

Minneapolis Institute of Art

Art Adventure

Amazing Animals in Art



Mia

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Thank you for participating in the Minneapolis Institute of Art's popular Art Adventure Program! By volunteering as a Picture Person, you build an important link between the museum and our region's schoolchildren. Membership at the Minneapolis Institute of Art now has a Pay What You Can option. Make a contribution or join for free, and become part of the member community! You'll enjoy access to special exhibitions, discounts, incentives, and insider news and information. If you choose to contribute, you'll be supporting the museum's free general admission every day. Donations also provide valuable resources that go to the museum's exhibitions, lectures, events, and classes offered for young and old alike.

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What are you doing next Family Day?

Family Days at the Minneapolis Institute of Art are free monthly events that highlight the museum's collection and special exhibitions for art lovers of all ages. The second Sunday each month, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., the museum is filled with hands-on art activities, live music, dance performances, artist demonstrations, family tours, and more. All activities are free and appropriate for children of all ages. Visit our website, www.artsmia.org, for specific Family Day dates, themes, and descriptions.

The Art Adventure Program

What's the Art Adventure Program?

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

What's a Picture Person?

Picture People are the volunteers from the community who facilitate discussions of artworks using reproductions in the classrooms. They are the vital link between the original work of art in the museum and children in the schools. Before they visit any classrooms, Picture People come to the museum for a training session on the theme and artworks their school will be using that year. At training they receive printed background material, learn engagement techniques, and—most importantly—experience interacting with the original objects they will soon be introducing to students.

What does the Art Adventure Program do for students?

A recent evaluation of Art Adventure showed that, besides encouraging an interest in art, the program fosters five major critical thinking skills: describe what they see, notice details, understand how the parts form a whole idea or artwork, support interpretations with sufficient reasons, and support opinions or preferences with sound reasons. The skills and experiences students gain through Art Adventure will impact them for the rest of their lives.

Once You're in the Classroom

Relax!

The information provided in this booklet is intended as background material to help you feel confident when sharing the images with children. You are not expected to cover everything. Choose two or three key ideas you think will be compelling for the age group to which you are presenting. Kids love stories—what might you “spin” into a tale? What parallels can you draw with their lives?

Be sure everyone can see you and the reproduction.

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

Set up the students for successful exploration.

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

Begin each discussion with a moment of silent looking.

Begin by introducing the lesson, yourself, and the reproductions. Review with the class what a museum is and what you'll be doing with them. Start by having the students observe the artwork in total silence. You might build the suspense by keeping each image hidden while you explain that you do not want them even to raise their hands until you ask them. Model your expectations by spending the time quietly looking too.

Give students time to talk about what they have observed.

Start with questions like “What’s going on here?” and “What do you see that makes you say that?” Be sure to use your finger to point to the part of the picture the child is talking about. Paraphrase his or her words to clarify the observation for others. You’ll be surprised how quickly students learn to justify their comments with evidence they can see in the picture! “What else can you find?” or introducing and linking historical content can help generate further comments.

Connect your key ideas to the students’ observations.

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

Keep the age of your class in mind.

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

Talk to other Picture People.

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

Talking about Art

These questions encourage close-looking and meaning-making to help students find their own relevance in works of art. Through this process they learn to value art as having something to do with their own lives.

What do you see in this artwork? What else can you find?

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

What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that?

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

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

What would you hear? How would something feel to touch? What path would you take through the picture? What do you see that makes you say that?

What does this artwork remind you of?

What would you use this for? What do you see that makes you say that?

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

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

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

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

How is this work of art like or different from another one you've seen in this set?

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

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

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

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

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

Using Touch-and-Feel Props

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

How should you use props? Without careful planning, props will do little but distract your group. Use these helpful tips to lead successful exploration:

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

Amazing Animals in Art

Art Adventure Program
A program from the
Minneapolis Institute of Art
Revised 2015

GENEROUS SUPPORT FOR ART ADVENTURE PROVIDED BY:

UNITED HEALTH FOUNDATION*

THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS

Amazing Animals in Art

Prop Kit Contents

Work of Art	Prop	Replacement Cost
Nazca, <i>Vessel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Hollow red clay sphere with slip glaze 	\$25
Philip R. Goodwin, <i>A "Bear" Chance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Sample painted canvas 	\$30
China, <i>Horse</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Sample of white clay with glazes ●Photograph of tomb figures 	\$20 \$10
Spain, <i>Gold Lion Statuette</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Sample of gold filigree ●Reproduction of actual lion size ●Images of Lion Fountain/Gold winged ram 	\$20 \$15 \$10
Benin, <i>Leopard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Model of bronze ●Bronze casting process description ●Photograph of Benin court ceremony 	\$50 \$10 \$10
James Jacques-Tissot, <i>On the Thames, a Heron</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Reproduction of another painting by Tissot ●Reproduction of a Japanese woodblock print 	\$10 \$10
Artwork Reproductions (6)		\$50

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

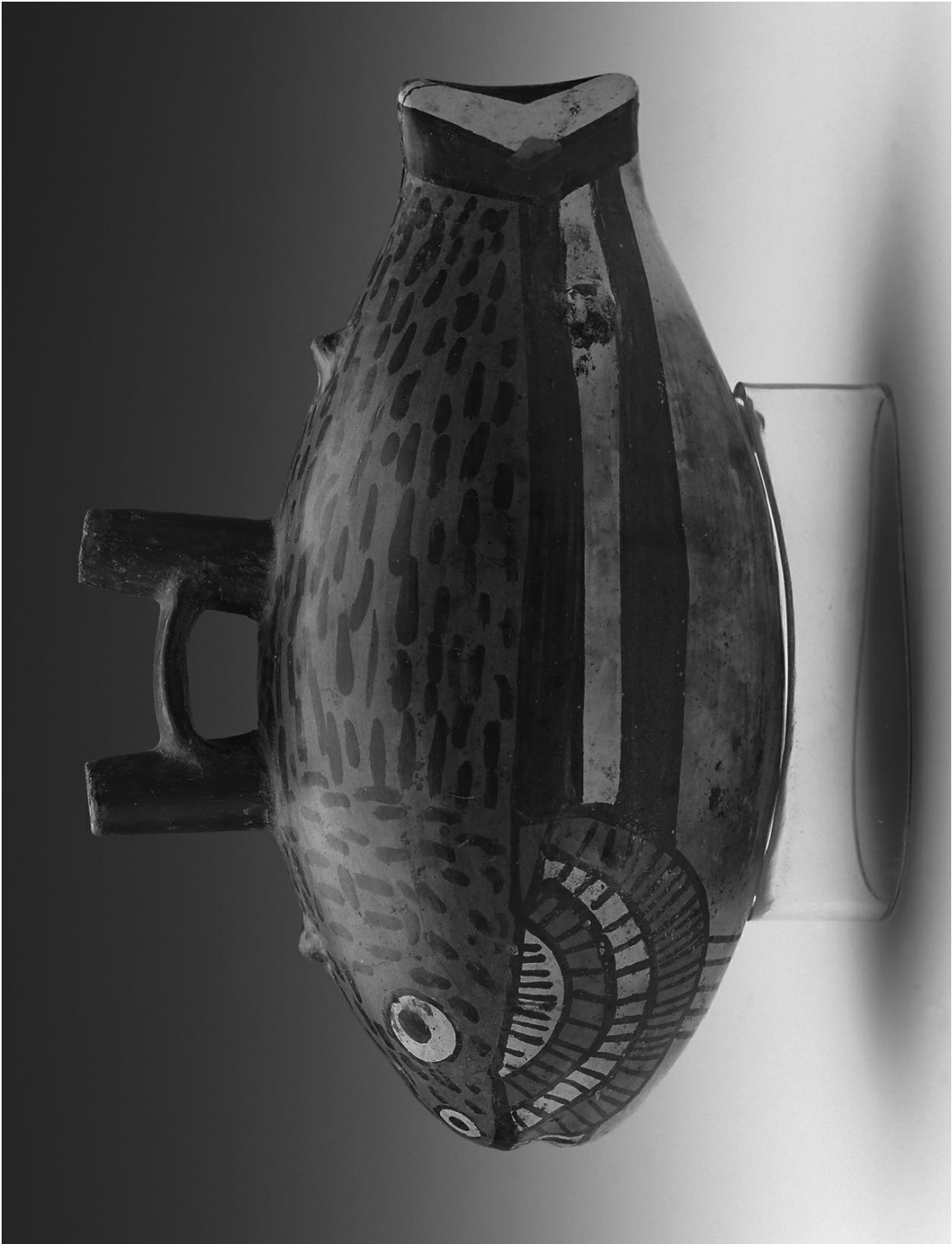
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Introduction

Throughout the ages, animals have been a source of fascination to humans. Whether loyal companions, threatening predators, or Friday dinner, animals with their grace, beauty, and mystery have long inspired artists. The six works of art in this set include images of animals from diverse cultures of the world and several periods in history. The works in this set illustrate the strong and lasting connection between humans and animals.

The set explores the reasons why artists create images of animals, considering religious beliefs, social customs, storytelling, advertising, and personal expression. It also features a broad range of media, providing an opportunity to study techniques used in painting, sculpture, and ceramics. Finally, through the works in this set, students are invited to examine the qualities of animals that have engaged artist's imaginations and techniques throughout history.



Nazca (South America, Peru, Andean region)

Vessel, 100 BCE–600 CE

Ceramic, pigment

H.5³/₈ x W.8¹/₄ x D.4 inches

The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund, 44.3.59

Theme

Since the Nazca (nahz-ka) people did not have a written language, they often used works of art as visual communication. This clay vessel was probably created for religious purposes and reflects the vital importance of fish and nature in the Nazca world-view.

Background

The Nazca civilization flourished in coastal valley region of Peru from about 100 BCE to 600 CE. Since the Nazca people did not have a written language, much of their culture remains a mystery today. However, we do know something about the Nazca because they communicated visually through highly technical and creative textiles and ceramics. These objects offer clues to the everyday life, customs, and beliefs of this culture from long ago.

Peru is situated on the western edge of the continent of South America, bordered by the Pacific Ocean and dominated by the central Andean Mountain chain—the Nazca settled and prospered in the Peruvian coastal river valleys. Although rivers remained dry for months—even years—at a time, towns developed along their banks. The economy of the Nazca towns relied on agriculture, supplemented by the rich fisheries of the coastal waters. The Nazca developed intricate irrigation systems with underground canals to transport and conserve water.

Nazca ceramics commonly reflected their natural environment and way of life—farming and fishing. Common motifs include fish, aquatic birds, and reptiles, as well as fruits and vegetables such as chili peppers, maize (corn), and lima beans. Complex figures appearing in later works combine various characteristics of humans, animals, and birds. The Nazca may have connected these figures to agricultural fertility and water. Because of scarce rainfall in the desert, and their dependence on the ecological balance of the natural environment, the Nazca were intensely concerned with their relationship to nature.

We can see that burial of the dead is important to the Nazca, since tombs have been found containing vast numbers of intricately woven textiles, colorful ceramics, and rich metal work. Many of the numerous tombs discovered in the river valleys were looted over the centuries by people searching for marketable artifacts. Enough, however, have been excavated scientifically by archaeologists to show that the dead, often buried in chambers with adobe-brick walls, were supplied with an array of tomb offerings. Thanks to the arid desert climate, large numbers of these offerings have been well preserved.

Vessel

A Nazca artist probably made this fish-shaped vessel for a tomb. It has a double bridge-spout handle—a distinctive feature of Nazca pottery. While the vessel's specific function is not known, its double spout would ease the pouring of liquids, while the bridge handle would be practical

for tying onto packs carried by animals, or, if it were larger, for hand carrying. Because of the small size of this vessel, however, a practical function seems unlikely.

Renowned for their polychrome (multi-colored) decoration, Nazca ceramics display the greatest color range of all the ancient New World ceramics. This vessel features a variety of colors—orange and red-browns, mauve, white, black, and gray. Using warm earth colors and bold black lines, the artist achieves an effect of both calm and dynamism.

The artist has skillfully combined two- and three-dimensional means to represent a fish. Made with smooth contours and rounded forms, the figure has an inflated, swollen appearance suggesting fertility and abundance. The fins are represented by projections from the back, sides, and lower surface of the fish. Painting on the vessel's surface marks other features and creates a bold linear design. The viewer is engaged by the large round eyes, the smaller circles representing nostrils below them, and the strangely bared teeth, a frightening touch to this seemingly harmless creature.

The short, quick lines repeated on the upper part represent the fish's scales and animate the surface with a lively pattern. The fan-shaped bands radiating from the sides of the mouth represent the gills, emphasizing their essential function. The bold horizontal stripes on the vessel's sides may refer to the distinct designs on certain types of fish, such as the striped bass. The stripes may even represent the lateral line, a organ that runs along a fish's body and detects vibrations. The lines intersect with a V-shaped form on the fish's tail, suggesting the tail's dynamic force in helping the fish to swim and producing a striking decorative effect.

Whatever the significance of these elements to the Nazca culture, it is clear that this artist observed the natural world and drew upon the rich colors, forms, and patterns found in nature. This sculpture expresses the vital spirit of the fish and its importance to the Nazca people—not only as a dietary staple and a source of nourishment, but also as a symbol that was integral to the mythology, religion, ceremonies, and rituals of a community. Although fragile, pottery is a long lasting material and one that proves the existence of ancient cultures.

Technique

Nazca artists created a variety of vessels including spheres, domelike jars, open bowls, cylinders, and figural shapes like this one. The pottery of some ancient cultures of northern Peru emphasized modeling (shaping the clay), and used limited color. The Nazca relied less on modeling, but covered their smooth, delicately curved surfaces with colorful polychrome painting and abstract designs.

This Nazca artist has represented the fish with some degree of naturalism. In the vessel's details, the artist has abstracted, for example, the fins and scales to create a bold design. As in the African *Leopard*, the artist references certain anatomical features; ultimately, the artist uses color, line, and form for expressive purposes, not for anatomical accuracy.

This vessel was shaped using the coil method, an additive process in which long cylinders of clay, formed by rolling between the hands, were coiled in rows to build up the walls of the vessel. The coil marks are not visible because they were carefully smoothed off with damp cloths, scrapers, and stone polishers. Some modeling was used to shape the head, tail, and fin area. The double bridge-spout handle was made in a mold and then joined with the body. The holes in it would have allowed air to escape during the firing process. The vessel was probably

covered with a slip, a thin overall clay wash (thin mixture of clay and water), and then painted with mineral pigments before it was fired.

Artist

The expressive artist who created this fish is unknown. No records of Nazca traditions exist to provide clues to the artist's identity, training, or gender. Nonetheless, the notable artistic achievements of the Nazca culture suggest the existence of craft specialists in the community.

Suggested Questions

1. Describe this fish. What about it looks like a real fish? What do you see that makes you say that? What doesn't? Which traits are shown through the shaping of the clay? Which features are painted on the surface?
2. How do you think this object might have been used? What clues tell you this?
3. Why do you think that fish might be important to the Nazca people? How are fish important to us today?



Philip R. Goodwin, American, 1882–1935

A "Bear" Chance, 1907

Oil on canvas

H.36 x W.26 inches

Gift of The National Biscuit Company, 70.64

Theme

In order to sell cereal, Philip Goodwin depicts a large brown bear in the wilderness chowing down on a crate full of Cream of Wheat cereal.

Background

The late 1800s and the early decades of the 1900s were the golden age of illustration. During this period, books and newspapers were major sources of public entertainment. Illustrated novels were widely read, and newspapers were in every home. Since photography was not yet an alternative for publishers, hand-drawn illustrations provided scenes of American life.

During the early part of the 1900s, the Cream of Wheat Company advertised its cereal in many publications. In one of the most successful campaigns in American advertising, the company asked popular artists to produce paintings for advertisements, which were reproduced in magazines. Among these works was Philip Goodwin's *A "Bear" Chance*, commissioned by the Cream of Wheat Company in 1906 and completed in 1907. The painting graced the office walls of a local company, which donated the painting to the Minneapolis Institute of Art in 1970.

Throughout the history of advertising, animals have been used to promote products with their popular appeal. Many examples come to mind that are widely recognized today: Tony the Tiger, Trix Rabbit, and Smokey Bear.

A "Bear" Chance

In this painting, a large brown bear sits in a clearing of a snowy pine-studded forest, devouring a wooden crate full of Cream of Wheat cereal. Its tracks mark the surrounding snow evidence the bear's footsteps up to the cereal box. The painting sends a clever marketing message by suggesting that the bear was lured from hibernation by the cereal.

To promote a product, Goodwin has created a charming narrative scene as well as a compelling image. American history is filled with tales of bears. Pioneers like Lewis and Clark encountered the grizzly bear in their push westward. The bear is often represented in Native American artworks as an admired and respected animal. Bears are especially intriguing to people, in part because we recognize human behavior in them. As powerful and dangerous as bears can be, they are also accepted as the cuddly teddy bear, the responsible Smokey Bear, or the sweet Winnie the Pooh.

Goodwin manipulates the bear's appearance to make it human-like; look at how almost child-like the bear appears as it sits and enjoys the cereal! Using its front paws like human hands, the bear firmly clutches the crate and nuzzles its mouth and nose greedily into the box. The

image suggests that if you eat Cream of Wheat, you too will be able to survive the frosty, harsh winter.

Furthermore, Goodwin contrasts the wooden Cream of Wheat crate—a product of the lumber industry—with the surrounding tree stumps, visually questioning the impact of human activity on nature.

Technique

Goodwin was a sensitive observer of the natural world around him, interested in capturing what he actually experienced.

Goodwin creates a tranquil setting using earthy colors and soft contours. The white, spare landscape is a striking contrast to the dark and imposing bear and provides an opportunity for the artist to show off the animal's thick coat of fur and its rich brown coloring. In this painting, Goodwin accurately depicts the details of the bear's form and anatomy—its massive, hunched body, soft brown fur, peering eyes, foraging nose, heavy legs, and large claws.

He draws our eye to the bear and the Cream of Wheat container, the centerpiece of the painting. The crate's prominent position in the foreground, its large scale, distinct geometric shapes, and bold letters reinforce it as the focus of our attention and the reason for this advertisement. Goodwin uses loose and sketchy brushstrokes in surrounding areas, as in the screen of trees in the background, the sky, and the blanket of snow. The soft dashes and thick dollops of paint enhance the bear's vibrant energy.

Goodwin uses triangular shapes to communicate a stable and tranquil mood. The somewhat triangular shape of the bear is echoed in the pine trees as well as in the tree stump to the right, conveying a harmonious relationship between the bear and its habitat.

Artist

Born in Norwich, Connecticut, in 1881, Philip Russell Goodwin began sketching and painting as a child, and made his first sale—an illustrated story—to *Collier's* when he was 11. He studied at both the Rhode Island School of Design and the Art Students League in New York City, as well as with Howard Pyle at Pyle's Brandywine School at Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. Known as “the Father of American Illustration,” Pyle inspired an entire generation of illustrators through his work and his teaching. The Wyeth family continues this tradition to the present time.

By 1904, Goodwin had his own studio in New York City and was working on commercial assignments, producing illustrations for *McClure's Magazine*, *Collier's*, and *Everybody's Magazine*, as well as covers for *Saturday Evening Post*. Working from subjects he observed both in the zoo and in the wild, he also made wax sculptures of animals, which were then cast in bronze.

A passionate outdoorsman and a skilled horseman, Goodwin enjoyed spending time in wilderness areas such as the Maine woods, the Colorado Rockies, remote areas of Canada, and the Montana mountainside lodge of his close friends, the artist Charles Russell and his wife Nancy.

Suggested Questions

1. Describe this bear. Does it look real or imaginary? What do you see that makes you say that? What feelings do you associate with bears? What feelings do you associate with this bear?
2. Give a weather report. What temperature is it? Season?
3. Describe the setting. What makes it look like the wilderness? What signs show evidence of humans?
4. Companies use pictures to tell us about their products. This painting was made to sell Cream of Wheat. How is *A Bear Chance* like pictures used to sell items on television, magazines, and the Internet?



China (Asia, T'ang dynasty, 7th-8th Century)

Horse, early 8th century

Earthenware with polychrome glaze

H.20½ x L.20¼ inches

The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund, 49.1.6

Theme

Strong, noble, and splendid, this ceramic horse conveys the love and admiration that T'ang (tang) society felt toward its steeds. Not only were horses important in daily life, they were a part of death as well—replicated as ceramic tomb figurines to accompany and entertain the deceased in the afterlife.

Background

The very name T'ang dynasty conjures up a vision of wealth, sophistication, and splendor of a kind that no other Chinese dynastic name can evoke. There springs to the mind's eye a picture of richly caparisoned horses, gay clothes, dancers, musicians, merchants of all nations, vast teeming cities into which the wealth of Asia seems to pour in a steady stream. There comes to mind a sense of a robust forward-looking people of education, endowed with a keen appreciation of the arts.

One of the most lively cultural periods in Chinese history, the T'ang dynasty, from 618 to 906 C.E., was an era of expansion, upheaval, and prosperity. The major power between the Yellow Sea and Persia, China held widespread influence and traded extensively with countries far beyond its own frontiers. As the largest and strongest power on earth, her trade goods—particularly silks, ceramics, and metalwork—were highly regarded by the rest of the world. During the T'ang, the famous trans-Asian "Silk Road" was at its peak, remaining for centuries the world's greatest trade corridor. Covering over 7,000 miles, the silk routes stretched from India to China—skirting the scorching deserts of Central Asia and ending in the cosmopolitan cities of Chang-an (present-day Xian), the capital, and Lo-yang. Diverse people traveled along these routes, including merchants as well as ambassadors, monks, pilgrims, and entertainers.

During this period, the influx of foreigners introduced new ideas that invigorated the Chinese intellectual and creative spirit. A number of influences entered into T'ang aristocratic life, for example, Indian religions and astronomy, Persian textile patterns and metal craft, Turkish costume, and horses from Central Asia. The impact of these influences on Chinese art was significant and pottery was one of the art forms clearly affected. T'ang ceramics display the sophistication of the period.

Though it was an era of exotic taste, the Chinese continued their traditional practice of placing wood and clay figurines of humans and animals in the burial chambers of the deceased. These articles, referred to as *ming-ch'i* (ming-chee), meaning "spirit articles," were produced to accompany and protect the dead in the afterlife. Hundreds of figures, including soldiers, servants, musicians, tomb guardians, horses, camels, and models of articles used in everyday life, were placed in tombs.

Many of the figures created during the T'ang period, when funeral processions and burials became extravagant. In fact, a special imperial government office was created for the production and supervision of *ming-ch'i*, regulating the number and type of grave objects. The office also regulated the arrangements of funeral processions not only of the aristocracy but of the common classes as well. T'ang funeral processions were relatively festive occasions. Mourners would often carry the grave furnishings, including ceramics, to the tomb while crowds of people stood by to observe the procession. An ancient account relates that some families, in an effort to compete with their neighbors, brought about financial disaster. Eventually, an imperial decree issued in 742 set limits on the size and number of tomb pieces allowed, based on the rank of the deceased.

T'ang Horse

This blue-glazed ceramic horse belongs to a group of ten figurines excavated in 1948 from an imperial tomb near Lo-yang. Comprising five pairs of figures—court officials, warrior guardians, earth spirits, horses, and camels—the set is distinguished by its finely modeled forms, large-scale figures, abundant use of rare cobalt blue glaze, excellent surface condition, and the fact that it has survived intact. It is one of the few complete tomb sets in existence and one of only two in Western collections.

The horse was perhaps the most popular of all subjects to the T'ang potter. It is portrayed here with a lively, bold quality typical of T'ang ceramic art. As one of only three known blue-glazed horses, and the largest and best of those three, this horse is the highlight of the Minneapolis tomb set. It stands four-square on an unglazed rectangular base, with its neck arched, its head down and turned slightly to one side. Although standing at ease, the horse appears to be full of spirit, poised to move at any moment. Elegant and noble in appearance, this steed is glazed in a brilliant, deep cobalt with a contrasting white-and-brown streaked mane. The lavish use of cobalt blue, instead of the ordinary straw-colored glaze, indicates that the retinue (a group of advisers, assistants, or others accompanying an important person) was commissioned by a wealthy family who could afford this rare and costly material imported from Persia. The saddle has been left unglazed, and the paint that once decorated it is now gone. (Real saddles in the T'ang period were probably wooden and covered with leather.) The richly decorated harness trappings (ornamental harness covering) are derived from Sassanian Persian metalwork design, and reflect the T'ang love of the exotic.

Eagerly sought for centuries, fine horses came to China from professional horse dealers of western Asia. The animals were of tremendous importance to T'ang China rulers, who used them for military purposes and diplomatic tribute. Vast horse herds were maintained by the Chinese government and horsemanship was regarded as an aristocratic privilege. Horses were important in providing an efficient mode of travel on the Silk Road and were vital to the military forces defending the borders of T'ang China. It is not surprising that the Chinese chose the horse—their favorite riding animal—to accompany them in the afterlife. Besides providing the deceased with a means to ride into battle, play polo, or hunt, the horse was a symbol of power, prestige, and wealth.

Technique

This horse, made of white clay, was cast from molds. Typically, most T'ang pottery figures were mold-made in mass quantity, although on occasion they could be modeled entirely by hand.

Larger figures, such as this horse, were often made by combining several molds with some hand-modeling to construct large, hollow pieces of sculpture. All works, whether mass-produced or otherwise, had to be finished by hand, a process that displayed the artist's skill, as is evident here in the horse's sense of proportion, spontaneity, and movement. The T'ang interest in naturalism is apparent in the careful attention given to the form of the horse, with its accurate proportions, distinct musculature, and lifelike posture. Its modeling conveys the artist's thorough understanding of a horse's anatomy.

This horse is made with the glazing technique of *san t'sai* (tsahn-tsigh), one of the unique ceramic developments of the T'ang period. *San t'sai* means "three-color" and usually refers to green, amber, and cream glazes found on T'ang burial ceramics. Many variations of the hues were used, however, so that the colors were not necessarily limited to three, and black and blue glazes were often included as well. The palette primarily used here includes blue, green, and caramel-colored glazes. The rare and costly blue glaze, usually reserved for the best and most striking figures, was associated with more important tombs.

In the *san t'sai* process, the figure was covered with a white slip before the glaze was applied. Slip is a fluid mixture of clay and water that works like a primer coat, smoothing out the surface and giving it an even color. The use of slip helps to bring out a clearer, brighter quality to the colored glazes than would be the case if the glazes were applied directly to the earthenware. After the application of slip, the body was covered with colored lead glazes. Lead flow and blend during the firing process, resulting in a vivid interplay of colors, splashes, and drips. T'ang potters use this fluidity to obtain what were considered beautiful streaks and drips. Despite the free and random nature of this process, it required extreme skill and sensitivity.

While the artist's interest in realistic detail is apparent in the horse's form, a quality of fantasy and generalization is also conveyed by the treatment of color. The glazes have been applied to produce a decorative and sumptuous effect rather than a realistic portrayal of the horse's color. The dynamic curve of the mane is heightened by its light colors and striped design, which contrast with the deep, brilliant blue of the body. The horse's bold colors and forms create a striking figure of remarkable splendor.

Artist

The manufacture of T'ang ceramics was a vital industry consisting of large workshops. While little is known about these workshops or the individual artists involved, this horse clearly was made by artists of the highest technical and artistic skill.

Suggested Questions

1. Describe this horse. What about this horse looks real? What looks imaginary?
2. Describe what the horse is wearing. What does this tell us about how this horse was used?
3. Would you like to ride this horse? Why or why not?
4. Do you think this horse was difficult to make? Why or why not?



Hispano-Muslim (Moorish)

Gold Lion Statuette, 1000s—1100s

Gold

H. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 x 2 inches

The Katherine Kettridge McMillan Memorial Fund, 72.12

Theme

Throughout the centuries, many cultures have seen lions as symbols of courage, strength, and majesty. The specific function of this charming gold statuette, measuring less than five inches high, remains a mystery. Its elaborate construction and elegant design, however suggest a purpose: a luxury item to delight the beholder. Undoubtedly, this figure served as a symbol of prestige and style for an aristocratic home in Muslim Spain around the 1000s and 1100s.

Background

This lion comes from Spain, which was conquered by the Muslim Umayyad [oo-my-ahd] empire in 711. The Umayyads ruled from Syria and established the southern region of the Iberian Peninsula as their empire's westernmost province, which they called *al-Andalus*. Parts of the region remained under the control of a Muslim empire or kingdom for the next 700 years, until Catholic armies brought Muslim rule to an end in 1492.

The Umayyad period in Spain was characterized by thriving trade, rich cultural exchange, and unparalleled artistic production. The Umayyads ruled from the city of Córdoba, which eventually grew to more than 500,000 inhabitants, comprising Muslims, Christians, and Jews. By the end of the 900s, Córdoba had become an international center of culture, science, philosophy, and learning. Arabic was the official language, and with a wealth of libraries and educational institutions, Islamic Iberia boasted a literacy rate that was higher and more widespread than in any other region in Western Europe. Many European Christian scholars studied in Muslim Spain and North Africa.

At the beginning of the 1000, the Umayyad dynasty was broken into a number of small, independent states, called the *taifa* [tah'-e-fah] kingdoms. The rulers, or *emirs*, of these aristocratic states fought among themselves for military supremacy and cultural prestige. They recruited the most famous poets to write sonnets and commissioned artisans to produce luxury goods for their personal pleasure. The lion statuette, produced at this time, is a testament to the sophisticated taste of the *taifa* rulers.

Lion Statuette

This lion statuette is Islamic in style and principle. Islamic art refers to works of art made by and for Muslims as expressions of the Islamic faith or its values, which also encompasses secular (non-religious) objects, made by cultures that flourished within the cultural environment of Islam. It is a common belief that Islam forbids the representation of living beings, yet portrayals of human and animal forms in the secular sphere can be found in all eras of Islamic art. The Qur'an, the Islamic holy book, does not explicitly prohibit figural representation, though it

condemns idolatry as a form of worship and so figural images are not found in mosques and other religious settings. Nevertheless, many Muslims—like people everywhere—enjoy pictures of people and animals in their everyday lives. Figural images in Islamic art, such as this small lion, are not intended to stimulate devotion, but serve instead as decorative reminders of the spiritual realm. Beautiful works of art are considered a reflection of the glory of heaven. Muslims—like any people who are associated by a common religion or political affiliation—hold a variety of beliefs, including their views on figural representation and approaches to art.

Although it is not known what exact purpose this small figure served, the vessel at the top of the handle and the hollow body provide some clues as to how it might have been used. It is believed that this lion is an aquamanile—a liquid-containing vessel, usually in the shape of an animal. The lion could have been a receptacle for water, oil or perfumes. The liquid would enter the cavity through the top of the handle and, when tipped, it is believed that the liquid would flow from the lion's tongue. It is also thought that the receptacle may have held a small candle or piece of aromatic incense, or served as a lamp.

Whatever its intended function, the statuette was certainly regarded as an object to be admired and treasured. Made of gold, it is extremely rare. Gold is a soft metal that is easily melted down and repurposed. For a delicate object such as this to have survived such a long and fractious period in history is remarkable. Only a few examples of small, gold filigree figures from this same period exist. The work closest in size, style, and workmanship is a winged ram found in northwestern Spain, now in the Provincial Museum of Lugo. Most gold work from Andalus was melted down by the Catholic conquerors of Muslim Spain (similar to the gold of the Aztecs and Incas) and the works that survived were generally ones that were buried inside walls of houses at the time of the expulsions of Muslims, who thought that the political situation might change and they could retrieve the works at some later time upon their return. Muslims and Jews were not permitted to take any valuables with them when they were exiled.

Technique

The lion statuette is completely covered in intricate ornament from head to toe. The surface is infused with floral and tendril filigree (small, thin threads of metal) and fine granulation (tiny metal beads). The closer you look at the lion, the more complex detail you discover. Islamic art draws on the creativity of many cultures and artistic traditions. Despite the diversity of its origins, it is often distinguished by an emphasis on ornamentation. Indeed, ornamentation is one of the most characteristic features of Islamic art and has been used from the 600s to the present. The Arabic word for ornament is *zakhrafa*, which means “to gild.” It refers to the richness represented in so many forms of Islamic art.

Ornamental designs based on floral and geometric patterns are among the most popular forms of decoration found on Islamic works of art. Flowers, leaves, and vines grow within geometric patterned surfaces and are contained by finely beaded registers that follow the form and structure of the lion's body. Four little birds perch within the branches at the four corners of the lion's back. Such a well-ordered garden may refer to the Garden of Paradise, promised in the afterlife to devout Muslims in the Qur'an. The delicacy of the applied décor and geometric patterning suggests a fine embroidered coat that softens the beast. The lion remains regal and refined, but the profusion of decoration makes it transcend the animal kingdom into a spiritual realm beyond this world.

Gold has long been valued for its beauty and coveted for its prestige. Gold is the most malleable of metals, capable of being pounded, stretched, or shaped without cracking or breaking. In its pure form, gold is too soft to be used alone and must be alloyed with another metal, such as copper or silver.

This small lion was likely made with the lost-wax process. The process is as follows:

1. First, a model of the lion is made of wax and coated in clay. When the clay is fired, the wax melts and is drained away, leaving an exact impression of the wax model in the cavity of the fired clay.
2. The cavity is then filled with molten gold.
3. When the gold is cool, the clay is carefully broken away, revealing the gold object.

In this case, the statuette's torso, head, mane, legs, feet, and handle may have been cast as separate pieces and soldered together. Decorative elements of granulation and filigree skillfully applied over the seams hide any trace of joinery and unify the form.

Granulation is the process by which minute gold spheres are fused to a gold surface. Fusing involves raising the temperature of the surface metal and the granules to the point at which they will adhere. The technique is extremely precise: if the correct temperature is not reached, the granules will not hold; if the temperature is too high, the granules will melt. The tiny spheres are first glued to the surface; the surface is then slowly heated to the precise temperature to fuse the spheres onto the base. The wires that comprise the filigree are attached with the same fusion process.

The minuscule granules are made by snipping small sections of wire onto a charcoal plate brought to just the right temperature so that the pieces liquefy and "bead up." Sphere size varies according to the thickness of the wire and the uniformity of the spheres is dependent on the precise cutting of the wire. To make the hair-fine wire, a rod of gold is threaded and pulled through a succession of funnels, each smaller than the next. It is then twisted or plaited to create the braid-like quality found on the statuette's filigree. The combination of lustrous gold, delicate décor, and intricate patterning on such an impossibly small scale make this a tour de force of metalworking skill as accomplished by a jeweler. Mysteries around this object remain, but the rich cultural and artistic traditions of Muslim Spain around the 11th and 12th centuries are clearly revealed.

Artist

The artist responsible for this remarkable object cannot be identified. Many artists and artisans lived and worked on commission in large districts surrounding palatial courts. As members of guilds, they produced a variety of goods for rulers as well as for merchants, courtiers, and officials of the court. In some cases, workshops were formed and supported within the palace walls. After the establishment of the taifa kingdoms, however, only a few emirs had the resources to commission such works or support workshops that made objects of this quality.

The gold lion statuette at the MIA is a rare example of goldsmithing in Muslim Spain. There are a few examples of similar objects in Spain, Switzerland, and Canada. Gold jewelry using these

same techniques is on view in many museums featuring Islamic art, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Suggested Questions

1. How would you describe this lion? What about this lion looks realistic? What looks imagined? Why do you think the artist made it realistic and decorative at the same time?
2. What clues tell us that someone very important or wealthy owned this lion? How do you think this lion was used? What clues tell you this?
3. Why do you think someone would want to be like a lion?
4. Compare this lion to the leopard. How are they similar? How are they different? What is your evidence?



Benin (Africa, Nigeria, West Africa region)

Leopard, 1600s

Bronze

H.17 x L.26 inches

Miscellaneous Works of Art Fund, 58.9

Theme

Created as a royal ceremonial object, this leopard was made to symbolize the Benin (beh-noon) ruler, called the *oba*. The leopard's strength, ferocity, and intelligence, by extension, reinforces the *oba*'s power and status.

Background

Located in the tropical rain forest of southern Nigeria, the kingdom of Benin is one of the most highly developed cultural centers in West Africa. Its art tradition is famous for its refinement and sophistication. Although little is known of Benin's early history, the kingdom was a great military and commercial power by the time the first Europeans arrived there in the late 1400s. Benin's first direct contact with the European world came in the 1400s with the arrival of the Portuguese. The kingdom established diplomatic and trade relations with Portugal, and Portuguese traders supplied luxury items such as coral beads and cloth for ceremonial attire. In return, Benin provided the Portuguese with items such as pepper, cloth, and carved ivory.

The accounts of travelers during the 1500s describe the beautiful city of Benin, the kingdom's capital, as a highly organized religious and administrative center ruled by the *oba*. Vast and splendid, the royal palace complex was richly adorned with cast bronze decorations, carved wooden pillars and beams as well as ivory carvings.

The *oba* was believed to be the reincarnation of Benin's original ruler and, therefore, divine. He was the central figure in the kingdom—the supreme political, judicial, economic, and spiritual head of his people. Because the *oba* acted as intermediary between his divine ancestors and the Benin people, it was believed that he personally controlled the forces affecting the well-being of the entire kingdom. Regarded with a combination of awe, reverence, and fear, the *oba* had power over the life and death of his subjects.

Surrounded by elaborate ceremonies and rituals, the *oba* and his ancestors were commemorated with symbols of prestige in the form of bronze heads, figurines, and plaques. Most Benin art was made to glorify the *oba* and to pay homage to past *obas*, expressing the special power and privileges of this ruler and reinforcing the complex hierarchy of the court.

The kingdom of Benin flourished until the end of the 1800s. Then in 1897, it was overcome by a British military expedition. Despite the loss and destruction caused by this event, the kingdom still exists today within the modern state of Nigeria. The *oba* has been restored and continues to serve as a religious leader, though his political authority is greatly diminished.

Benin Leopard

This bronze leopard is actually a water vessel, used by the *oba* when he washed his hands during ceremonies. The vessel was filled through a round, hinged opening at the top of the leopard's head; when tipped, water poured out through its pierced nostrils. This type of water vessel in animal form, called an aquamanile, derives from European types made from about 1100 to 1500 and used in both religious and secular contexts. Such vessels may have been known in Benin through trade with Europe.

When not being used, the leopard aquamanile stood on the *oba*'s ancestral altar in the royal palace courtyard. Other bronze objects such as plaques and heads would have been displayed with it. Leopards were usually made in pairs; the mate to this leopard is in a museum in Munich, Germany.

Admired for its power, ferocity, speed, and intelligence, the leopard became a symbol of the *oba*. According to Benin thought, the leopard could strike fear into the heart of the enemy; it also was recognized as a leader in the animal kingdom. Images of leopards appeared on many royal objects, reinforcing the *oba*'s majesty and power. Live leopards, captured and tamed, were kept at the royal palace. Placed on leashes, they even accompanied royal processions. Leopard skins, which were emblems of rank in Benin, could be worn only by the *oba* and those who obtained his permission. When a hunter killed a leopard he was expected to report to the nearest chief that it was a "leopard of the bush," not one "of the house." Like the royal art of Benin, the leopard essentially belonged to the king, signifying his superior status.

This sculpture conveys the leopard's strength, cunning, and wary alertness. Standing firmly on sturdy, muscular legs, the animal looks straight ahead with its ears perked and its fangs bared, a reminder of its awesome power. It displays many of the conventions used for leopards in Benin art, such as overlapping canines, distinct molars, slanted eyes, and leaf-shaped ears.

The richly textured bronze surface has a dull black patina (a thin, colored layer that forms over time on bronze when it is exposed to air) and has been painstakingly incised with small circles to represent the leopard's spots. These are set against a stippled background.

Technique

The artist has skillfully combined accurate depictions of detail and non-realistic style, representing the leopard's physical characteristics—its sharp teeth, alert ears, lively eyes, and thick, heavy tail. Other features are simplified to create an abstract decorative effect. These include the regularly patterned circles incised on its coat and the elaborate linear designs on the perky ears.

Portrayed with ambiguity, the leopard can be perceived as either fierce or friendly. The sculpture's fully rounded forms and immobile stance evoke a sense of stillness, even a charming tameness. At the same time, the animal's sturdy legs are rigid with strength and tension, perhaps ready to spring, while the facial features are energetic and ferocious.

For centuries Benin artists have created exquisite animal figures and bronze heads by using a sophisticated casting technique known as the *lost-wax* method. In this process, the artists create a mold by making a clay core, which is covered with a layer of wax. They model and carving the wax as they want the sculpture to look, including all the details intended for the finished work. The wax is then covered with a thick coating of clay. Heating the mold causes the

clay to harden and the wax to melt. When the melted wax is poured out, it leaves an empty space, which is filled by pouring in molten bronze. After the metal cools and hardens, the clay jacket is chipped away, revealing a bronze sculpture identical to the original wax model. As much as possible of the interior clay core is removed to produce a hollow sculpture.

Artist

Benin was a flourishing center for artistic activity where artists and craftpersons were organized into guilds (an association of craftsmen or merchants) of blacksmiths, brass and bronze casters, wood and ivory carvers, bead and costume makers, and leather workers. The *oba*, the most important patron of the arts in Benin, had a virtual monopoly on the work of many of the artists' guilds. These guilds were incorporated into the court organization, with workshops located in the palace. Membership in the guilds was hereditary, with skills passed on from generation to generation.

Suggested Questions

1. Describe this leopard. What about this looks like a real leopard? What looks imagined?
2. What parts of the leopard's body do you notice first? What kinds of pattern do you see on the leopard?
3. In Benin, the leopard was associated with the ruler, the *oba*. What qualities might a leopard and ruler share? If you were a ruler, what animal would you want to be associated with? Why?



James Jacques-Joseph Tissot, French, 1836–1902

On the Thames, A Heron, c. 1871–72

Oil on canvas

H.36 ½ x W.23 ¾ inches

Gift of Mrs. Patrick Butler, 75.7

Theme

James Tissot's (Tee-ssō's), painting *On the Thames, A Heron* combines a quaint English Victorian narrative—two fashionable young women at leisure, boating on the River Thames (temz)—with the flight of a wild bird. By merging contemporary English and French styles of painting, Tissot pays equal attention to the young ladies and Grey Heron that dominates the lower half of the painting.

Background

The industrial revolution under the reign of Queen Victoria. By the end of the 1800s, Victoria's England had acquired territory and developed trade routes throughout the world, expanding the British Empire to encompass nearly one-fourth of the earth's land surface. Exotic goods from around the world flowed in to England's ports.

London's Great Exhibition of 1851, held in Hyde Park, was a platform for advances in science and new machines powered by steam and electricity, which spurred drastic changes in the way people lived. Goods were manufactured more quickly and cheaply, workers became more productive, and wages increased. People now had more free time and disposable income. Tissot wasted no time finding patrons among this growing middle class, which indulged in pastimes previously enjoyed only by the wealthy, such as leisurely outings on the Thames.

On the Thames, A Heron

On the Thames, A Heron is one of Tissot's, a native Frenchman, first English works. Arriving with little money and few resources, he quickly built his career creating scenes of London life imbued with Victorian charm. Here, Tissot has painted two fashionably dressed young women on an autumn outing on the calm backwaters of the River Thames. For his setting, he chose the Thames, England's major river at the country's heart, in a conscious appeal to his English audience. As a major transportation route for both trade and travel, the Thames was a symbol of England's vitality and a subject of admiration.

On the Thames, A Heron depicts a typical English scene. As in an English poem or novel, the image tells the story of two women—one blonde, one brunette—in a wooden rowboat developed specifically for Victorians to enjoy the recreational value of the river. Tissot painted the scene with glossy precision. His attention to detail is particularly expressed in his subjects' clothes, which were carefully chosen for the models. The black-and-white checked skirt, pom-pom fringed shawl, and little white hat with flowers and black ribbon all appear in later paintings.

What takes this painting beyond a sentimental English narrative is the magnificent Grey Heron that glides diagonally across the lower half of the composition. The heron subtly appears to the viewer as it materializes from the natural surroundings of marsh grasses and water. Once

discovered, it inspires awe and wonder through its size and beauty. As if captured with a camera, Tissot constructs that instant when this great bird takes flight, roused from its fishing post along the river's edge.

Grey Herons (*Ardea cinerea*) are one of England's most familiar birds. They can be found in fresh, salt, clear, or muddy waters. Regents Park in central London has up to 20 nesting pairs. Known to live for up to 25 years, herons are excellent fishers and silently stalk in shallow waters to strike their prey with alarming speed. As Tissot has so skillfully depicted, the Grey Heron has a white head with a crest of long black feathers. With a wingspan of 72 inches and a length of 37 inches, they arch their wings and tuck in their necks while in flight. It is no wonder that Tissot chose to place this familiar bird of England so prominently in this painting.

Tissot's placement of the heron directly into the foreground is a daring move that stems from his interest in Japanese design, so popular with his fellow artists back in France. The strong diagonal composition, shallow depth of field, and the viewer's high vantage point come directly from Japanese woodblock prints. The contrast of two separate pictorial elements—the girls and the heron—in a compressed space also reflects an influence from Japan. Tissot's application of pattern in the fabrics, trees, grasses, and water is another reflection of Japanese style. In this way, Tissot takes a traditional English scene and transforms it into a thoroughly contemporary form.

Tissot lends greater depth to the scene through his use of weather and season. The still, mystical mood is evoked through the rich colors of an overcast fall day. The soft gray backdrop of the Thames heightens lush variations of sienna, umber, red, and green.

Subtle gestures indicate that the girls activity has been interrupted, as one stops still while tying her shawl, the other rowing. Tissot draws the viewer into the picture through these gestures—the turn and lift of a head or the gaze of the eyes. The subjects' attention is not directed toward the heron, but rather the viewer. Perhaps it is we, the viewers, who have just entered on the distant shore to disrupt this hushed scene.

Technique

Today, Tissot's blending of popular English subjects with French painting appears inconsequential, even unnoticeable. However, in his day, Tissot's French contemporaries considered his style as pandering to the London market, while the English critics thought his painting too "French" through his emphasis on design.

Tissot was technically a conservative academic painter, trained at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris; nevertheless, it was his social acquaintances that had the greater effect on his style. His influential friends included artists Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, and perhaps most importantly, James Whistler. While in Paris, Tissot absorbed the trends for Japanese design, called *Japonisme*; a decorative style that emphasized sensual rather than moral meanings; and Impressionism, a modern way of painting thoroughly contemporary subjects. Japanese woodblock prints, readily available through trade, brought to the West a new understanding of Japanese design principles. Western artists owed a clear debt to Japan in their daring compositions, shallow field, and high vantage point. Photography as a new medium also influenced the way contemporary artists painted and composed. The camera's ability to record instantaneously with descriptive accuracy may have influenced Tissot's sense of immediacy and attention to detail.

Disillusioned by the political and social events of the late 1800s, many artists turned away from a romantic view of the world in favor of an objective view of the ordinary, observable world. Avant-garde (innovative and experimental artists and works of art) artists rejected traditional themes of history, mythology, and religion in favor of scenes from everyday life, emphasizing contemporary fashions and social practices central to the whole idea of Modern. Tissot's interest in fashion, etiquette, and elegant accessories is a distinctive feature of his work. Tissot's paintings often feature two or three figures amid a profusion of fabrics, ribbons, and flowers. Despite his interest in new subject matter, Tissot continued to paint in the highly finished, detailed style of the academy to meld traditional techniques with modern life.

Tissot's paintings also look to the popular culture of English illustrated magazines for their subject and treatment. Upon his arrival in London, he stayed with his friend, Thomas Gibson Bowles, who ran the newly published magazine, *Vanity Fair*. While in England, Tissot taught himself to etch (a printmaking process using acid on metal plates to create reproducible illustrations) in order to reproduce his own paintings rather than sell the rights to other engravers. Tissot's flair for narrative may stem from his sketches and etchings of people in familiar settings, such as the Thames, the streets of London, and seaside resort towns, which he made for such publications as *Vanity Fair*, *Graphic*, and *Illustrated London News*.

Biography

Tissot was born in 1836 in Nantes, a thriving seaport where he grew up among ships, boats, and water. His father was a prosperous merchant who had a drapery business, and his mother was a milliner, which likely influenced Tissot's passion for painting fabrics of all types and textures. Over his father's objections, Tissot went to Paris at the age of 20 to study at the *École des Beaux-Arts*. In Paris he made friends with fellow artists Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, and James Whistler. Although he studied at the academy, he made his reputation in France as a society painter and exhibited his work at the fashionable Paris Salon, becoming the most profitable of the four friends.

Despite coming from wealth, Tissot joined the revolutionary Paris Commune when the Franco-Prussian War ended in 1870. When the government returned to power, Tissot fled to London, where he remained for 11 years. After Tissot was officially cleared of any association with the Commune in 1874, he returned to Paris for short trips, but kept his home in north London's fashionable St. John's Wood, where he built a successful career painting London society. The collectors adored his work, his friends envied his success, and his critics dismissed him as frivolous and insincere.

Suggested Questions

1. What words would you use to describe the Gray Heron? How would you describe the women's reaction to the heron? How would the painting be different without the heron?
2. What story do you think this painting tells? What part do you think the heron plays in this painting's story?
3. England of the late 1800s was a very fashionable place, and Tissot was interested in the fashions of the day. What types of textures did Tissot paint in the clothes? What kinds of patterns did Tissot paint in this scene?