

## Sources of Strength – AAG Sharing Session

A tip offered in a previous review: *Photograph* artwork labels for a quick complete record of their contents.

Access MIA flickr images for this set and all others at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/minneapolisinstituteofarts/collections/72157616792245193/>

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

#### **Honor Shirt** (G261)

- *Teaching the Arts* feature: <http://new.artsmia.org/teaching-the-arts/shirt/>
- The recipient is rewarded for his actions –and the honor of wearing the shirt provides positive motivation for maintaining such good behavior. The creation and giving of the shirt and the honoree’s model behavior reinforce one another.
- Use bead prop to emphasize the artists’ work

#### **Friendship Blanket** (G261) <http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/140440/1/friendship-blanket>

- Friendship as SOS
- good piece for “look >turn away from>report what you saw”
- Design = 2 rows of tiny beads outlining 2 pairs of red silk hands. Are hands important to us? High 5, wave hello, handshake, hands in the air, vehicle for making, fingerprint as identity.
- Traditionally given to friends at ceremonies. Drapes around shoulders.
- Do we see any evidence that this blanket was used?
- Like shirt, uses wool, beads and silk - but in different proportions
- Would you consider this a good gift? Why/why not?

Gallery 256 offers both

Fijian wooden **Neckrest**, <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=5680>

Low wooden **chief’s stool**, <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=33830>, from the Cook Islands. Have kids sit flat on the floor, while you kneel, to emphasize how the stool is tall enough to differentiate between a chief and his subjects.

#### **Headrest** (G254) <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=5976>

Similar in size and material to the Chowke stool, but utilized like the *Tiger Pillow*.

#### **Mami Wata** (G250) <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=111879>

- “Mother Water” intrigues many kids
- Can change shape, physically and spiritually strong, but without the Guardian Figures’ muscles.
- Learn more at sites such as <http://africa.si.edu/exhibits/mamiwata/intro.html>.

***Senufo mask*** (G250) <http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/77445/2/mask>

- Terrifically menacing composite (kids can id antelope, crocodile, rhino ears, warthog tusks).
- Little pigment remains, would be worn with a full-body outfit.
- Guests enjoy learning that it employs fire and is meant to scare away malevolent spirits.
- <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1979.206.71>

***Fantasy Coffin*** (G250) <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=111088>

MPG Object File exists

- Similarities to stool: wood, symbol of status, connection between living and deceased.
- Focus on it as a celebration of the deceased's life or way to show respect/individuality
- What kind of creature are we looking at?
- What might this be used for?
- Very high interest

The display of **African blades** between galleries 236 and 250 is impressive.

- These were made as “*non-functional*, symbolic emblems of male power and authority.” Many great details emerge - take a long look at the embellishments.
- How'd it feel to hold one of these?
- What about them tells you they're for display rather than combat?

***White Tigers*** (G252)

Impressive size. Great depiction of 2 tigers. Related to the Japanese Zodiac, which describes people born under this sign as, “sensitive, stubborn, short-tempered, courageous, selfish and slightly mean ... yet they are deep thinkers and are capable of great sympathy for those they are close to and love.”

**Boys Kimonos**

General information on kimonos: <http://new.artsmia.org/teaching-the-arts/japanese-kimono/ever-changing-styles/>

***Boy's Kimono (falcon motif)*** (G252) <http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/28512/boy-s-kimono>

The training of predatory birds for hunting and sport has a long tradition in Japan. In the Edo period (1600-1868), master falconers (*takajo*) were accorded special rank within the samurai hierarchy. This boy's costume is decorated with falcons as a fitting emblem of male strength and focused determination.

***Boy's Kimono (carp motif)*** (G252) <http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/25721/boy-s-kimono>

Label discusses the Iris Festival as an occasion when men, and later boys, displayed their fighting skills. For such events, boys would wear kimonos patterned with symbols of masculine strength and determination, such as carp struggling against a river current.

### **Japanese Samurai Armor**

- *Teaching the Arts* feature: <http://new.artsmia.org/teaching-the-arts/japanese-samurai-armor/>
- MPG Object File exists for this artwork.
- See also MPG object file “Armor Session Notes” from Kathleen Steiger’s armor-related sub ideas and info.

### **Tiger Emerging from Bamboo** (G221) <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=45653>

Tigers as a subject for painting became popular among Japanese artists as early as the 15th century when Chinese examples were brought to Japan. Within Zen monasteries, they became symbols of the earthbound spirit and were often paired with images of dragons, emblems of the soaring enlightened spirit. Among Japan's military elite, they were symbols of power, and artists often painted them among thick trunks of bamboo, a plant admired for its strength and resiliency. Tigers aren't native to Japan. Without the subject to observe, it's challenging to depict them realistically.

### **Amida Buddha** (G220) <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=2537>

MPG Object File exists

- What you'd find *inside* a temple guarded by guardians such as ours
- Epitome of calm, a model for followers
- id. Buddha's attributes (long ears, ushnisha, urna, and mudra -right hand disperses fear, left-hand is open in gesture of giving or wish granting)
- Sits in lotus position on lotus flower (grows up from fetid muck into white purity)
- Joined woodblock technique
- Was at one time covered in gold leaf (lacquer underneath like the guardians), shine light into inlaid crystal eyes

### **Wisdom King of Awe-inspiring Power** (G220)

<https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=116725>

- Consider the name of this object – perhaps *before* you see it.
- Helps one overcome worldly passions
- Is decidedly not of this world. There's ample evidence of this and his power (multiple faces, arms, legs, weapons, fire)
- Realistically sculpted, esp. bull.
- Comes in multiple pieces. Do you see where something could be missing?

### **Guardian Figures** (G205)

See MIA feature at [http://artsmia.org/world-myths/viewallart/nio\\_keyideas.html](http://artsmia.org/world-myths/viewallart/nio_keyideas.html)

Most guides encourage several or all students to assume the guardian's poses.

### **Sunburst** (G100)

*Teaching the Arts* feature: <http://new.artsmia.org/teaching-the-arts/everything-under-the-sun/>

### **Tiger Pillow** (G204)

*Teaching the Arts* feature: <http://new.artsmia.org/teaching-the-arts/tiger-pillow/>

***Buddhist Guardian Mahabala*** (G203) <http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/73441/1/the-buddhist-guardian-mahabala>

- What would make the central figure a good guardian? Ferocious! Multiple heads, arms and weapons, surrounded by fire and astride a bull.
- Why riding a bull? What other animal would be a good vehicle/accompanying animal for a guard?
- This figure is one aspect of the Buddha of Infinite Light (sits above). Do all of us *need* to have a wrathful side?

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

***The Merced River in Yosemite*** (G323) <http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/3451/the-merced-river-in-yosemite>

- If within this painting, what would you see? Smell? Hear? Feel?
- Is it dusk or dawn?
- Relate the intentional draw of people to the West coast (Bierstadt's time) to the contemporary migration of people to North Dakota.
- See his image and many of his works at: <http://www.albertbierstadt.org/biography.html>.
- There is a Mount Bierstadt, in the Rockies, SW of Denver – named after our artist.
- This place continues to inspire! The mountain looks to be El Capitan (easy to find online images, such as Ansel Adams): The first free climb of El Capitan was recently accomplished. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/05/sports/on-el-capitans-dawn-wall-two-climbers-make-slow-progress-toward-a-dream.html>

***Madonna And Child*** (G357) <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=2564>

Easy to compare/contrast with *Migrant Mother*: setting, color, emotion, health of subjects, impact on viewer, strength from mother's love. Symbols are \*

***Christus Consolator*** (357) <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=104894>

- Made for the very purpose of providing people with strength, consolation – through faith.
- Consider the people in the painting. Why might they be looking for help?
- Image of the slave within was used by abolitionists
- Learn about how the work's history, including its relationship w/ Dassel, MN, at <http://new.artsmia.org/press/scheffers-painting-of-christ-the-comforter-discovered-in-a-church-in-rural-minnesota/> and <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/autumn09/new-discoveries-a-reduced-version-of-ary-scheffers-christ-consolator>.

***Theseus Combatting the Minotaur*** (G357) <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=6225>

High drama. Kids loved the opportunity to show off their knowledge of Greek mythology. Works easily with VTS.

***Odd Fellows Lodge Hall Ceremonial Objects*** (Just off the Connecticut Room, see image at document's end)

- Benefit of cooperation with others who have different skills. Strength of belonging to a group.
- Great symbols to discuss!

**Portrait of James Ward (G324)** <http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/20/1/portrait-of-james-ward>  
Sweet reminder of our relationships with pets. Note boy's name on dog's collar!

**Antoine-Laurent de Lavoisier (G354)** <http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/24026/1/antoine-laurent-de-lavoisier-1743-1794>

- An opportunity to consider intellectual or scholarly strength.
- What does this portrait tell us about its subject?
- Who are today's great thinkers? What might their sculptures contain?

**Saint-Séverin (G371)** <http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/1308/1/saint-s-verin>

- Notice how what you see changes as you walk from the painting's left to right.
- Good transition to this piece: "Our next artwork has a secret!" (Eiffel tower on back)

**Poet with Birds (G377)** MPG Object File exists <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=1427>  
<http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/6468/1/the-poet-with-the-birds>

- Works well with VTS
- If within this painting, what would you see? Smell? Hear? Feel?
- Importance of having a place to think/rest.
- Artist was expressing his happiness at being free to be/express himself.
- Where do you do your best thinking? Feel most relaxed? Your favorite place in nature?

**Cologne Cathedral (G377)** <http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/2857/14/cologne-cathedral>  
Can see the Delaunay from this lovely painting! Easy compare/contrast.

**The Brown Sisters (2 photographs)** by Nicholas Nixon (G365)  
<https://collections.artsmia.org/index.php?page=detail&id=108785>

- Relate to the prop. photo of Mary's Coin's adult family.
- Is photography (where you're creating the image with a machine) art?

**Strings (G374)** <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=113150>

- Evidence of strength =self-reliance, creating items for oneself
- Importance of help from others - quilting bee, teaching skills from one generation to the next.
- Using discards to create something beautiful and functional

**Some/One (G373)**, <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=115836>

MPG Object File exists

- Recognizable as larger-than-life armor/robe
- Role of individuals (simply explain dog tags as IDs) within the whole
- Can connect the elaborate hairstyles in nearby photographs with tiger pillow/headrests

**Your Dog (G369)** <https://collections.artsmia.org/?page=detail&id=102644>

- Does this remind you of any other works on our tour?
- Why would you/not like this dog's companionship?

