



Burton D. Morgan Gallery

Cover:

Chinese Ornament, c. 18th century (detail),

Brass and gold plate

1 1/2" h x 3" w x 1 5/8" d (inches)

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1044 252

OBJECT LESSONS

"... me hi g ha e e a a e am le fa ab ac idea."

AFRICAN

Erin Behn '13
Eric Hubbard '16

What is the meaning behind the number of talons on a Chinese dragon? What do patterns in African art express about leadership? How does the function of ancient objects inform our understanding of the cultures that made them? These and other questions are explored in the exhibition OBJECT LESSONS, the title of which refers to how the close reading of material culture is fundamental to curatorial practices.

ANCIENT

Anna Mazin '14
Blair Heidkamp '15

Curated by the 2013 *Museum Studies* class taught by Jay Gates, Class of 1968, each student selected materials in the CWAM's permanent collection representing five CWAM collection concentrations—African, Ancient, Asian, "Curiosities," and Prints. For this teaching exhibition, students were asked to first describe their objects, then to synthesize the visual evidence with contextual research.

ASIAN

Melissa Hackett '15
Kelsey Williams '14

The term "Curiosities" is used here as a reference to the late-nineteenth century practice of bringing back materials from abroad to create "Cabinets of Curiosities," some of which became so extensive they formed the basis of major museum collections. The term "Cabinets of Curiosities" and its practice can be traced to sixteenth-century Europe where objects, yet to be classified, would be stored in rooms where visitors could marvel at what was to them "exotic." Notable collections begun in this manner include the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK, and the British Museum, London. In a similar vein, from the late-nineteenth century up through the mid-twentieth century, a significant group of art and ethnographic materials from China, Korea, and other areas of the world were given to the College by Presbyterian missionaries and alumni. These materials comprise the origin of the CWAM's collection and are featured in the "Curiosities" portion of this exhibition.

"CURIOSITIES"

Phu Nguyen Thien '14
Seung Ryong Riew '14

PRINTS

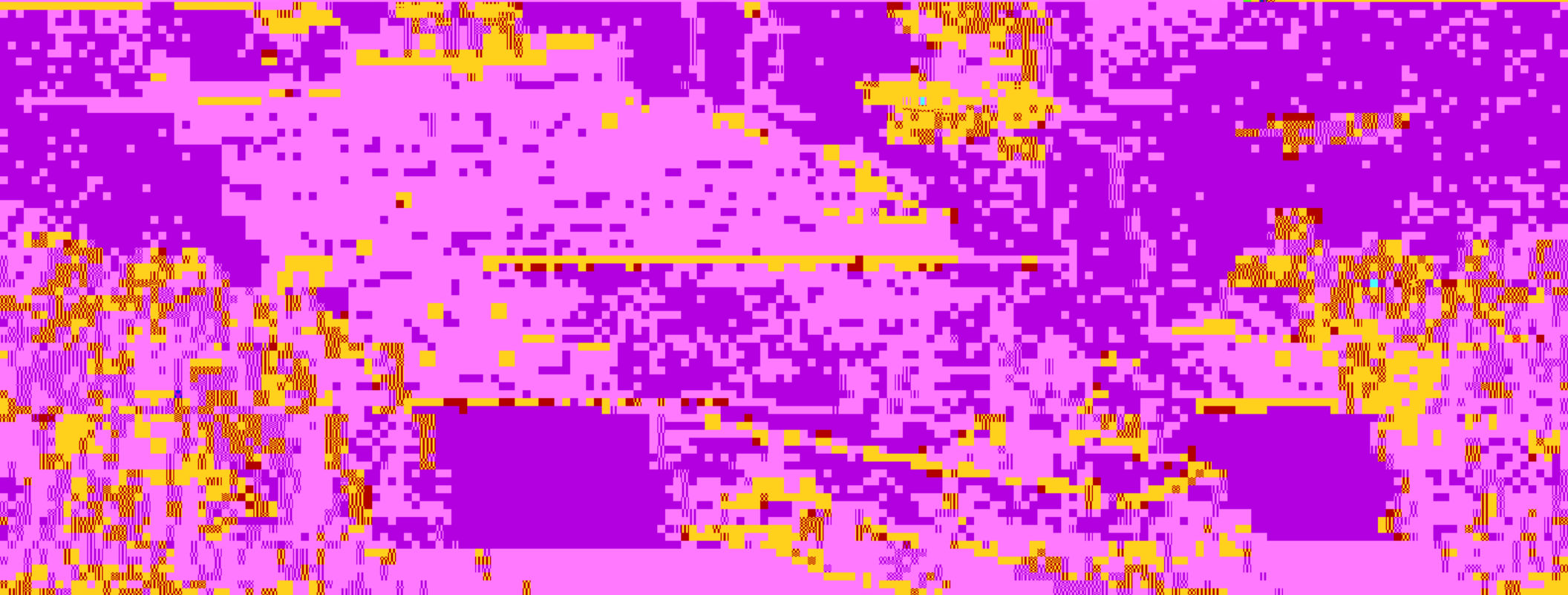
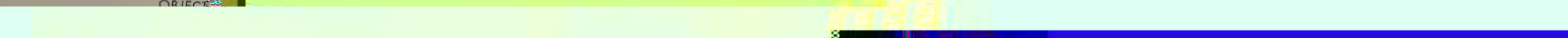
Karin Barend '13
Betsy Elderbrock '13

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the students in the *Museum Studies* course for their enthusiasm, attention to detail, and energy. Congratulations on a job well done. Additionally, the CWAM thanks Jay Gates for being such a willing collaborator, and Professor of Archaeology, Nick P. Kardulias, for supporting the students researching the Department of Archaeology's Pella materials. Doug McGlumphy, CWAM Preparator, deserves a special note of recognition for not only his exhibition design, but for also sharing his expertise in teaching museum practices.

Tac Aa :
Sarah Blosser '13

Kitty McManus Zurko, Director/Curator
The College of Wooster Art Museum



Prestige cup, c. 20th century (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Kuba peoples

Wood, pigment

8 h x 5 1/8 w x 5 3/4 d (inches)

The College of Wooster Art Museum 2007.120

Gift of William C. Mithoeffer, Class of 1953

By the late 1800s, as many as half of all men in the Kuba kingdom were titleholders appointed by the king. Because of this great degree of upwards mobility, as well as the relative affluence common throughout the kingdom, many individuals sought ways to express their wealth and reputation to others within their community. Utilitarian items such as cups and boxes with elaborate carving were an accessible manner for titleholders to adorn themselves and to demonstrate their prosperity to the community.

Cups for palm wine hold special significance in Kuba culture, as the sharing of palm wine demonstrates generosity. Palm wine is believed to have played a role in the creation of the Kuba peoples' dynastic lineage, and the raffia palm from which it comes provides the Kuba people with

Kente wrap, c. 20th century (Ghana)

Ashanti peoples

Rayon, cotton

132 h x 89 1/2 w (inches)

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1985.18

Gift of William C. Mithoefer, Class of 1953

Like the Golden Stool, *kente* cloth is closely associated with royal regalia. In fact, within the Ashanti culture, such textiles are referred to as “stool property,” making them equivalent in status and spiritual importance. And, like the stool, the origin of the cloth is somewhat mythic in nature, and refers to hunters who sought to replicate both the complexity and beauty of a spider’s web.

Kente cloth is a medium through which the Ashanti record important events, tell meaningful stories, and pay homage to significant individuals. This is done through hundreds of different designs, each identifiable by a unique pattern. The strip-sewn cloths were traditionally reserved for royalty, but now serve as a special garment available to all through purchase or inheritance.

In addition to the visual/verbal symbolism of the patterns, color is one of the more significant aspects of *kente* as color carries very

Stool, 20th century (Ghana)

Ashanti peoples

Wood

College Collections

For the Ashanti peoples of Ghana, the Golden Stool is a tremendously important symbol that represents the heritage, welfare, and collective soul of their nation. When the Ashanti nation was founded in 1701 by the first King, Osei Tutu, the image of the stool was appropriated as a means of

Storage jar and goblet., c. early-mid 16th century BCE (Jordan)

Middle-late Bronze Age; ceramic

The Pella Collection at The College of Wooster

Courtesy of The College of Wooster Department of Archaeology

The Wooster expedition at Pella found this storage jar inside a Bronze Age tomb that contained three separate burials, as well as what Robert Smith later called “a relatively homogenous group of funerary vessels.” The jar is notable for its excellent condition, and the small ceramic goblet wedged inside its mouth. The single handle is fairly unusual among Jordanian Bronze Age storage vessels, but is typical for the local culture in and around Pella at that time.

Despite the jar’s fairly common and utilitarian nature, it still tells us a great deal about the people who placed it inside the tomb. There is a horizontal line of closure near the bottom of the jar, which indicates that the potter shaped the base and upper body separately on a potter’s wheel before joining the two sections. The jar’s handle and ovaloid shape classify it as a storage vessel, while the goblet wedged inside the mouth of the jar recalls a Bronze Age practice in which small dipping jugs were placed inside of larger storage jars so as to help remove the jars’ contents. The use of a goblet suggests that the jar originally held a liquid such as wine, which would have been considered valuable enough to bring with the deceased into the afterlife.

Anna Mazin '14

Major: Archaeology

ANCIENT

Colonnade, c. 5th century CE (Jordan)

Byzantine; marble

The Pella Collection at The College of Wooster

Courtesy of The College of Wooster Department of Archaeology

This piece of a Corinthian colonnade, or small column, was found inside the remains of the ancient church at Pella beneath the raised floor in the southern apse of the sanctuary. The colonnade likely belonged to a smaller structure within the church, such as an altar, ambo or lectern, or baldachin. The church dates roughly to CE 400, during the early Byzantine period, and likely became the See of the Bishop of Pella before its destruction by an earthquake during the early-eighth century.

This colonnade features two inscriptions—"ACK" and "CE"—on either side of the base. Such inscriptions are not uncommon among early Byzantine churches, and they often represent a physical manifestation of the relationship between early Christians and their place of worship. In a religious context, "ACK" most likely stands for the Greek ἀσκητής, meaning "ascetic" or a person who lives a harsh and simple lifestyle for religious reasons. The possible religious meaning of "CE" is unknown, but it may represent the secular term βασιλική, or "imperial." The stylistic variation between the two carvings indicates that they were likely made by different people during different periods, so one carving may be religious while the other is not. If neither inscription is religious, the ἀσκητής may also stand for "athlete."

Anna Mazin '14

Major: Archaeology

Krater (Jordan)

Early Bronze Age (3,300! 2,800 BCE); ceramic

The Pella Collection at The College of Wooster

Courtesy of The College of Wooster Department of Archaeology

Kraters are large open bowls, with small flat circular bases. Originally the term krater was only used for vessels whose purpose was to mix water and wine before its consumption, but in general the word is used to describe any bowl that had a similar shape and form regardless of purpose. With a wide opening this krater can be put under the category of a serving vessel, most likely used for liquid.

From the second half of the Early Bronze Age, this type of coil form was not slipped or glazed as were later pieces. One theory suggests that by not having a glazed exterior, water cooled as it sat in the krater. Water would seep through the clay and evaporate when it reached the outside wall. This percolation process, in turn, cooled the remaining water in the vessel. Kraters were functional pieces, and were generally lacking in ornate decoration, as can be seen in this piece.

Blair Heidkamp '15

Major: Archaeology

Unguentaria, c. CE 250-300 (Jordan)

Glass

The Pella Collection at The College of Wooster

Courtesy of The College of Wooster Department of Archaeology

Unguentaria, or "tear bottle," is the common name for a ceramic or glass vessel with a spherical cavity and a long neck. Used mainly for storing

Chinese Gold Ornament, Bowl, and Snuff Bottles

During the Qing Dynasty (CE 1644–1912), the last imperial Chinese dynasty, the meaning and ownership of the image of the ubiquitous Chinese dragon evolved considerably. From the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, the emperors adopted the previous Ming Dynasty's symbol of ruling authority—a four-taloned dragon—but distinguished Qing reign by using a five-taloned dragon. This symbol, which was worn and used solely by the emperor and his family, was eventually democratized by the Chinese people for common use by the end of the Qing's almost 270 year reign. The five objects presented here illustrate these changes.

Starting with one of the earlier object from the Qing reign, the **gold ornament** is an example of the restrictions over the use of the symbol of the dragon. Circular medallions were often given to imperial subjects, with the highest ranking officials receiving a medal showing a forward-facing, five-clawed dragon. No one of lower status wore an ornament such as this. As time went on, however, more individuals began to adopt what was formerly the emperor's exclusive symbol of status. By the end of the Qing Dynasty in the early-twentieth century, it was unthinkable for an individual to own anything less than an image of a five-taloned dragon.

While the Qing **porcelain bowl** seen here is an example of later depictions of a five-clawed dragon, this bowl may have been owned by an elite within the imperial court, as yellow and green glazed porcelain was unique to the courts, and similar bowls were found in the Forbidden City in Beijing.

The three **snuff bottles** are examples of what could be considered a fad in China during the Qing dynasty. Tobacco had only just been introduced to China at the end of the seventeenth century, and was popularized by the ruling class. Tobacco, and more specifically snuff, created a booming market for snuff bottles. These objects became an important part of social exchange among the elite and commoners alike.

The three snuff bottles all feature the dragon in their surface designs. The coral-colored porcelain snuff bottle bears the reign mark of one of the earliest emperors of the Qing Dynasty, the Qianlong Emperor, who reigned from 1736–1795. The presence of a reign mark suggests that this bottle in particular might have been owned by an imperial elite. The eighteenth-century amber snuff bottle and the nineteenth-century lacquered bottle lack reign marks, although both include dragons in their surface designs.

Melissa Hackett '15
Major: Studio Art



Cricket cages, c. 20th century (Chinese)

Gourd, bone, tortoise, and jade

4-5 h x 3-4 w (inches)

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1964.268-271

Gift of Mrs. C. E. Loehr

Throughout China's history, cricket cages have been used to house chirping insects as either pets or cricket fighters. Cricket fighting became a popular sport during the Song dynasty (CE 960–1279). Originally a gambling sport, cricket fighting today is popular as a competition. During a cricket fight, the two competing crickets are first weighed, like boxers, and then provoked by the owners. Battles last only a few seconds and crickets are rarely injured. A winner is determined when one cricket stops fighting.

Plate, c. late-19th-to-early 20th centuries (Japanese)

Stoneware, glaze

10 1/8 w x 1 7/8 h (inches)

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1986.118

Gift of Evin C. Varner



In late-nineteenth century Japan, there was an overwhelming cultural shift toward modernization and a desire to emulate Western models. During this period, traditional Japanese folk-crafts began to die out. However, as a backlash to this shift toward modernity, Japanese scholars revived native traditions and folk-crafts in an attempt to maintain Japanese identity. The stoneware plate to the left is from this period in Japan and is known as *mingei*.

The term *mingei* is short for *minshuteki kogei*, or “people’s art.” *Mingei* tended to be simple objects necessary for everyday living, and are distinguished by their usefulness, production in large quantities, low prices, anonymous creators, and recognizable regional styles.

Because of the nature of *mingei* and the lack of dates and identifying marks, it is difficult to pinpoint when this plate was made, or even the specific process used. However, by comparing this piece to similar *mingei*, we can make some generalizations about the method of manufacture. Therefore, this plate can be classified as glazed stoneware, and the potter most likely used a *temmoku*, or a dark, iron rich glaze over a clear glaze. Before the *temmoku* glaze was applied, the potter painted the rabbit image over the clear glaze with wax, using a method called “wax resist.” In other words, the *temmoku* glaze did not adhere to where the wax was applied, allowing the color of the clay body under the clear glaze to be seen as the image of the rabbit.

In addition to being one of the twelve zodiac symbols, the Japanese believe that the image of the rabbit can be seen in the full moon, pounding rice. This plate may have been used for holding food or another such utilitarian purpose, or used during a lunar-related festival, given the prominence of the rabbit image.

Kelsey Williams '14

Major: East Asian Studies

Cassone, attributed to c. 16th century (Italian)

Wood, metal

24 1/2 h x 64 1/2 w x 18 d (inches)

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1966.26

Gift of Esther Boyer



Allegedly made in the sixteenth century during the Renaissance, this walnut chest is called a *cassone* in Italian. It is typically used as a wedding chest to store the outfits of the married couple and other items of the bride's dowry. It was also one of the most important and artistically endowed pieces of furniture in the Italian household during this period, especially for wealthy and powerful families. Political marriages, where alliances are forged and power consolidated, were common during the Renaissance. The *cassone* thus became a means for families to display their wealth.

Many great artists, such as Donatello and Sandro Botticelli, were hired to design and decorate *cassoni*, and some of the great artworks of the Italian Renaissance were in fact decorations on the front panels.

A shift in intellectual, cultural, and religious attitudes during the Italian Renaissance toward humanist thought was matched by a change in aesthetic and materialistic preferences. During this time, people took comfort and pleasure in the beauty of their earthly possessions and their existence, perhaps as a response to the traumatic experience of the Black Death. They also preferred definitive and complex designs to vague forms and outlines. This particular walnut *cassone* employs intricate waveform patterns in its exterior decoration; the upward, cresting curves accentuate the horizontal form while the different directions of the waves maintain the harmony of the overall design. The feet are in the shape of ionic capitals, reminiscent of the resurgence of interest in classical architecture during this time. The relatively heavy lid is supported by two tiny metal hinges, which makes it not quite suitable for frequent opening and closing. The flat top also suggests that this *cassone* was intended for seating as well as storage purposes.

Phu Nguyen Thien '14

Double Major: Philosophy/Psychology

"CURIOSITIES"

Chairs

Korean Headdress

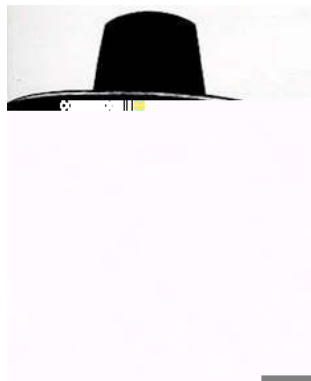
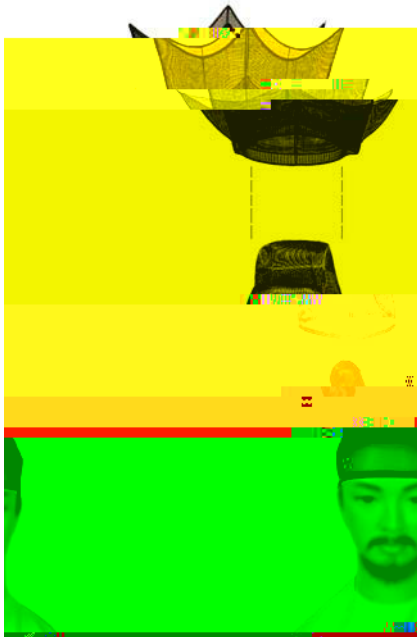
Five types of Korean headdress in in this exhibition: *gat* (갓); *manggeon* (망건); *tanggeon* (탕건); and *jungjagwan* (정자관). Such headwear were used during the Joseon Dynasty in Korea (CE 1392–1897). Hats as social signifiers were an important part of the Joseon Dynasty's culture.

The major functions of Korean headdress were protection and decoration, indication of the wearer's rank, and the expression of formality during ceremonial occasions. During this time, Confucian ideals led Koreans to place a strong emphasis on actively respecting both elders and ancestors. As such, people were instructed not to harm any part of their body, out of respect for receiving it from their parents. Therefore, no one cut their hair. During their youth, people would braid their hair, and after marriage, men would wear their hair in topknots called *sangtu* (상투).

Presumably, Koreans originally used hats in order to cover up their *sangtu*. However, the *yangban* (양반), or the noble class of the Joseon Dynasty, developed specific types of hats to also signify their rank. The *yangban* class had to always behave properly, maintain their dignity, and generally look presentable. Thus, they created relatively impractical styles of hats made from expensive materials to express their high social rank. All of the objects in this case are symbols of the *yangban* class during the Joseon Dynasty .

Seung Ryong Riew '14

Major: Studio Art



Manggeon (망건), c. early 20th century (Korean)

Horsehair

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1928.20

Gift of Mrs. M.H. Frank and E. Adams

Every married man during the Joseon Dynasty put their hair into a topknot called *sangtu* (상투). In order to keep their hair up in an organized manner, people wore horsehair woven headbands, such as this one, called *manggeon* around their foreheads. Both sides of the *manggeon* are more tightly woven than the front, and it is constructed with five different parts: *dang*, *pyunja*, front, back, and *gwanja*. *Dang* is the band for tightening the upper part of the *manggeon*. *Pyunja* is for the lower part. The front part is where the transparent net is, and this goes on the forehead. The back part is used to tighten up the back of the head. A set of *gwanja*, or buttons attached to the headband, are placed behind the ears. Different shapes and colors of *gwanja* indicated the wearer's rank.

Seung Ryong Riew '14

Major: Studio Art

Tanggeon (탕건), c. early 20th century (Korean)

Bamboo, horse tail

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1928.14

Gift of Mrs. M.H. Frank and E. Adams

Tanggeon was worn on top of the *sangtu*, a topknot of the hair. Also made with bamboo and horse tail hair, men wore this indoors by itself or under their *gat* or other hats. *Tanggeon* was only to be worn as an inner cap by *yangban* (noble class) men who worked for the government. People made sure they always had their *tanggeon* near them, and some even used a drawer inside their pillows to keep their *tanggeon* safely with them.

Seung Ryong Riew '14

Major: Studio Art

Clare Veronica Hope Leighton (British, 1899–1989)

Whaling, 1949

Wood engraving

15 h x 12 w (inches)

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1968.1615

The John Taylor Arms Print Collection

Gift of Ward M. and Mariam C. Canaday

In this round-shaped relief print, Clare Leighton displays her sensibilities as an illustrator creating images for products that can be commonly used as household collectibles. Her extensive knowledge of both illustrative art and wood engraving allowed her to create designs for household items such as Steuben glass and stained glass windows.

Designed to be printed on Wedgewood plates, *Whaling* displays a black and white woodcut engraved design with nautical scenery as the main focus. The delicate and sensible engraving marks that shape many of the waves informs us of her accomplished skills as a highly detailed wood engraver.

The engraving technique demands precision and control but permits the fine white lines to form a beautiful richly textured design. It also allows us to explore all the figures carved into the design. Similar to Leighton's piece *The Cotton Picker*, the focus of the image shows hard working sailors at sea, demonstrating the practices of the laboring class as seafaring whalers. Leighton chooses to illustrate the working class in a positive way.

Karin Barend '13

Major: Studio Art



Helen West Heller (American, 1885–1955)

Alabama Biochemist, 1947

Woodcut

11 3/8 h x 8 3/8 w (inches)

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1968.405

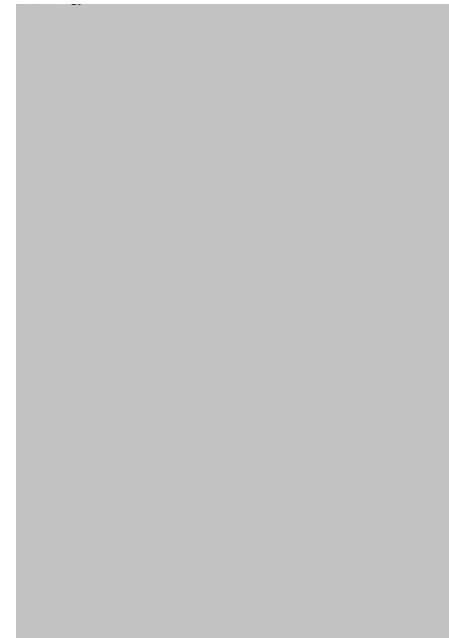
The John Taylor Arms Print Collection

Gift of Ward M. and Mariam C. Canaday

Alabama Biochemist features a black and white image with a heavy pattern-based illustration of a chemist working among natural elements. There is a sense of dimension in this print created by the use of changing directional patterns that emulate designs seen in traditional quilt making. The artists' choice of a composition featuring the human figure and plants also create a sense of depth, despite the flat nature of the print medium. Heller's quilt-like textures created both by the living organisms as well as the abstract elements blends well together, perhaps making a tongue-in-cheek reference to the biochemist blending liquids in the containers that he is holding up. Similar to *The Cotton Picker* by Clare Leighton and Elizabeth Catlett's *Blues*, in this print, Heller focuses on elevating the working class.

Karin Barend '13

Major: Studio Art



PRINTS

Isabel Bishop (American, 1902–1988)

Departure, 1944

Etching

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1968.2414

The John Taylor Arms Print Collection

Gift of Ward M. and Mariam C. Canaday

Isabel Bishop was born in Ohio in 1902, but spent much of her childhood in Detroit. She moved to New York at the age of sixteen to study at the Art Student's League. She is best known for her representations of women in urban life, and during the latter half of her career she had a studio in Union Square where she found inspiration.

Departure was created in 1944. Interestingly, this image features a man with his back facing the viewer. The man is walking away from the viewer so we cannot see his face to understand his mood, and he is walking into the light because his shadow is behind him. Scholars have suggested that this print is a sign of hope and recovery from the Great Depression because, as the man is walking into the light of economic recovery, he leaves behind the shadow of the Depression. Some historians have even suggested that the man's coat being half off as a sign of his shrugging off the weight of the Depression.

Betsy Elderbrock '13

Major: Studio Art

Grace Thurston Albee (American, 1890–1985)

Dr. Farber at Work, 20th century

Wood engraving

6 13/16 h x 6 1/16 w (inches)

The College of Wooster Art Museum 1968.1537

The John Taylor Arms Print Collection

Gift of Ward M. and Mariam C. Canaday

Grace Thurston Albee was a mother of five boys and a frequent traveler. Due to her busy lifestyle, she favored wood engraving because she could make them anywhere without needing a press. (Wood engraving is a relief print where ink is applied to the face of the block and pressed onto paper to transfer the image.)

Dr. Farber at Work, was made in the mid-twentieth century. The subject is a male dentist at work on a patient who is obscured by a white cloth. The doctor is in shadow, while the lamp he is using illuminates the cloth covering the patient. The doctor is drawn in fine, intricate marks while the lamp has a heavier and chunkier feel to it. The interior is well developed and creates a sense of space for the viewer, as if they are in that moment looking on. The doctor's lips look pursed, as if he is concentrating with all his might. His face, his hands, and the lamp all fight for the center of the image, and your eyes are led in a circle around these features.

Betsy Elderbrock '13

Major: Studio Art

