grand-scale work was intended for a merchant's carpeted salon—not the front rooms of the rural folks in the painting. In the days before “social media,” entire communities looked forward to occasions when everyone got together. Johnson captured the rascal kids, the fiddler, the young couples flirting, the returned veterans still wearing parts of their uniforms, all gathering in late fall to boil down sap collected from sugar-maple trees.

He first blocked out the scene in oil, then used the margins to try out ways to best shape his caricatures. These sketches were for his eyes only and would have been covered by layers of glaze and scumble as the process went forward.

Dennis Congdon, painter and RISD professor (Painting)

Attributed to William B. Savage

American, active, 1880-1890

Spinning Wheel Armchair, ca. 1886

Red oak, basswood, and buttonwood

Gift in memory of Nathalie Lorillard Bailey Morris by Elizabeth Morris Smith 78.157

Reusing every part of a spinning wheel, this chair exemplifies 19th-century interests in the impact of industrialization and colonial-era aesthetics. By recycling a device rendered obsolete with the rise of the American textile industry, furniture makers such as William Savage paid homage to the nation's past, creating new functionality from the remnants of a bygone era. These chairs soon became symbols of a romanticized interpretation of domesticity, and were advertised and purchased as wedding or birthday presents.



Arthur Bowen Davies

American, 1862-1928

Clothed in Dominion, ca. 1912

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Miss Lizzie P. Bliss 31.336

Arthur B. Davies was a driving force behind the groundbreaking New York modern art exhibition known as the 1913 Armory Show. He was also an avid admirer of modern dance and Greek art, both of which informed his notions about natural movement presented in nature. While in Paris in 1912, Davies followed the performances of the Ballets Russes, whose archaic, sensuous staging of Claude Debussy's



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Afternoon of a Faun shocked even sophisticated audiences. He recalls that ballet in this frieze of young men moving languorously in a scenographic forest setting. A kneeling figure at left suggests the notorious pose of the exultant faun, made famous by dancer Vaslav Nijinsky.

Thomas Cole
American, 1801-1848
Landscape (Landscape with Tree Trunks), 1828
Oil on canvas
Walter H. Kimball Fund 30.063

Thomas Cole's early paintings celebrated unspoiled nature in a land ripe with promise, combining acute observation with European conventions of the picturesque and the sublime. An English immigrant, Cole studied in Philadelphia before establishing his career in New York. Trips to New England and the Catskills provided material for landscapes painted later in the studio.

Here, a passing storm reveals a mountaintop bathed in sunlight; a blasted tree, dead from a lightning strike, mediates between heaven and earth and suggests the cycle of life. Human presence is interjected at the top of the waterfall, where a Native American salutes nature's magnificence.

Asher Brown Durand
American, 1796-1886
Chocorua Peak, 1855
Oil on canvas
Gift of Rhode Island Art Association 52.104

In the summer of 1855, Asher B. Durand, America's leading landscape painter, returned to the White Mountains of New Hampshire after a long absence. He had recently published a series of articles urging young painters to find beauty in the pristine landscapes of America, rather than seek exotic locations abroad. He also encouraged them to work directly from nature and not impose narrative content or dramatic episodes of weather. Following his own advice to adhere to the "magnitude of objects and extent of space," he rendered this stark view of Mount Chocorua, a summit known for its sheer precipices and harsh profile.



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Cecilia Beaux
American, 1855-1942
Portrait of Sarah E. Doyle, ca.1902
Oil on canvas
Gift of Committee of High School Graduates 32.062

Parisian-trained Cecilia Beaux portrays educator and suffragist Sarah Doyle in academic robes over a white blouse and skirt. Broad brushstrokes and a deep red background contrast with her steady, dignified gaze and allude to her intellectual energy.

Doyle was principal of the girls' department at Providence High School from 1872 to 1892 and a founder of Pembroke College at Brown University. To acknowledge her "deep and lasting influence upon the women of this community," former students commissioned a portrait that would "perpetuate her strong, womanly personality," and "be of itself a work of art of the highest merit."



Julian Alden Weir
American, 1852-1919
Face Reflected in a Mirror, 1896
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 03.004

In this unusual double portrait, Weir draws the viewer into an intricate puzzle of flat and decorative elements. A rhythmic progression of verticals is formed by the curtains, the mirror's edge, the bedposts, and the figure's confident pose. In contrast, horizontal crossbars rise from the floor and float attention upward to the model's reflection. Her voluminous striped sleeve joins various textiles and carved ornaments as counterpoints to the composition's insistent geometry. In this contemporary version of a traditional theme, Weir demonstrates his knowledge of aesthetic interiors, subtle tonal harmonies, and asymmetric arrangement of forms.



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John White Alexander
American, 1856-1915
The Blue Bowl, 1898
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 04.141.1

The Blue Bowl was shown in Paris and Vienna before appearing at RISD's Autumn Exhibition of 1904. Alexander's sophisticated style was unique in America, presenting feminine subjects in flattened and asymmetric spaces.

More than the Delft bowl of the title, the true focus of the painting is the back of the model's dress. Executed with thin washes of color on roughly textured canvas, its sinuous curves and floral-patterned folds illustrate the height of Art Nouveau costume and pictorial design. The painting's decorative theme and compositional daring are further enhanced by the rhythmic floral reliefs on its custom frame.



Frank Weston Benson
American, 1862-1951
Lady Trying on a Hat (The Black Hat), 1904
Oil on canvas
Gift of Walter Callender, Henry D. Sharpe, Howard L. Clark, William Gammell and Isaac C. Bates 06.002

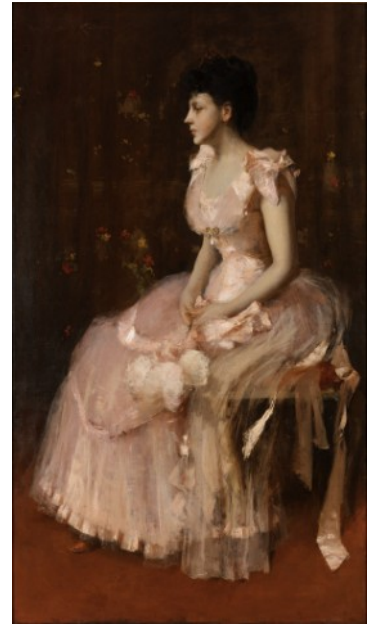
Benson chose the private act of dressing as a premise for this study. His setting, an "artistic interior," incorporates decorative objects, including a Japanese chest, a blue and white porcelain vase, and small silver items arrayed on a table. A favorite model, Mary Sullivan, appears to admire herself in an unseen mirror as she lifts her arms to adjust the elaborate black hat. Its wide brim obscures her face, deflecting attention to her active pose and to the dazzling surface effects of her gauzy white dress and satin waistband.



RISD MUSEUM

William Merritt Chase
American, 1849-1916
Portrait of a Lady in Pink, ca. 1888–1889
Oil on canvas
Gift of Isaac C. Bates 94.010

The model for this painting was Chase's student Marietta "Pansy" Benedict Cotton, a young New York socialite. Chase's composition showcases his eclectic techniques, from the fine academic modeling of the sitter's face and arms to the wide, bravura brushstrokes of her gown. Critics lauded the decorative backdrop and the "artistic quality" of the dress's translucent pink layers. After exhibiting *Lady in Pink* at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Chase sold it to Isaac C. Bates of Providence. The following year, it became the first American painting to enter the RISD Museum's collection.



John Goddard, cabinetmaker
American, 1723-1785
Desk and Bookcase, 1761
Mahogany, red cedar, tulipwood and pine
Bequest of Martha B. Lisle 67.166

Furniture made by the Townsend and Goddard circle of cabinetmakers exhibited the highest level of American craftsmanship, reflected the success of its owners, and, two centuries later, made headlines by setting the world auction record for American furniture.

This desk's drawers, doors, and pigeonholes allowed the organization of correspondence, the storage of everything from writing instruments to treasured books, and the securing of valuables under lock and key. Comparing the rich mahogany, gleaming brasses, and exceptionally carved shells on the front and sides with the plain boards on the back, visible around the corner, confirms that this piece was made to be placed against a wall, and that American cabinetmakers wisely used their best materials where they would be appreciated.

I've been drawn to these Newport secretaries since I first saw them. There are nine, two of them in this museum. Of all 18th-century American furniture, they are built to the largest scale, and have strong proportions and incredible detailing. Note the way the block front of the drawers continues through the base and feet. They are made from the finest Caribbean mahogany, king of the Western cabinet woods.



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To make this secretary, you would start with the sides and frame of the lower desk and its base, then make the large block front drawers, the fall front, and the desk's interior. Next, build the uppercase sides and frame with the elaborate cornice moldings. After making the three folding doors, add the interior dividers for holding books, papers, and ledgers. Done? No! Now take it all apart and finish and polish each piece. Re-assemble everything and install all the hardware. Finally, wrap the desk and bookcase separately, and hope they don't fall off the horse-drawn delivery wagon.

Timothy Philbrick, furniture maker

Thomas Chambers
American, 1808-1879
Undercliff near Cold-Spring, 1840-1867
Oil on canvas
Museum Works of Art Fund 43.006

An impoverished upbringing and lack of family connections barred Chambers from establishing a career as a professional artist in his native England, prompting him to immigrate to America in 1832. Despite his lack of formal training, the appeal of his subject matter brought him moderate success as a marine and landscape painter. He utilized topographical engravings in planning his scenic landscape paintings, but he added distinctive and dynamic color to his designs. Although the house of the famous publisher Gen. George P. Morris is prominently featured in *Undercliff*, the painting was likely intended as a souvenir of the nascent Hudson River tourism trade.



George Harvey
English, 1806-1876
Newburgh on Hudson, 1872
Oil on panel
Museum Works of Art Fund 43.174

Despite the bucolic appearance of this wide Hudson Valley vista, Harvey includes evidence of industry and of man's shaping of the landscape: barges and a steamship head down the river towards New York City and in the highly manicured garden, a man pushes a lawn mower.



Trained in the British topographical tradition of watercolor painting, Harvey utilized the same level of site-specificity and detail in his oil painting. He had returned to his native England around 1850, but visited the Hudson Valley on subsequent trips and remained familiar with the particularities of its wildlife, towns, and geography.

RISD MUSEUM

John Singleton Copley
American, ca. 1738-1815
Portrait of Governor Moses Gill, 1764
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 07.117

Moses Gill was 30 years old and a successful hardware merchant when he commissioned formal portraits of himself and his first wife, Sarah, seen at right. Their marriage added land to Gill's assets, elevating his standing in Boston's social hierarchy. Copley posed Gill in a fictional interior populated with luxurious draperies, a mahogany baluster, and paneled woodwork. Copley often "invented" clothing for his sitters, as is the case with this elegant costume with a fitted silk waistcoat that responds to his girth and acknowledges his prosperity.

After Sarah's death, Moses Gill remarried (his second wife, Rebecca, is at his left) and pursued a successful political career. A supporter of colonial independence, he joined the Massachusetts legislature, was appointed lieutenant governor of Massachusetts, and in 1799 briefly served as acting governor.

Wow, look at that waistcoat! This painting's powerful visual presence comes from Copley's ability to capture light reflecting off that satin garment and his masterful manipulation of warm gray values to convey the texture of that expensive material. The painting's power also comes from its geometry: the S curve running down the center of the composition was thought to be an ideal line in art theory of Copley's time. Then there's the remarkable repetition and mirroring of shapes throughout the painting, such as the triangular shape that appears in the door panel and below the elbow on the left side, and the curve of the outer coat which echoes the curve of the waistcoat.

Trent Burleson, painter and RISD professor (Illustration)



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John Singleton Copley
American, ca. 1738-1815
Portrait of Sarah Prince Gill, 1764
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 07.118

Sarah Prince Gill was the daughter of Reverend Thomas Prince, the rector of Old South Church, Boston. Well-educated and committed to a life of Christian piety, she believed in personal and political independence and initially resisted marriage as a state in which "Men's [brains] increase in Proportion to the Decrease of the Women's." Six years older than her spouse, she accepted Moses Gill's proposal reluctantly, believing God wanted her to assume the responsibilities of a household.

Copley portrayed Rebecca in a wooded landscape, a setting that acknowledges her contemplative personality and complements the handsome interior in which her husband is presented, seen at left.

John Singleton Copley
American, ca. 1738-1815
Portrait of Rebecca Boylston Gill, ca. 1773
Oil on canvas
Museum purchase with funds from Isaac C. Bates, William Gammell, Henry D. Sharpe, Miss Ellen D. Sharpe, Elizabeth A. Shepard, Daniel B. Updike, the Honorable George P. Wetmore and Mrs. Gustav Radeke
07.120

Rebecca Boylston was 45 when she married widower Moses Gill; he was 38. She was a member of a prominent Boston merchant family and had acquired great land and wealth through inheritance. Gill (at right) commemorated their union by commissioning a portrait that emphasizes Rebecca's urban sophistication. She wears a Turkish-style costume distinguished by gold embroidery, a silk turban laced with pearls, and a rose-colored mantle draped across one arm. A garden urn filled with lilies complements her fanciful attire. Rebecca confidently engages in this presentation of contemporary status and mode, creating an impression that contrasts distinctly with Copley's portrait of her predecessor.



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John Singleton Copley
American, ca. 1738-1815
Portrait of Theodore Atkinson, Jr. (1737-1769), 1757-1758
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 18.264

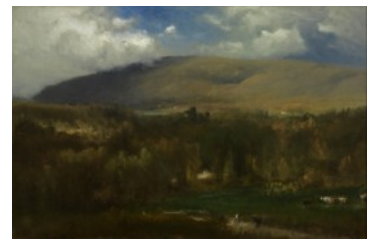
Copley was barely 20 when he was commissioned to paint Theodore Atkinson, Jr., the heir to vast New Hampshire landholdings. He staged Atkinson as a young lord striding forward to survey his country estate, adapting the pose from English engravings. Atkinson's suit was also a fashionable invention, permitting Copley to advertise his skill at rendering sumptuous textiles by dressing his subject in an expensive silk waistcoat. Unlike portraits of young British aristocrats on which it is modeled, no classical ruins or attributes of learning are present. The combination of likeness, costume, and verdant acreage effectively signaled Atkinson's distinguished pedigree and brilliant future.



George Inness
American, 1825-1894
In the Berkshire Hills, ca. 1877-1878
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 09.085

Inness was a skilled draftsman but eventually crafted landscapes in which topographical precision gave way to effects that echoed human moods and sentiments. By the 1860s, he had become attracted to the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, an 18th-century Swedish theologian who preached that God was present throughout nature.

In this view of the Berkshire Hills, Inness blurs the details of the landscape to express his conviction that all material objects are spiritually charged. He objected strenuously when critics compared his methods to the broken brushstrokes of the French Impressionists, calling that style a materialistic system that denied "the reality of the unseen."



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Thomas Cole
American, 1801-1848
Genesee Scenery (Mountain Landscape with Waterfall), 1847
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund 38.054

In the late 1840s, Cole's earlier interest in dramatic effects was replaced by his desire to represent nature in repose. "In the pure blue sky is the highest sublime," he wrote. "There is the illimitable." He was the first to depict this section of the Genesee River, which flows north through New York State. Cole combined carefully drawn sketches to construct a composite, framed viewpoint from high above the footbridge and mill, relying on precise drawings of trees and color notes on rusted minerals to assure truthfulness in the details.



James Earl
American, 1761-1796
Portrait of Elisabeth Fales Paine and Her Aunt, ca. 1794-1796
Oil on canvas
Museum Appropriation Fund 24.052

This double portrait serves a dual function: it commemorates the bond between Elizabeth and her aunt Sarah, and also celebrates Elizabeth's maturation into a polished young woman. Orphaned as girl, Elizabeth was sent from Bristol, Rhode Island, to South Carolina to be raised by paternal relatives. She later returned to Rhode Island and married Samuel W. Bridgham, who subsequently was elected the first mayor of Providence.



Born in Massachusetts, artist James Earl immigrated to England as a youth to improve his skills and seek a larger audience. He re-crossed the Atlantic in 1794, hoping a temporary venture in Charleston would bring him wealth, but perished in 1796 in a yellow fever epidemic.

American
Native American Sachem, ca. 1700
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mr. Robert Winthrop 48.246

For decades, this painting of a Native American sachem (chief or leader) was misidentified as a portrait of Niantic leader Ninigret II; recent scholarship indicates that the subject may be Robin Cassacinamon, an influential Pequot leader. Cassacinamon was known to have been a friend of the Winthrop family of Connecticut, through whom this painting descended. The tribe originally occupied the basin of the Pequot River (now Connecticut's Thames River), but the artist generalizes the setting in an idyllic manner. The stylization



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of the landscape, along with classical pose of the sachem, suggests that the artist, although nominally trained, was familiar with European art.

Alexander Stirling Calder
American, 1870-1945
Gorham Company Foundry, foundry or carver
American, 1831-
Sioux Brave, Our American Stoic, 1912
Bronze
Gift of the estate of Dr. Helen C. Putnam 51.261

A. Stirling Calder, father of sculptor Alexander Calder, studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and at the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris. He later abandoned academic modeling in favor of monolithic sculptures stripped of extraneous details.

Sioux Brave, Our American Stoic refers to the loss of Native American land and culture at a time when sculptural depictions of Native Americans more often symbolized the American continent, its rivers, and its indigenous virtues. The use of the Greek word stoic in the title suggests the virtues of self-control, fortitude, and detachment from distracting emotion—qualities that can equip the individual to find inner peace.

Robert Feke
American, 1708-1751
Portrait of Joseph Whipple, ca. 1746-1749
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph K. Ott in honor of Franklin Robinson
1991.135

This portrait was once believed to depict Rhode Island merchant Joseph Whipple, but the sitter's youthful countenance demonstrates that it is Whipple's son and namesake, who, like his father, was a deputy governor of the colony. Young Whipple stands with one arm extended as if to survey the landscape. The family owned extensive property in Middleton, Rhode Island, and this vista may allude to their status as property holders.

Feke borrowed the pose and setting from European prototypes, which were common sources for portraits of the colonial elite.



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Working primarily in Newport and Boston, Feke was America's first native-born artist of renown.

Sydney Richmond Burleigh, designer
American, 1853-1931
Julia Lippitt Mauran, carver
American, 1860-1949
Potter and Company, cabinetmaker
American, fl. 1878-1910
King Arthur Chest, ca. 1900
Oak with paint and gilding
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.429



This chest in the Arts and Crafts style conveys the movement's philosophy of "art for the people," a progressive mindset embodied by Sydney Richmond Burleigh when he commissioned Julia Lippitt Mauran, a female woodcarver. Featuring characters and imagery from the legend of King Arthur, Mauran's panels reflect the movement's idealization of the medieval period as an era of sincere artisan practice. Both Burleigh and Mauran actively promoted the Arts and Crafts movement in Providence, Burleigh as a founder of the Providence Art Club and Mauran as a charter member of the Providence Handicraft Club. Isaac Bates, whose portrait hangs above, gave this chest to RISD; he was a member of the Providence Art Club and an active supporter of art in the city.

This piece demonstrates the permeability of the boundaries of art, design, and craft. It is a collaboration in the spirit of the Art Workers Guild, with the painter, Burleigh, designing the piece, Mauran carving the panels, and the woodworkers at Potter & Company building it. Burleigh's choice of frame-and-panel construction allowed Potter to construct the chest with blank panels. Oak is not easy to carve, and no doubt Mauran's work represented the most labor-intensive part of the project. It's likely that once she completed the panels, they were returned to Potter, where the chest would have been assembled and finished.

This is a good example of how furniture can express profound ideas—things like love and fidelity, as seen in the legend of Arthur and Guinevere, or the politics of art and labor behind the Arts and Crafts movement—while giving us a place to put our stuff.

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John Dunnigan, furniture designer and maker and RISD professor
(Furniture Design)

Frank Weston Benson
American, 1862-1951
Portrait of Isaac C. Bates, Esq., 1906
Oil on canvas
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.910

Isaac Comstock Bates owned a successful pork-packing firm whose sugar-cured hams, kettle-rendered lard, and premium bacon were widely distributed and enjoyed “a high repute in the market,” according to one 1889 account.

A member of the Providence Art Club, Bates supported local artists but his collecting interests also extended from American and European paintings, prints, and drawings to Asian ceramics, textiles, metalwork, and stencils. At the time of his death, he was president of the Rhode Island School of Design. Gifts made during his lifetime and through a massive bequest in 1913 added more than 2500 works of art to the Museum’s collection.



William Morris Hunt
American, 1824-1879
Portrait of Ellen M. Brown (Mrs. Ellen Berry), 1874
Oil on canvas
Bequest of Mrs. Ellen M. Berry 77.034

A talented amateur musician, Ellen Brown of Providence was 18 years old when she posed for Hunt. As in this portrait of Miss Brown, Hunt’s practice was to compose the figure with broad masses of light and dark, then refine details with thin washes of color and highlights of thick impasto. The preeminent American painter and teacher had social connections in Boston and Rhode Island and conducted a summer art school in Newport. Hunt received his artistic training in Paris and later promoted the work of French realist painters, applying their techniques to his American subjects.



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Frederic Remington
American, 1861-1909
The Mountain Man, 1903
Bronze
Lent by Andrew O. Ott EL024.82

Nostalgia for the disappearing American West fueled the success of Frederic Remington, whose bronze sculptures became sought-after reminders of the daring of American expansion. Cast in the lost-wax process at Roman Bronze Works in New York, *The Mountain Man* captures an Iroquois trapper as he descends a perilous slope, trusting his packhorse to negotiate the path. Remington lavished attention on the trapper's clothing, equipment, and steed and modeled a rocky terrain for the attached base. The combination of realism and romance appealed to Remington's collectors and guaranteed the popularity of his frontier subjects.

The Mountain Man began with a wax original delivered to foundry artisans who created a mold from a flexible material. Molten wax was poured into that mold, creating a hollow wax duplicate. Remington corrected this new model and added fine details—notice the precise wax-working on the moccasins.

The finished wax model, fitted with a “plumbing system” of sprues and vents, was “invested” in a mold made of plaster, sand, and fire clay, then baked several days. Wax evacuated, the mold was removed from the kiln and placed in a sand pit, where molten bronze was poured into the cavity. Finally, the cooled bronze sculpture was removed from the investment mold, the sprues and vents were trimmed, and an artisan gave it a final chasing and patina.

Dean Snyder, sculptor and RISD professor (Sculpture)

Howard McLean
American, 1879 - 1952
Evening Promenade, 1912
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Stambler 1991.118

In this depiction of ordinary New Yorkers gathering at a ferry slip on a summer evening, McLean includes dapper men in straw boaters, young women with parasols, and children awaiting the return of a working parent. Waterfront landing slips for ferries carrying passengers between Manhattan and Brooklyn, Staten Island, and New Jersey attracted both commuters and strollers seeking cool breezes.



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Such scenes of docks, urban tenements, street fairs, excavations, and saloons appealed to a group of early 20th-century painters dubbed the Ashcan School. They employed bold brushstrokes and brilliant, saturated color to convey the vitality of the city and its dwellers.

Frank Weston Benson
American, 1862-1951
Summer, 1909
Oil on canvas
Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.912

Frank Benson taught at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and gave occasional studio critiques at RISD. That work and income from private commissions permitted him to acquire vacation property on North Haven Island, Maine, where he photographed and made sketches of his daughters and their friends in preparation for this painting of a perfect summer day. Benson used these studies to capture poses, then referenced and combined them as he created the finished work in his studio. His models present an optimistic view of contemporary young womanhood—relaxed, confident, and looking to the future.

Benson's *Summer* is incomplete without its frame, impeccably crafted by the Boston firm Foster Brothers to complement the painting. I am attracted to this frame for its brilliant luminosity. To achieve such a dazzling surface, tissue-thin sheets of gold leaf were carefully laid over wood that had been carved, sanded, sealed with rabbit-skin glue, and painted with gesso and reddish clay before it was sized with adhesive. Even today this surface glows, as gold leaf retains its luster indefinitely. Festooned with a chainwork of fruit, foliage, and flowers, the frame also redoubles the painting's inherent theme of fertility.

Isabella McCormick, RISD (Painting) / Brown BA student, 2015



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Attributed to James Martin
English, 1778 - 1853; active America, ca 1795-1820
Portrait of a Gentleman, ca. 1820
Pastel on paper
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 2000.81

While the identity of this gentleman is unknown, the work's history and date suggest he may have resided in New York, where African Americans and men of French-Haitian descent were established merchants, theater owners, and clergy in the early 19th century. Set against a background of breaking light, the subject is dressed in a double-breasted blue coat with gleaming gold buttons, the conventional attire in gentlemen's portraits of this period. His distinguished appearance is individualized by the delicate tones of his complexion and silver hair, and by the exceptional attention given to his gentle features and gaze.



Gilbert Stuart
American, 1755-1828
Portrait of George Washington, ca. 1805
Oil on panel
Public Subscription Fund 22.220

Rhode Island native Gilbert Stuart painted several distinct portraits of George Washington from life. An unfinished head now known as the Athenaeum type, painted in Philadelphia in 1796, served as his prototype for numerous bust-length portraits of Washington that Stuart made in his Boston studio over the next 30 years. Stuart painted RISD's variant for former Massachusetts senator Jonathan Mason. In it, he softened and rounded Washington's face, simplified the black bow at the end of his queue, or braid, and loosely rendered his coat and shirt ruffle. In 1922, the Museum solicited public contributions to purchase the portrait from Mason's descendants.



William Sidney Mount
American, 1807-1868
Portrait of Hannah Muncy Smith, 1852
Oil on canvas
Gift of Dr. William M. Muncy 70.100

Widow Hannah Muncy Smith owned land in Penataquit, Long Island, where Mount painted her stoic likeness during the summer of 1852. He also completed a posthumous portrait of her only grandchild, but charged less for Hannah's, preferring living models. Mount wrote that for Hannah's portrait, he drew the "old lady . . . aged 73" in india ink, then "glazed the cap with cobalt and the background and dress, with black and burnt sienna mixed . . . to kill or subdue the white ground



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so that I could see the head (the effect) better . . . I scumbled pure white and touched parts I wished to leave transparent—the portrait successful in color and likeness.”

American

Portrait of Charles Leonard Pendleton, ca. 1861

Ambrotype with hand tinting

Gift of Fred Stewart Greene 04.1466

In 1904, Charles L. Pendleton made the extraordinary decision to bequeath his entire collection of 18th and 19th-century American and English furniture, glass, ceramics, rugs, and metalwork to the Rhode Island School of Design Museum. Two years later, the RISD Museum opened this country’s first museum wing dedicated to the display of American decorative arts. Known as Pendleton House, its architecture is based on Pendleton’s 1799 Georgian residence, still standing nearby at 72 Waterman Street.



Not only was Pendleton’s gift visionary, he was sought by many for his expertise and credited with inspiring generations of collectors and benefactors. This exhibition features many works from his collection.

William Bradford

American, 1823-1892

Arctic Sunset, 1874

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mrs. George H. Davenport 18.192

A New Bedford native and practicing Quaker, Bradford sought evidence of God’s role in nature and strove to record “every dash of color which the great Painter in his benevolence vouchsafed to us.” In the summer of 1869 he made his second trip to the northeastern Canadian coast, accompanied by photographers equipped with large-format cameras and glass-plate negatives. Freezing temperatures prohibited painting out-of-doors, but Bradford made color notations, snugly dressed in “the sealskin suits of the Eskimeaux.” The photographic images were instrumental in creating *Arctic Sunset*, as they captured natural phenomena such as light glancing off huge expanses of ice.



Arctic Sunset takes the viewer to the end of the earth and the edge of a magical gold and orange low-lying sunset, existing apart from the frenzy of human activities and the Civil War that raged during the

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several years that separated Bradford's expeditions. White ice mountains and icebergs reflect and refract the light. A beauty this impossible requires a dispassionate photographic eye. Traveling with two photographers, John L. Dunmore and George Critcherson, Bradford relied on their images to create something akin to the images of the moon circulated by NASA 95 years later. The seal and the ship offer a reference to size and a reminder that humans are visitors in this extreme land.

Sandor Bodo, photographer and journalist

Sanford Robinson Gifford
American, 1823-1881
Lake Geneva, 1875
Oil on canvas
Anonymous gift 56.166



Gifford attended Brown University before he moved to New York in 1845 to study painting. He became celebrated for luminous landscapes, which included Hudson River Valley views as well as scenes from his travels abroad.

While visiting Switzerland in 1868 he sketched the Castle of Chillon on Lake Geneva (Lac Léman), a romantic destination for 19th-century travelers. Panoramic photographs that had recently become available to tourists also served as resources for his paintings of the site. Gifford appropriated their horizontal format to capture the radiant expanse of the lake and distant peaks, unifying both sky and water in a rosy atmospheric glow.

The restoration of this frame was made possible by a generous gift from Eli Wilner & Company, New York.

Martin Johnson Heade
American, 1819-1904
Brazilian Forest, 1864
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. C. Richard Steedman 68.052



The lure of science and exotic climates diverted Heade from New England to South America in the 1860s. Sponsored by Emperor Dom Pedro II, he made annotated studies of the flora and fauna he encountered while traveling in Brazil. "From Forest Studies in South America—Tree Fern," inscribed on the back of this painting, identifies the enormous fronds in the lower right corner. Tiny figures suggest the vast scale and density of the jungle environment.

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Heade completed Brazilian Forest in a London studio, then sold it to Governor Henry Lippitt of Rhode Island after his return.