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Being and Believing in the Natural World: Perspectives from the Ancient Mediterranean, Asia, and Indigenous North America, Oct 22, 2022 - 05/07/2023

Human relationships with the natural world are explored across these ancient Mediterranean, Asian, and Indigenous North American objects. Rather than searching for similarities across cultures, this exhibition embraces the layers of meaning that emerge in bringing these different perceptions together. Dating from 2000 BCE to the present day, many of these objects could be presented within multiple contexts. Grouped as they are, they consider how diverse makers interacted with the natural world and suggest points of departure for thinking about our own narratives today.

Across the exhibition labels, different terminology describes the makers and their affiliations. "Artist once known" is used for Indigenous North American art and "unidentified maker(s)" for objects from Asia and the ancient Mediterranean. Specific geographical locations of origin are included when known, as are cultural designations. The infor- mation for each object is formatted to reflect current leading practices in the study of ancient, Asian, and Indigenous North American art.

Gina Borromeo (GB), former chief curator and curator of ancient art
Wai Yee Chiong (WC), associate curator of Asian art
Sháńdíín Brown (SB), Henry Luce Curatorial Fellow for Native American Art

RISD Museum is supported by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and with the generous partnership of the Rhode Island School of Design, its Board of Trustees, and Museum Governors.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Sacred & Divine

Across Asia and the ancient Mediterranean, people have imbued the natural world with sacred powers. Many Asian peoples consider mountains and rivers divine and believe that deities occupy gardens filled with lush greenery and mythical animals. Some gods and spirits take the form of animals or are evident in the destructive powers of the elements. Believing that natural forces give and also take, humans have always sought to appease these powers through rituals and other offerings.

Out of respect for tribal communities, a conscious decision was made to exclude Indigenous North American objects from this section.

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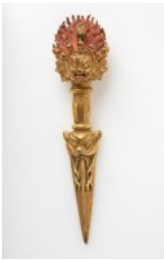
Unidentified maker(s)
Amitābha Buddha, 1609
China (Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644; Wanli Era, 1572–1620)
Ink, color, and gold on silk
Museum Appropriation Fund 18.093

Seated on a grand throne, the Amitābha Buddha gazes contemplatively at viewers. Embellished with vivid colors, this dynamic image was designed to inspire awe, enveloping devotees in radiance and light. Commissioned by the empress dowager Cisheng (1545–1614) of China, this image works within a set of paintings made for a ritual that unites celestial and terrestrial beings. This rite, known as the Water-Land Retreat, is still held by some Buddhists today as a celebratory event or to appease evil spirits. Even divorced from its original context, this painting evokes a special aura, inviting viewers to visualize themselves as part of a space shared with the divine.

—WC

Unidentified maker(s)
Vishnu with His Consorts, ca. 1600s
India (Kerala)
Wood and color pigments
Museum purchase: gift of the Museum Associates 85.199

Unidentified maker(s)
***Phurba* Dagger with Head of Hayagriva**, 1800s
Tibet (Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911)
Gilded copper alloy with pigment
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.41



Unidentified maker(s)
Necklace with Garuda and Attendants, 1800s
Nepal
Gilt silver, lapis lazuli, rock crystal, tinted glass, mother-of-pearl, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, mica, and aquamarine
Gift of Marshall H. Gould 46.082

The Hindu god Vishnu takes on different forms to maintain order in the world, often accompanied by divine animals. Here an elaborate carving of Shesha, a seven-headed serpent, frames Vishnu, singing praises from

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his many mouths. For Hindus, serpents protect and nourish the underground realms.

The necklace in the case below features a blue- winged hybrid figure of the mythical Garuda bird and Vishnu adorned with jewels. The half-man and half-bird motif, popular for amulets, protects the wearer from illnesses connected with water and serpents. The ritual dagger features Hayagriva, a wrathful horse-headed being who can destroy demons. Hayagriva is one of Vishnu's avatars.

—WC

Katsushika Hokusai **葛飾北斎**
1760–1849; b. in Edo, Japan; lived and worked in Japan
The Amida Falls on the Kiso Road (**木曾路ノ奥阿弥陀ヶ瀧** Kisoji no oku amida ga taki)
From the series *A Tour of the Waterfalls in Various Provinces* (**諸国滝廻り** Shokoku taki meguri), ca. 1831–1832
Edo Period (1615–1868)
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1221

Katsushika Hokusai **葛飾北斎**
1760–1849; b. in Edo, Japan; lived and worked in Japan
Rōben Falls at Mt. Ōyama in Sagami Province (**相州大山ろうべんの滝** Sōshū Rōben no taki)
From the series *A Tour of the Waterfalls in Various Provinces* (**諸国滝廻り** Shokoku taki meguri), ca. 1831–1832
Edo Period (1615–1868)
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1220

For the Japanese people, *kami* (spirits and deities) inhabit the natural world, and waterfalls are revered for their power to cleanse and purify. These prints depict two sacred waterfalls on the Japanese archipelago—the Amida Falls (left), named for the Amida Buddha after a monk achieved enlightenment at the site, and Rōben Falls (right), a popular site for purification rituals. Hokusai framed the source of the Amida Falls within a circle, imbuing it with a sense of mystique. He depicts pilgrims cleansing themselves at Rōben Falls before they proceed to a nearby temple or shrine.

—WC

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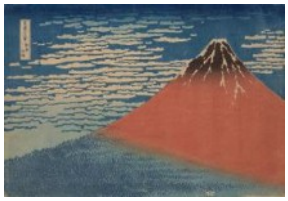
Katsushika Hokusai **葛飾北斎**
1760–1849; b. in Edo, Japan; lived and worked in Japan
Fine Wind, Clear Weather (**凱風快晴** Gaifū kaisei)
From the series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* (**富嶽三十六景** Fugaku sanjūrokkei), ca. 1829–1833
Edo Period, 1615–1868
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1185



Katsushika Hokusai **葛飾北斎**
1760–1849; b. in Edo, Japan; lived and worked in Japan
Mountain Climbers (**諸人登山** Shojin tozan)
From the series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* (**富嶽三十六景** Fugaku sanjūrokkei), ca. 1829–1833
Edo Period, 1615–1868
Polychrome woodblock print
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 20.1187

In many Asian belief systems, natural elements such as mountains, rivers, wind, and water are considered sacred, and thought to be inhabited and personified by deities. These prints depict Mount Fuji, considered the holiest mountain in the Japan and long central to Buddhist and Indigenous Japanese beliefs and to cults dedicated to mountain worship. Pilgrims scale Mount Fuji to worship and pay homage, as shown at right. Wearing straw hats and aided by walking sticks, they trudge up the steep slope, stopping at grottoes to pray.

—WC

Inoue Yasuji **井上安治**(Tankei)
1864–1889; b. in Edo, Japan; lived and worked in Japan
The Volcanic Eruption of Mount Bandai **(磐梯山噴火の圖 Bandaisan funka no zu)**, 1888
Meiji Era, 1868–1912
Polychrome woodblock prints
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund **2021.79.1**

Whole villages are uprooted and humans and animals tossed in the air in the wake of Mount Bandai's eruption, shown on the far right of this triptych. In Japan, volcanic mountains were both revered and feared, and Mount Bandai and Mount Fuji (below) were no exceptions. Shrines

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housing mountain deities still serve as worship destinations for pilgrims today. **—WC**	
Unidentified maker(s) **Griffin**, 14–37 CE Roman (Villa at Fondo Bottaro) (Imperial Period, 27 BCE–393 CE) Tempera on plaster Museum Appropriation Fund 38.058.17	
Unidentified maker(s) **Box in the Shape of a Hintha Bird**, ca. 1900–1960 Myanmar Wood, gold-leaf, metal, glass, mirrors, and lacquer Gift of Doris Duke's Southeast Asian Art Collection 2004.12.3	
Phineus Painter (Greek [Chalcidian], active 530–510 BCE) **Wine Jug (*Oinochoe*) with Sphinx**, ca. 520 BCE Greek (Archaic Period, 700–480 BCE) Terracotta; black-figure Museum Appropriation Fund 30.082	
Unidentified maker(s) **Ewer with Sphinx**, ca. 1000–1100 Anatolia (Seljuk Empire, 1037–1194) Earthenware with glaze Gift of Mr. Robert Lehman 49.137	

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Unidentified maker(s)
Sea Horse Roof Tile, 1368–1644
China (Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644)
Earthenware with glaze
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 13.007

Unidentified maker(s)
Jade Bowl with Human-Fish Figures, 1736–1795
China (Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911; Qianlong Era, 1735–1796)
Jade (jadeite)
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.67

Powerful mythical creatures are found across geographies and religious beliefs. Many of these figures are guardians, and some are associated with wisdom. The griffin in this Roman fresco combines two fearsome animals, the lion and the eagle, making it a strong protector and a guardian of treasures.

In the case below are other fantastic creatures.
- the hintha, a mythical bird in Buddhism, similar to the Hindu hamsa
- a Greek sphinx combining a human, lion, and eagle
- a Turko-Persian sphinx, associated with the sun
- a sea-horse guardian from China
- human-fish figures revered in South and Southeast Asia

—GB | WC

Unidentified maker(s)
Gathering of Immortals, early 1800s
China (Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911)
Ink on silk with metallic-wrapped yarn and tapestry weave
Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.232

Amidst lush gardens and flowing streams, immortal beings and deities gather to welcome the Queen Mother of the West, seen descending from the upper left on a phoenix. Likely a fantastical depiction of Mount Kunlun, a sacred mountain for Daoist practitioners, this elaborately painted and embroidered landscape represents an after- life paradise. Auspicious symbols abound, including peaches of immortality and pines of longevity, promising devotees a blissful eternal existence.

-WC

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Unidentified maker(s)
Daoist Priest's Robe (*Jiangyi*), 1800s
China (Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911)
Silk, metallic yarn, tapestry weave
Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.242

Unidentified maker(s)
Shirt with Yantra Designs, mid 1900s
Myanmar or Northern Thailand (Shan State)
Ink and color on silk plain weave
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2002.11.7A

In many parts of Asia, garments worn for rituals often include depictions of natural elements considered sacred and divine. Worn by high-ranking Daoist priests during formal rituals, *jiangyi* are usually adorned with auspicious designs. This example is covered with cranes and mythical animals.

People of the Shan State in Myanmar and Northern Thailand use *yantras*, or geometric diagrams with animal designs and inscriptions, to ward off evil spirits. *Yantras* are commonly painted on textiles, as seen on this undershirt, or tattooed on the body.

—WC

Unidentified maker(s)
Dionysus, ca. 20–50 CE
Roman (Imperial Period, 27 BCE–393 CE)
Marble
Museum Appropriation Fund 20.039

Worshipped by ancient Greeks and Romans, Dionysus (Bacchus to the Romans) was intimately connected with nature. The cultivator and protector of grapevines and trees, he was the god of wine and the giver of joy, and thus linked to merriment and feasting. He could also bring grief and sorrow, perhaps caused by too much wine. Dionysus was the god of theater, and invoked in performances and celebrations. He was also a god of the under- world. Depicted in various ways to reflect his multiple roles, he was often sculpted as a youthful male with long flowing hair and a slight build, as in this fragment.

-GB

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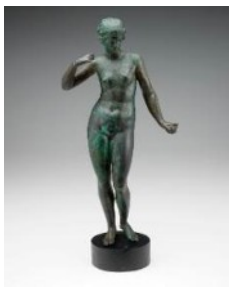
Unidentified maker(s)
Satyr, 324–337 CE
Roman (Daphne, Syria) (Imperial Period, 27 BCE–393 CE)
Limestone tesserae
Acquired by exchange from Worcester Art Museum 40.196

Prosperous homes near the ancient Roman city of Antioch (now Antakya, Turkey) were often decorated with images of the wine god Dionysus and his followers. This satyr, a mythical woodland companion of Dionysus, was once part of the floor in an opulent villa in a suburb of Antioch. The satyr wears a wreath of green spiky leaves and holds a crooked stick used for hunting hares. By greeting guests to the villa and inviting them to enjoy life's pleasures, images like this one contributed to an atmosphere of wine-drinking merriment.

-GB

Unidentified maker(s)
Oil Flask (Lekythos), 390–300 BCE
Greek (Attica)
Terracotta; red-figure
Museum Appropriation and Special Gift Funds 25.085

Unidentified maker(s)
Aphrodite, 199–100 BCE
Greek (Hellenistic Period, 323–31 BCE)
Bronze
Museum Appropriation and Special Gift Funds 26.117



According to Greek myth, Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, rose from the sea. As she walked along the coast, flowers grew under her feet. The personification of nature's creative power, she was the mother of all living beings, protecting those who worshipped her. Many depictions of Aphrodite survive from ancient Greece and Rome, where they adorned homes, gardens, and sanctuaries. Wealthy patrons may have installed this bronze in a garden shrine. The oil flask may have been used for liquid offerings. On it, Aphrodite rides a chariot drawn by swans.

—GB

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Unidentified maker(s)
Horse, 750–700 BCE
Greek (Geometric Period, 900–700 BCE)
Bronze
Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth 54.132

Unidentified maker(s)
Bird, ca. 700 BCE
Greek (Geometric Period, 900–700 BCE)
Bronze
Museum Works of Art Fund 54.198

Unidentified maker(s)
Bull, 100–200 CE
Roman (Imperial Period, 27 BCE–393 CE)
Bronze
Gift of Mrs. Gustave Radeke 09.005

Across the ancient Greek and Roman world, worshippers visited temples and shrines to make requests to the gods and give thanks for their fulfillment. Offerings came in many forms: prayers, hymns, incense, liquids including wine or olive oil, animal sacrifices, or votive figures like these. Small bronze or terracotta figures of animals pleased certain gods or substituted for animal sacrifices.

—GB

Unidentified maker(s)
Fortuna, 1–199 CE
Roman (Imperial Period, 27 BCE–393 CE)
Bronze
Museum purchase: gift of Ambassador J. W. Middendorf II and Frances Middendorf and Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2021.17

Originally a fertility deity, the Roman goddess Fortuna gradually assumed the characteristics of Tyche, the Greek goddess of luck. Both goddesses could bestow good fortune as easily as harsh punishment, and their unpredictability made mortals fear them.

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The Romans made many offerings to Fortuna, some in the form of small figures such as this one. The cornucopia in her left hand suggests agricultural fertility and abundance, and her right hand may have held a bowl for liquid offerings. Similar figures were found in several household shrines in Pompeii's ruins. **—GB**	
Unidentified maker(s) **Mirror Cover**, 750–700 BCE Roman (Imperial Period, 27 BCE–393 CE) Bronze with gilding Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry D. Sharpe 26.272 This mirror cover depicts three Erotes—winged figures associated with love and sex—sacrificing a lamb at an outdoor shrine. On a high pedestal behind the altar is a statue of a nude male god. Religious rituals like the one shown here were enacted countless times at shrines throughout the Roman world, ensuring continued blessings from the gods. **—GB**	
Unidentified maker(s) **Drinking Cup (*Kylix*)**, 530–520 BCE Greek (Attica) (Archaic Period, 700–480 BCE) Terracotta; black-figure Museum Works of Art Fund 63.048 Pothos Painter (Greek [Attic], active 420–390 BCE) **Mixing Bowl (Krater)**, 420 BCE Greek (Attica) (Classical Period, 480–343 BCE) Terracotta; red-figure Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 23.324	 

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Unidentified maker(s)
Drinking Cup (Rhyton), after 350 BCE
Greek (now Taranto, Italy)
Terracotta; red-figure
Museum Appropriation Fund 26.166

The large central vessel, used for mixing water with wine, is decorated with companions of the wine god, Dionysus. Maenads were women who roamed the forests, singing and dancing in a happy frenzy. Fertility spirits of the countryside, satyrs were depicted as men with donkey ears and horse tails.

Dionysus was worshipped as a bull in the Greek colonies of southern Italy, where the cup at right was made. The larger cup refers to Dionysus as god of wine and theater. In use, it becomes a mask: Dionysus's large eyes become the drinker's, the handles morph into ears, and the base turns into an open mouth. Inside is Medusa, a monster capable of turning people to stone, perhaps warning against overindulgence.

Unidentified maker(s)
Mixing Bowl (Krater), 520–510 BCE
Greek (Archaic Period, 700–480 BCE)
Terracotta; black-figure
Museum Appropriation Fund 29.140

The Greek hero Herakles (known to Romans as Hercules) became a god after completing his Twelve Labors. Here he is about to step onto a horse-drawn chariot. Before him stand the goddess of wisdom and war, Athena; the wine god, Dionysus; and the sun god, Apollo. They welcome Herakles to their home, Mount Olympus.

No literal reference to the mountain—beyond the presence of the gods—was necessary to suggest this sacred place.

—GB

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Materials

Objects made of a range of natural materials are presented here. Whether created for elite patrons or common people, these works acquired meaning through the materials from which they were made. They reflect great technical skill and deep understanding of resources mined from the earth and harvested from plants and animals.

They also demonstrate how makers further elevate dazzling gemstones and metals, luminescent shells, and colorful feathers to create treasured items.

Assiniboine artist once known
Eagle-Feather Headdress, ca. 1900
Eagle feathers, chicken feathers, ribbon, sequins, glass beads, felt, leather, and horsehair
Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Gift of Paul Lee 91-151
TL103.2022

Historically, a warrior from a Plains tribe would earn the privilege of wearing an eagle-feather headdress by demonstrating his bravery in battle. Since the forced relocations and cultural suppressions of the reservation era, high-ranking Plains men have worn eagle-feather headdresses for ceremonial events or community occasions. This short flaring-style Assiniboine headdress is made from immature golden-eagle feathers with attached horsehair and pink-dyed chicken feathers. For many Native American tribes, golden eagles and other eagle species are understood as sacred, and their feathers are used for religious and cultural purposes.

—SB

Tlingit artist once known
Frontlet (*Shakee.at*), late 1800s
Wood, abalone shell, and pigment
Museum Works of Art Fund 44.154

Iridescent blue, green, and pink abalone shells shine on this Tlingit frontlet, or headdress, made in the late 1800s. The flesh of abalone, a marine snail, can be eaten fresh or dry, and its shell is a resource for adornment. Tlingit makers working from their homelands in southeast Alaska traded goods for abalone shells from northern California. This inlaid frontlet depicts the Thunderbird and Killer Whale.

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In the traditional stories of Tlingit and other Northwest Coast tribes, the mythical Thunderbird preys on whales during storms. Frontlets are worn for Tlingit memorial potlatch feasts and public dance celebrations. **—SB**	
Diné (Navajo) artist once known **Necklace**, ca. 1930s Silver and turquoise Anonymous gift 55.050	
Diné (Navajo) artist once known **Ring**, before 1913 Diné (Navajo) Silver and turquoise Bequest of Isaac C. Bates 13.647	
Diné (Navajo) artist once known **Earrings**, before 1916 Diné (Navajo) Turquoise, coral, and cotton string Gift of Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf 16.065	
Diné (Navajo) artist once known **Bracelet**, before 1967 Bequest of Martha B. Lisle 67.170	
Unidentified maker(s) **Lion-Head Earrings**, late 300s–early 200s BCE Greek (Hellenistic Period, 323–31 BCE) Gold Gift of Ostby & Barton in memory of Englehardt Cornelius Ostby 19.121	

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Unidentified maker(s)
Bead Necklace, 200–100 BCE
Greek (Syria) (Hellenistic Period, 323–31 BCE)
Glass
Gift of Manton B. Metcalf 14.457

Unidentified maker(s)
Cosmetic Dish, 1307–1070 BCE
Egyptian (New Kingdom, 1550–1070 BCE)
Calcite (also known as Egyptian alabaster)
Bequest of Lyra Brown Nickerson 16.205

Unidentified maker(s)
Duck, 1800s
China (Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911)
Malachite
Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr. 1989.110.73

Unidentified maker(s)
***Bi* Disc**, 206 BCE–221 CE
China (Han Dynasty, 206 BCE–221 CE)
Jade (nephrite)
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 16.132

Unidentified maker(s)
Knife Blade, 206 BCE–221 CE
China (Han Dynasty, 206 BCE–221 CE)
Jade (nephrite)
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 16.135

Skillfully worked jade objects, such as the knife and disc in the case at left, have been found in elite tombs in China. Thousands of years ago, they likely held ceremonial meaning. Vibrant stones like malachite, said to capture the luminosity of the sun and moon, were also treasured in China.

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Ancient Greeks loved gold jewelry, often incorporating plant and animal motifs in their designs. They also transformed readily available materials into glass beads for necklaces. Since ancient times, Indigenous people in what is now the Southwest US have mined turquoise. Diné people believe turquoise provides spiritual protection. **—WC | GB | SB**	
Unidentified Mandaya maker(s) **Woman's Jacket**, 1800s Philippines (Mindanao) Abaca fiber, bast fiber, mother-of-pearl disks, metal sequins; plain weave with embroidery and appliqué Gift of Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf 15.235 In the Philippines, mother-of-pearl is used widely to decorate textiles. Indigenous Mandaya makers, known for weaving abaca-fiber textiles, added mother-of-pearl discs to the neckline and hem of this jacket, which glitters in the light. Made from pearl-oyster shells, mother-of-pearl is known for its strength, making it well-suited for ornamentation. **—WC**	
Santee Sioux artist once known **Woman's Dress**, late 1800s–early 1900s Wool plain weave with silk ribbon, sequin, and shell appliqué Museum Works of Art Fund 44.592 Dresses like this one, sewn from tradecloth and embellished with ribbons and a dentalium seashell cape, were particularly popular among Plains women and girls in the late 1800s. Found along the west coast of Canada and the US, dentalium, or tusk shells, were attained by Plains tribes through trade networks. Indigenous people use these shells in making garments, hair ornaments, necklaces, and earrings. **-SB**	

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Shoshone artist once known
Roach (Headdress), before 1919
Deer hair and porcupine hair
Gift of Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf 19.101

Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) artist once known
Box, before 1944
Birchbark, porcupine quills, thread, and plant fiber
Museum Works of Art Fund 44.594

Some Native American men wear roach headdresses as part of their regalia. Originating in Eastern tribes, roaches were eventually adopted by Western tribes, including the Shoshone. This example is made from synthetically dyed deer and porcupine hair. Deer and porcupine are hunted for food, and their hair is used by tribal makers.

Following traditional knowledge, Indigenous makers can harvest materials in sustainable ways—including gathering porcupine quills without hurting the animal. This Anishinaabe artist used materials from their homelands in the Great Lakes region of Canada and the US. The design on the lid is porcupine quillwork, an art form the Anishinaabe are known for.

—SB

Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne) artist once known
Gloves, before 1943
Leather, porcupine quills, and glass beads
Museum Works of Art Fund 43.109

Ute artist once known
Tipi Bag, late 1800s
Cotton, leather, glass beads, horsehair, and tin cones
Gift of Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf 19.099

Tipi bags were used by some Plains Native American tribes to transport belongings between camps. This bag is adorned with glass beadwork, tin

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cones, and horsehair. Horses are culturally important for many tribes, and continue to be essential in hunting and ranching. Horsehair is often used for adornment. These gauntlet-style gloves are decorated with porcupine quills and glass beads. Leather gloves with extended cuffs were worn by men in the US military and adopted by Plains, Plateau, and Great Basin Native Americans. Many tribes practice quillwork. This Cheyenne artist quilled a floral design, perhaps inspired by the plants that surrounded them. **—SB**	
Great Plains artist once known **Beaded Bag**, before 1957 Leather and glass beads Gift of Mrs. Howard Day 57.045	
Dakota artist once known **Bag**, ca. 1872–1875 Wool and glass beads Gift of Scott Anderson in memory of Susan Hay 2021.90.3	
Eastern Woodland and Great Lakes artist once known **Pair of Moccasins**, late 1800s Felt, leather, and glass beads Gift of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities 60.034.48	
Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) artist once known **Glengarry Cap**, 1800s Cotton, silk, and beads Gift of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities 59.095.29	

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Inunaina (Arapaho) artist once known
Awl Case, ca. 1900
Leather with bead and feather embellishment
Gift of Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf 19.102

These bags and the shoes and hat on the other side of the case were beaded in diverse styles by artists from different Native American tribes. When Europeans came to North America, they introduced glass beads to Native American communities through trade, and beadwork soon evolved into a core cultural art medium. These colorful designs reflect aspects of the natural world, including flowers, leaves, and animals.

—SB

Pomo artist once known
Basket, early 1900s
Willow, sedge root, dyed bulrush or fern root, California Quail topknot feathers; three-rod coiled
Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 31.152

Unidentified maker(s)
Wedding Headdress (*Dianzi*), ca. 1850–1900
China (Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911)
Silver and copper alloy with gilding, kingfisher feathers, jadeite, imitation pearls, semiprecious stones; frame: metal wires with black and green silk floss and black satin
Gift of Marshall H. Gould 44.048.1

Pomo people traditionally hunted quail for sustenance in their homelands of northern California, often weaving their feathers into their tightly woven baskets. Adorned with beadwork, quillwork, tin cones, and dyed chicken feathers, the Inunaina case at right stored an awl, a pointed tool used for making clothing and moccasins. Indigenous people of North America have used wild bird feathers for adornment for thousands of years. Since chickens were introduced to tribal communities as food, their feathers have also been utilized.

Across centuries, the Chinese have prized kingfisher feathers for their brilliant colors, using them to embellish hairpins, earrings, and

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headdresses (at left) for aristocratic women. The demand for the iridescent feathers however, led to a great depletion of these birds.

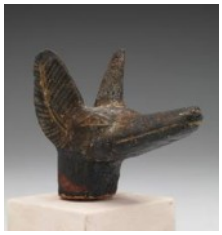
-SB/WC

The Realm of the Afterlife

This section explores how people in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome used motifs from the natural world to adorn objects that accompanied them to their graves. Some objects were used in life while others were created specifically for the dead. Many were likely found in tombs and their presence in museums today raises ethical questions.

Without the objects' archaeological contexts, we are left with only a partial understanding of their original meanings. Most of these works were created for wealthy patrons by skilled makers with access to the finest materials, additionally narrowing our understanding of ancient beliefs.
Out of respect for tribal communities, a conscious decision was made to exclude Indigenous North American objects from this section.

Unidentified maker(s)
Head of Anubis, 946 BCE–393 CE
Egyptian (Third Intermediate to Roman Period, 1070 BCE–393 CE)
Wood, gesso, and paint
Anonymous gift 22.129



Unidentified maker(s)
Amulet of a Ram-Headed Deity, 304–30 BCE
Egyptian (Ptolemaic Period, 332–30 BCE)
Egyptian faience
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 11.078

Unidentified maker(s)
Shabti, 945–525 BCE
Egyptian (Third Intermediate to Late Period, 1070–332 BCE)
Egyptian faience
Anonymous gift 22.131

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Unidentified maker(s)
Hippopotamus, 2030–1640 BCE
Egyptian (Middle Kingdom, 2030–1640 BCE)
Egyptian faience
Museum Appropriation Fund 29.119

Anubis protected and guided the dead. This wooden head was part of a larger statuette guarding a shrine or coffin.

A glass-like material associated with rebirth, Egyptian faience was often used to make grave goods, such as this hippo. Hippos were associated with the Nile River, considered the source of all life.

Amulets provided protection; they were worn during life and sewn into the mummy wrappings of the deceased. Shabtis were figures placed in tombs to perform labor in the afterlife. If the deceased is called upon to sow or irrigate the land, a shabti will answer, "Here I am" and do the work for them.

—GB

Reed Painter (Greek [Attic], active 420–400 BCE)
Oil Flask (Lekythos), 420–400 BCE Greek (Classical Period, 480–323 BCE)
Terracotta; white-ground
Museum Appropriation Fund 25.082

Unidentified maker(s)
Bowl (Dinos), 490–470 BCE
Campanian
Bronze
Museum Appropriation Fund 30.017

The flask depicts Charon, ferryman of the dead. He prepares to transport the soul of the woman standing on the bank of the river Styx. To pay Charon's fare, a coin would be placed in a corpse's mouth. *Lekythoi* filled with olive oil were popular gifts for the dead, and many were buried in tombs.

Pegasus, a winged horse, was the bearer of thunder and lightning for the Greek god Zeus. In a funerary context, the horses flying around this bronze vessel might be transporting the dead to the realm of the gods. Terracotta or hammered bronze *dinoi* sometimes held the ashes of the deceased.

—GB

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Unidentified maker(s)
Lidded Box (Pyxis), ca. 760 BCE
Greek (Attica) (Geometric Period, 900–700 BCE)
Terracotta; black-figure
Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth 37.022

The Concentric Circle Group (Greek [Attic], active 750–720 BCE)
Wine Jug (*Oinochoe*), 735–720 BCE
Greek (Attica) (Geometric Period, 900–700 BCE)
Terracotta
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2002.46

In ancient Greece, the rituals and objects of death and burial provided a final opportunity to display wealth, class identity, and familial pride. Luxury items such as the wine jug (*oinochoe*) and the lidded box (*pyxis*) and were particularly appropriate grave gifts.

Wealthy women used *pyxides* to store cosmetics or jewelry, while *oinochoai* were used during the symposium, a social activity attended by aristocratic men. Horses figure prominently in both vessels.

They signify wealth, as only landowners could afford them. The water birds on the wine jug suggest drinking as well as death, as the dead were believed to be thirsty.

—GB

Unidentified maker(s)
Fragments from a Funerary Altar, ca. 50 CE
Roman (Imperial Period, 27BCE–393 CE)
Marble
Museum Appropriation Fund 26.157

These marble reliefs once formed the sides of a funerary altar, the front and back of which are now missing. In the fragment on the left, the tree and the bow and quiver hanging from it all relate to the sun god, Apollo. The evergreen laurel tree symbolizes eternal life, while Apollo himself was associated with resurrection. The fragment at right depicts a snake wrapped around a *cista mystica* basket linked to the mystery cult of the god Dionysus. The snake, which regularly sheds its skin and grows a new one, is also a symbol of the renewal of life.

-GB

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Living with the Natural World

This section explores how people appreciated the beauty of the natural world and incorporated it into their daily lives. From realistic depictionstoabstractedforms,themotifsacrossthesetextile designs, ceramic forms and patterns, coins, and baskets reflect the vast knowledge and understanding different cultures had of their environment. We invite you to consider how the practice of incorporating natural motifs continues today.

Hopi artist once known
Basketry Plaque, late 1800s
Rabbitbrush, sumac, or willow; yucca; and pigment; wicker-plaited
Museum Works of Art Fund 44.582

Narragansett artist once known
Splint Basket, 1800s
Wood splint and pigment
Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Rudolf F. Haffenreffer Collection
1/1422 **TL115.2022.1**

A:shiwi (Pueblo of Zuni) artist once known
Olla, ca. 1825
Earthenware with slip decoration
Gift of Mrs. Thomas Hunt 43.407

The Narragansett and other New England tribes weave baskets from ash and oak trees for everyday use and the commercial market. The flowerlike stamped designs on the example at center are common across the region.

Sa'lakwmana, cloud spirit and bringer of rain, is depicted on this plaque woven from plants in the Hopi homelands in Arizona. Hopi gardener Susan Sekaquaptewa explains that the relationship with plants "is reciprocal. We offer gratitude for what they give us, and we pray for the rains and the sun that nourish them."

Water also is precious in the Zuni homelands of western New Mexico. Pottery ollas like this one (right) were made to collect, store, and carry water.

-SB

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Haida artist once known
Ladle, before 1944
Mountain-goat horn and copper
Museum Works of Art Fund 44.333

Yurok artist once known
Cap, early 1900s
Hazel stick and conifer root with bear grass, woodwardia fern (dyed in alder juice), and maidenhair fern
Gift of Edward B. Aldrich D18.054

Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast eat mountain goats, weave goat wool, and carve goat horns into ladles used for practical and ceremonial uses. This ladle's handle depicts Raven, a powerful trickster figure in Northwest Coast traditions.

While we don't know the name of this Yurok cap's maker, we can appreciate their ecological and traditional knowledge and creative skill in gathering, dyeing, and weaving these natural materials.

We can also imagine the proud girl who would have worn the cap in a ceremony.

—SB | Cecilia Ammon, Mellon Curatorial Intern in Native American Art

Tlingit artist once known
Chilkat Robe, late 1800s
Cedar bark, fur, mountain-goat hair
Gift of Mrs. Kenneth F. Wood 43.228

This robe, likely made for a child, depicts a diving whale with a human face in the center of its body. Tlingit people wear robes like this one in civic or ceremonial events, the long fringe swaying when the wearer dances.

-SB

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Pikuni Blackfeet (Piegan) artist once known **Parfleche**, 1800s Scraped hide and pigment Museum Works of Art Fund 43.099 A highly skilled woman scraped and painted an animal hide to create this colorful Pikuni envelope-shaped bag, or parfleche. Today, parfleches are made by both men and women. **-SB**	
Unidentified maker(s) **Tetradrachm**, ca. 304–189 BCE Greek (Rhodes) Silver Museum Appropriation Fund 40.015.29 **Didrachm**, late 500s–early 400s BCE Greek (Metapontum) Silver Museum Appropriation Fund 40.015.74 **Didrachm**, 483–472 BCE Greek (Himera) Silver Museum Appropriation Fund 40.015.131 **Didrachm**, ca. 510–490 BCE Greek (Eretria) Silver Museum Appropriation Fund 40.015.185	

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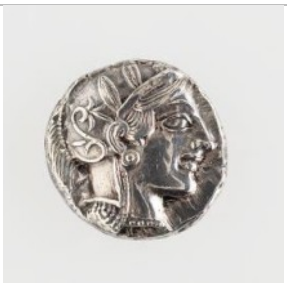
Tetradrachm, after ca. 460 BCE
Greek (Athens)
Silver
Museum Appropriation Fund 40.015.186



Tetradrachm, ca. 387–295 BCE
Greek (Ephesus [now Turkey])
Silver
Museum Appropriation Fund 40.015.237

Utilitarian objects showed their makers' careful observation of the natural world around them. Images of plants and animals abound on coins and household vessels.

—GB

Unidentified maker(s)
Bowl (Phiale), 600–500 BCE
Greek (Corinth) (Archaic Period, 700–480 BCE)
Terracotta; black-figure
Museum Appropriation Fund 25.091

Unidentified maker(s)
Panther Devouring Prey, 100–200 CE
Roman (Imperial Period, 27 BCE–393 CE)
Bronze
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 14.021

Unidentified maker(s)
Fish Plate, 360–320 BCE
Greek (South Italy)
Terracotta; red-figure
Lent by the family of Sidney Greenwald TL18.2017

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Unidentified maker(s)
Hand Holding a Dove, 300–200 BCE
Etruscan
Terracotta
Gift of Dr. Armand Versaci 1986.165

Unidentified maker(s)
Boar Oil Container (*Askos*), 325–275 BCE
Greek (South Italy) (Hellenistic Period, 323–31 BCE)
Terracotta
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 1996.98

Utilitarian objects showed their makers' careful observation of the natural world around them. Images of plants and animals abound on coins and household vessels.

—GB

Unidentified maker(s)
Storage Jar (Amphora), 550–525 BCE
Greek (Archaic Period, 700–480 BCE)
Terracotta; black-figure
Museum Appropriation and Special Gift Funds 25.083

Demeter and Persephone flank Triptolemus, who rides a chariot and holds wheat spears and a scepter. Demeter, the goddess of the harvest and agriculture, taught Triptolemus the art of agriculture so that he could show the Greeks how to plant and reap crops.

—GB

Unidentified maker(s)
Wall Tile with Roses, 1800s
Persia (now Iran) (Qajar Dynasty, 1789–1925)
Earthenware with pigment and glaze
Anonymous gift 2019.24.9

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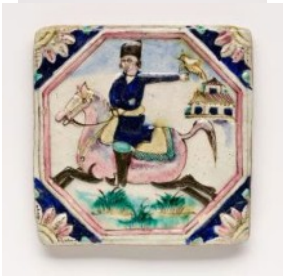
Unidentified maker(s)
Eight-Pointed Star Wall Tile, 1300s
Persia (now Iran) (Ilkhanid Period, 1256–1353)
Fritware with glaze and pigment
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 24.029

Unidentified maker(s)
Wall Tile with Tulips and Hyacinths, 1600s
Damascus, Syria (Ottoman Empire, 1299–1922)
Ceramic with underglaze painted pigments and overglaze
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 14.037

Unidentified maker(s)
Wall Tile with Gazelle, 1300s Persia (now Iran) (Ilkhanid Period, 1256–1353) Earthenware with pigment and glaze
Gift of Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf 17.366

Unidentified maker(s)
Wall Tile with Horse and Rider, 1700s
Persia (now Iran) (Qajar Dynasty, 1789–1925)
Earthenware with pigment and glaze
Anonymous gift 2019.24.10



For thousands of years, makers have ornamented architecture with motifs from the natural world. Tile design really flourished in what is now Syria and Iran beginning in the 1100s. Wall tiles arranged to form colorful patterns decorated the interiors and exteriors of religious buildings and wealthy households. Drawing from hunting scenes with spotted gazelles to tulips, hyacinths, and roses, tile designers created dazzling patterns. Copper-based turquoise, cobalt blue, manganese violet, antimony yellow, and other minerals provided colorful palettes.

—WC

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Unidentified maker(s)
***Selendang* (Shoulder Cloth)**, late 1800s–early 1900s
Indonesia (Java)
Silk with wax-resist pattern
Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.488

Unidentified maker(s)
***Selendang* (Shoulder Cloth),** late 1800s–early 1900s
Indonesia (Java)
Silk with wax-resist pattern
Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.489

Batik wax-resist techniques were used to produce the flowers and fantastic birds and beasts on these Javanese shoulder cloths. Some designs were drawn, while others were stamped onto the fabric.

Traditionally, batik textiles were reserved for the imperial family and ceremonial occasions, but today they are widely worn.

-WC

Unidentified maker(s)
***Chogha* (Man's Coat),** 1800s
India (Mughal Empire, 1526–1858)
Wool with gold- and silver-thread embroidery
Bequest of Miss Lucy T. Aldrich 55.262

Covered with gold and silver embroidery, this coat bears witness to the splendor and luxury of the Indian courts in the 1800s. Floral and vegetal designs, manifested here in scrolling vines and blossoms, were commonly used in textiles, indicating the importance of the natural world as inspiration.

-WC

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Ka'igwu (Kiowa) artist once known
Cradleboard, ca. 1900
Wood, leather, beads, and brass tacks
Museum Works of Art Fund 44.610

Throughout North America, Indigenous people make baby carriers. Note the wooden boards in this Kiowa example. In *Manual* 16, Kiowa maker Vanessa Paukeigope Jennings explains the first step in harvesting Osage orange wood for a cradleboard:

You don't just take that tree, but that's the one you talk to. And you tell him your purpose: "I'm here because there's a little Kiowa coming along that Milky Way road, and we want to prepare a cradle for him." And so you offer tobacco and you pray, and then you lay that tobacco down under that tree.

—SB

Contemporary Asian Art Inspired by Nature

The natural world remains a fundamental muse for artists. Whether drawing from literature or personal memories or experimenting with complex materials, these works speak to how some contemporary Asian artists have sought to capture the essence of the natural world.
This section also explores how tradition, training, and cultural identity factor into discourses of nature.

Krishna Reddy
1925–2018; b. in Andhra Pradesh, India; lived and worked in India, Europe, and the US
Plants, 1965
Color viscosity intaglio
Museum Works of Art Fund 69.046

Krishna Reddy expressed his reverence for natural forms in this print's dense explosion of colors and textures. Using a technique he invented for pulling multicolored prints from a single plate, he trans- formed the plants that inspired him into complex, vivid abstractions.

—WC

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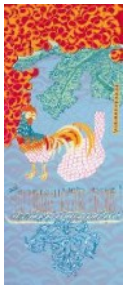
Jungil Hong 홍정일
(RISD BFA 1999, Ceramics; MFA 2015, Textiles)
b. 1976 in Seoul, South Korea; lives and works in Providence
***Baby Leg Meat Leg* (아기다리고기다리, Agi dari kogi dari)**, 2002
Color screenprint on paper
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan 2002.62.12



"A chicken wearing underwear out on a date . . . persimmon trees . . . grandma's stories of the Korean war . . . Chinese medicine boxes . . . ceramic urns." In a conversation, artist Jungil Hong listed the "collection of thoughts" depicted in this colorful, playful print, which represents childhood memories and explores her Korean background.

The title, *Baby Leg Meat Leg*, is a phrase Hong remembers from her childhood that means something closer to "I have been waiting and waiting." She transforms images from the past into birds and vegetal patterns injected with humor, inviting our contemplation.

—WC

Yutaka Sone **曽根裕**
b. 1965 in Shizuoka, Japan; lives and works in Japan
African Landscape, 2006
Acrylic on canvas, elephant figurines, various stones, wooden saw horses and plank
Gift of the Anita Reiner Estate 2020.24

Elephant figurines made from different materials roam across Yutaka Sone's mixed-media interpretation of an African landscape. Drawing from his own immersions in nature, Sone constructs pieces that invite contemplation. Pebbles and stones complement this fabricated landscape, raising questions about the built world versus the natural word and what is "real."

—WC

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Kondō Takahiro **近藤高弘**
b. 1958 in Kyoto, Japan; lives and works in Japan
Blue Mist Objet, 2004
Porcelain with blue underglaze and silver-mist (gintekisai) overglaze
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2005.51

Minjung Kim 김민정
b. 1962 in Gwangju, South Korea; lives and works in South Korea, France, Italy, and the US
Mountain, 2019
Ink on mulberry *hanji* paper
Museum purchase: A grant from Trustee Emeritus Dr. Se-Ung Lee P 91 via the Korea Foundation 2021.78

Stone monoliths in Scotland inspired these stacked ceramic forms at left. On the surface, tiny droplets resembling dew reflect the artist's fascination with water. Kondō Takahiro achieved this effect by applying metallic paint to the glaze before firing.

Explaining that she "wanted to draw the sound of the waves," Minjung Kim brushed different dilutions of ink onto *hanji* paper made from mulberry bark.
The resulting painting reminds the artist of the soft rolling hills of South Korea, where she was born.

—WC

Matsubara Naoko **松原直子**
b. 1937 in Shikoku, Japan; lives and works in Canada
Solitude
From the portfolio *Solitude*, 1971
Woodcut on *hōsho* paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Ames 2001.91.1

Matsubara Naoko **松原直子**
b. 1937 in Shikoku, Japan; lives and works in Canada
Drop of Life
From the portfolio *Solitude*, 1971
Woodcuts on *hōsho* paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Ames 2001.91.11

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These expressive woodcut illustrations articulate the serenity central to the 1854 book *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau's idealized account of life on Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. More than a century later, Matsubara was also inspired by New England's natural beauty. Here a willow tree merges with its own reflection, emphasizing a sense of isolation, while hands reaching for peapods highlight fleeting moments of abundance. Vigorous lines energize these illustrations, giving them life. **—WC**	
Kurita Kōichirō **栗田紘一郎** b. 1943 in Manchuria; lives and works in Japan ***Weeping Beech V, Southold Long Island, NY***, 2008 Platinum print on gampi paper Mary B. Jackson Fund 2013.25 Like Matsubara Naoko, whose woodcuts are at left, Kurita Kōichirō was moved by the spiritual experience of nature described in Henry David Thoreau's book *Walden*. Each photo in this image translates Kurita's own experience of various details of a woodland landscape on Long Island. Considering the environmental impact of cutting down a tree to make paper versus sustainably harvesting its bark, Kurita deliberately chose to print this work on handmade *gampi* paper, made from mulberry bark. **—WC**	
Cao Quantang **曹全堂** b. 1957 in Shaanxi, China; lives and works in China ***Bumper Harvest of Wheat in the Mountainous Region***, 1978 Tempera on paper Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain 82.281.2 This painting's brilliant colors evoke a particularly happy harvest scene. Cao Quantang's work comes out of the Chinese tradition of peasant painters—amateurs first trained in the 1950s to create propagandistic art for the Chinese government. Cao and others sought to capture the beauty of the countryside in highly political works promoting the government's message of peaceful prosperity. **—WC**	

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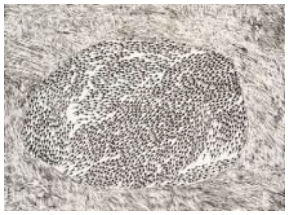
Xu Bing **徐冰**
b. 1955 in Chongqing, China; lives and works in China
Life Pond, from *Five Series of Repetitions*, 1986
Woodcut on paper
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2005.56



Tadpoles are the focus of this monochromatic woodcut, part of a series that also addresses the process of printmaking. Over ten works, the print- maker begins by printing an uncarved woodblock in black ink and ends by carving the entirety of the block. This account of nothing progressing to something and back to nothing also evokes the cycle of life.

—WC

Sakurai Yasuko **櫻井靖子**
b. 1969 in Kyoto, Japan; lives and works in Japan
Flower, 2006
Porcelain
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2007.2

Sakurai Yasuko's unglazed porcelain bowl recalls a blossoming flower. By carving into mold-casted porcelain tubes, the artist created a form that casts surprising shadows.

—WC

Kwon Sang-Oh **権相五**
b. in Busan, South Korea; lives and works in South Korea
Stone, 2000
Lacquer, hemp cloth, clay, paper, rice paste
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2002.47

Made to represent the solidity of rock, this vessel is surprisingly light. It was constructed using a method pioneered by Kwon, a laborious process of layering lacquer on rice paper and hemp cloth.

—WC

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Nishihata Tadashi **西端正**
b. 1948 in Hyogo, Japan; lives and works in Japan
Bowl, ca. 2000
Stoneware with glaze
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2000.35

"I strive to evoke flowing water, mountain ridges or forests of trees while always bearing in mind which shapes will bring out the allure of the clay itself."
—Nishihata Tadashi

This vessel's textured surface evokes tree bark, and its color recalls fall foliage. To reproduce the reddish glaze, Nishihata experimented more than 30 years and revived a long-lost tradition. The potter has explored a range of natural materials, including ashes from different woods and rice stalks.

—WC

Contemporary Indigenous North American Art Inspired by Nature

Many Indigenous North American people hold deep ancestral connections to their homelands and the plants and animals that live there, providing them with artistic inspiration both historically and today. Each of these contemporary Indigenous works tells its own unique narrative.

Melanie Yazzie
Diné (Navajo), b. 1966
Silent Symbols, 1999
Lithograph
Gift of Nancy Friese 1998.62.1

Melanie Yazzie
Diné (Navajo), b. 1966
Twins—Are Not Really Ever the Same, 1997
Monotype
Gift of Nancy Friese in honor of Roger and Gayle Mandle 2008.93.1

Following the Diné dictum "walk in beauty," Melanie Yazzie draws inspiration from personal experiences. The monotype at right is about "growing up on the Navajo Nation. Being with our sheep herd and sheepdogs on the land has always brought such good feelings to me. . . . I spent much time listening to the fly flying by, the wind, the sheep grazing. All teaching me to absorb that quiet moment." *Silent Symbols*, she says, is about "a dream I had about

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traveling to New Zealand. I dreamt that a giant sea turtle saved me from an airplane crash. it took me to the surface where a Native person lifted me to land." **—SB**	
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith Salish/Cree/Shoshone, b. 1940 ***Sticky Mouth***, 1997 Color lithograph on paperMary B. Jackson Fund 2014.9.3 When she was a child, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith carried around pictures of animals that her father had drawn for her. *Sticky Mouth*, the literal translation of the Blackfeet word for bear, incorporates petroglyphs, animals, plants, human figures, and color. The fusion of these elements animates this work. Smith's cultural and cosmic perception of being(s) in and of nature is imbued with spiritual power and significance. **—Larissa Nez** (Brown MA 2022, Public Humanities)	
Wakeah Jhane Comanche/Blackfeet/Kiowa B. Yellowtail, manufacturer ***Matriarch Silk Scarf***, 2020 Silk plain weave; digitally printed Gift of Kate Irvin 2021.124.2 On this silk scarf, Wakeah Jhane depicts five Native American women surrounded by colorful floral designs. Some of their garments also feature floral designs, a common element in clothing made by Native American women. As her title suggests, Jhane is paying homage to matriarchs, or female leaders. Women are especially revered in many Native American societies, as they create and sustain life. Note the baby in the cradleboard and the toddler holding her mother's hand. This work was manufactured by the woman-owned Native American fashion brand B. Yellowtail. **—SB**	

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Melissa Cody
Diné (Navajo), b. 1983
Only Love Can Break Your Heart (Dust), 2013
Wool and aniline dyes
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2022.43

Fourth-generation master weaver Melissa Cody was taught by her mother beginning at the age of five. Historically, Diné weavers collected wool from their sheep and dyed it with plants harvested in Dinétah (Navajo homelands). Like some other contemporary Diné weavers, Cody works in the Germantown style, characterized by vibrant aniline dyes. Note how the bright red colors in this piece create mountain designs.

Cody is inspired by many sources, including music. This textile references Neil Young's 1970 single "Only Love Can Break Your Heart."

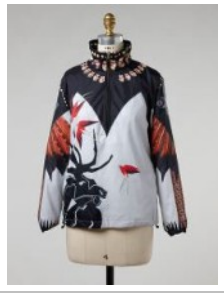
—SB

Pitseolak Ashoona
Inuit, ca. 1904–1983
Caribou Hunt, 1964
Stonecut with stencil on rice paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James A. Houston 77.148.3

Pitseolak Ashoona is celebrated for her scenes of the "old life" in Qikiqtaaluk (Baffin Island), where she lived in the traditional Inuit way. She combined expressive linework and joy with *Qaujimajatuqangit*— an Inuktitut phrase for "things we have always known, things crucial to survival"—to transmit traditional knowledge during a time of rapid change in the 20th century.

—Cecilia Ammon, Mellon Curatorial Intern in Native American Art

Jamie Okuma
Luiseño / Shoshone-Bannock, b. 1977
Windbreaker, Spring/Summer 2021
Polyester; digitally printed
Gift of Kate Irvin 2021.124.4



Native American makers highly respect and value their sources of adornment, traditionally using organic elements such as feathers and shells

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to decorate regalia. Designer Jamie Okuma recontextualizes these traditions through digital printing on contemporary garments. This windbreaker features printed elk teeth on the collar and feathers and dentalium shells on the sleeves. An elk and three birds decorate the front of the jacket, paying homage to animals that typically provide ornamental materials. **—SB**	
Dawn M. Spears Narragansett/Choctaw, b. 1965 **Cornhusk Doll**, 2013 Corn husks, yarn, fabric, leather, glass beads, and ribbon Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Museum Purchase 2013-8-1ED TL115.2022.2 Dawn M. Spears Narragansett/Choctaw, b. 1965 **Cornhusk Doll**, 2013 Corn husks, yarn, fabric, leather, glass beads, and ribbon Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Museum Purchase 2013-8-2 TL115.2022.3 Dawn M. Spears Narragansett/Choctaw, b. 1965 **Cornhusk Doll**, 2014 Corn husks, yarn, fabric, leather, glass beads, and ribbon Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Museum Purchase 2013-8-3 TL115.2022.4 Dawn M. Spears Narragansett/Choctaw, b. 1965 **Cornhusk Doll**, 2014 Corn husks, yarn, fabric, leather, glass beads, and ribbon Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Museum Purchase 2013-8-4 TL115.2022.5 Corn is a culturally important food for many Native American tribes, and the husks can be used to make dolls. Cornhusk dolls are a traditional Narragansett art form, but local artist and farmer Dawn Spears was especially inspired by her upbringing in Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) homelands in Upstate New York. On her Rhode Island farm today, Spears grows Narragansett Flint corn as both a medicine and as a food in her Three Sisters garden. The doll outfits	

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Spears creates represent contemporary Native American regalia. She explains, “As you’re forming the head and slowly building the body, . . . you are making a connection with the doll. It grows from there and you keep building.” **-SB**	
Elizabeth James-Perry Aquinnah Wampanoag, b. 1973 ***Star Scape Wampum Belt***, 2021 Quahog-shell wampum tubular beads on hand-spun, naturally dyed milkweed-plant cordage warps Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 2021.43.1 Elizabeth James-Perry Aquinnah Wampanoag, b. 1973 ***Thunderbird over Red Earth*** **(Patterned twined soft-fiber basket or bag)**, 2021 Soft-fiber basket made of hand-spun, hemp yarn dyed with mordanted madder root, logwood, and Osage orange Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 2021.43.2 Elizabeth James-Perry’s multidisciplinary work includes wampum shell and Northeast twined textiles. Hailing from Noepe (Martha’s Vineyard), she learned her artistry from her mother and cousins. About these works, she writes: Shells and plant fibers are local and sustainable, likewise natural dyes from nuts, barks, and roots. Gathering wild materials is a pleasant way to travel throughout Wampanoag tribal homelands in modern-day eastern Massachusetts and eastern Rhode Island. [These two works] represent many thousands of years of Native traditional ecological knowledge . . . . they are both ancient and young in that sense. **—SB**