

Re|Framing the Collection:
New Considerations in American and European Art, 1475–1875
Bowdoin College Museum of Art

What can we learn when new questions are asked of the Museum’s collection of European and American art, long admired as expressions of Western ideals and artistic traditions? This exhibition explores intertwined stories of Europeans and their American descendants with Indigenous and enslaved peoples whose lives have long been erased from historical narratives. When James Bowdoin III bequeathed his art collection in 1811 to support the new college bearing his family’s name, his philanthropy co-existed with his family’s enslavement of Africans in colonial Boston and, as Kennebec Proprietors, their participation in dispossessing the Wabanaki of their homelands along the Kennebec River.

The artworks on view, created over four centuries, coincide with the expansion of Euro-American cultures and empires in the New World. Beginning in the late fifteenth century, competing European nations, and after 1783, the United States of America, fought over and harvested the continent’s vast resources. In the process, these governments undermined Indigenous communities through disease and by force, and enslaved Africans and others for their own economic benefit. By mining the Museum’s collection, this exhibition explores how art reflects the deeply ingrained belief systems of Euro-Americans that justified colonization, empire-building, and structural inequality. *Re|Framing the Collection* thus incorporates new perspectives to tell more inclusive stories of our shared histories.



PIETER VAN DER AA
Dutch, 1659–1733

Nova Orbis Terrae Tabula Accuratissime Delineata, 1713
engraving

Bequest of Charles Potter Kling
1935.145

In this engraving, Dutch publisher and mapmaker Pieter van der Aa depicts the world as it was known to European audiences in the early eighteenth century. Featured in the 1713 publication *Le Nouveau Theatre du Monde, ou la Geographic Royal*, it includes an exhaustive list of towns and cities across the globe. Many of these had been established as a result of earlier exploration and colonization. Surrounding the map are representations of heavenly bodies and earthly realms, represented as the Four Continents. “Africa” and “America” are coded as exotic, set in the wilderness with wild animals and basketry. They are juxtaposed with “Asia” and “Europe,” then considered civilized cultures. While the engraving testifies to an early understanding of geographical boundaries made possible through land and sea exploration, the personifications of the Four Continents document how these principal regions were perceived by the audience for this atlas.

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GHERRARDO DEL FORA
Italian, approx. 1445–1497

St. Mary Magdalene between St. Peter Martyr and St. Catharine of Siena, ca. 1475
tempera on panel

Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation
1961.100.11

This devotional picture by Gherardo del Fora illustrates the cultural transformations that began in Renaissance Italy, from the rise of humanism and an interest in classical antiquity to the increasing influence of the Catholic Church. A talented painter and book illustrator in Florence, Gherardo expresses his understanding of the natural world with realistic perspectives of Mary Magdalene, covered in calf-length hair and flanked by Saints Peter Martyr and Catherine of Siena. In the distant scene visible through a window, an earlier event in Mary's life unfolds; she is the first to recognize Christ, newly risen following his crucifixion. During the late fifteenth century during Gherardo's lifetime, new ways of seeing, both literally and figuratively, validated Western Europeans' global explorations and exploitation of the New World that soon followed.



After **JAN DE BEER**
Netherlandish, ca. 1475–before 1528

Adoration Triptych, ca. 1518–19
oil on panel in an engaged frame

Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund, Jane H. and Charles E. Parker Jr. Art Acquisition Fund and Laura T. and John H. Halford Jr. Art Acquisition Fund
2018.25

An exceptional copy of Jan de Beer's now-lost Adoration triptych, this painting expresses ideas found in sixteenth-century Antwerp, de Beer's home and Europe's largest commercial port. Within classical ruins and naturalistic scenery, scenes in the life of the Holy Family are depicted with sophistication and visual elegance. The birth of Christ appears at left and the Flight into Egypt is on the right. At center, three wise men offer gold, frankincense, and myrrh, gifts that mirrored the economy of Antwerp where these rare commodities arrived from India, Asia, and Africa. One king is a Black African whose turban identifies him as Muslim although the artist depicted him in European dress. Through the Trans-Saharan trade route, African rulers were known and respected in Renaissance Europe, before racism and exploitation led to the capture and enslavement of their people.

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JACOPO DA CARRUCCI (called Pontormo)
Italian, 1494–1556

Apollo and Daphne, 1513
oil on canvas

Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation
1961.100.9

One of the Museum's finest European paintings is this work by Pontormo, best known for his work in Mannerism, a late Renaissance style. Based on classical mythology, *Apollo and Daphne* was created when Pontormo was just eighteen-years-old. Commissioned in 1513 by the Medici in Florence, the scene decorated a carriage used in a carnival that marked the family's triumphant return to power after years of exile. Here Apollo, madly in love with the nymph Daphne, chases her through the woods as Daphne escapes his advances through her metamorphosis into a laurel tree. In memory of his beloved, Apollo adopted the tree's leaves as his emblem, and the Medici later appropriated the laurel after their return to power. Classical mythology has long provided a major source of imagery and symbolism among European and American societies.



DENYS CALVAERT
Flemish, 1540–1619

Annunciation, ca. 1595
oil on copper

Museum Purchase, Laura T. and John H. Halford Jr. Art Acquisition Fund, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund, and Jane H. and Charles E. Parker Jr. Art Acquisition Fund
2010.36

Born in Antwerp, Denys Calvaert was one of the first Northern artists to migrate to Italy, where he focused on Christian subjects. His work demonstrates the widespread power of Christian convictions among European adherents and their colonizing descendants. The *Annunciation* encapsulates a transformative moment in Christianity when the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would bear the Son of God, who would be called Jesus, conceived through the Holy Spirit. Painted on copper, its smooth surface gives a pearlescent sheen. The picture was almost certainly privately commissioned and, like Gherardo's painting of Mary Magdalene on view nearby, used as a personal devotional object. Europeans believed that Christianity represented what was true and moral. As a result, other forms of worship or beliefs in the supernatural world were afforded little value, even though they that held great meaning among non-European cultures.

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GUIDO RENI
Italian 1575–1642

Salome with the Head of St John the Baptist, ca. 1620–30
oil on canvas

Bequest of the Honorable James Bowdoin III
1813.3

Guido Reni was an acclaimed painter, known best for his interpretations of religious and mythological scenes. Here he depicts the Biblical story of the beheading of John the Baptist: Salome, the daughter of Herodias, carries his severed head on a charger. A popular subject in Christian art, Salome became especially popular during the Renaissance. Depictions of her were used to demonstrate the role of lascivious women in seducing men from the path of salvation. The painting reminded viewers of human weakness and temptation, and their obligation to live righteously. As if to remind viewers of the story's relevance to modern times, Reni renders Salome's dress in contemporary fashion. Emblazoned with pearls and gemstones, it signifies her wealth and status. James Bowdoin III collected this work, perhaps because it reflected his own moralistic values and those of the period. The painting came to Bowdoin College as part of his 1811 bequest.



EGBERT VAN HEEMSKERCK THE ELDER
Dutch, 1634–1704

The Doctor's Surgery, ca. 1665–75
oil on canvas

Contributed in memory of Dr. Bernard & Mrs. Jeanette Gordon Halperin, a gift from their children
2020.4

Egbert van Heemskerck, the son of a Haarlem doctor, painted many medical genre scenes throughout his career. Here, his scene of an emergency surgery is rich in pathos and tension. The doctor tends to a patient slumped in a chair, while a woman covers her face in fear or grief. Others wait for care. Vanitas symbols found within the doctor's quarters pessimistically pronounce the patient's fate: a skull and femur, and a niche with a skull, a drawing of a bird, and an extinguished candle. Heemskerck's upbringing in a doctor's household likely accounts for the keen insight with which he rendered this interior, imbued with both accuracy and tense drama. Heemskerck's painting is a reflection of the rise of, and increasing reliance on, modern scientific knowledge in European society. By showing a scene of the ill-fated man, Heemskerck likely comments on the limits of these new advancements.

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UNIDENTIFIED ARTIST
Possibly German or Netherlandish

Memento Mori Prayer Bead, ca. seventeenth century
ivory

Gift of Linda and David Roth in memory of David P. Becker
2011.26

This *memento mori* prayer bead serves as a reminder of the inescapability of death and helped lead to the formulation of *vanitas*, or the hollowness of earthly pleasures. It originally decorated a chaplet or rosary that in late medieval and early modern Europe was used as an aid, through prayer, toward salvation. Chaplets reminded the devotee of his or her mortality, and this bead's use of *memento mori* is no exception. Using the doubled-headed Janus figure, the head of a decaying corpse with mouth opened appears back-to-back with a skull; an elaborate network of bone and sinew conjoins the two. Snakes, frogs, snails, and reptiles crawl over its surface, making the bead an object of both fascination and repulsion. The snake was a traditional symbol for original sin and the fall of man, but the frog symbolized Christ's resurrection. The ivory was likely imported from Africa, a result of global trading networks.



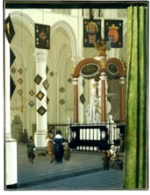
HARMEN VAN STEENWYCK
Dutch, ca. 1612–after 1656

A Vanitas Still Life, ca. 1640–56
oil on panel

Museum Purchase, Laura T. and John H. Halford Jr. Art Acquisition Fund and Funds
Contributed by George and Elaine Keyes
2016.4

One of the leading figures in *vanitas* painting, Harmen van Steenwyck learned to paint under the tutelage of his uncle, artist David Bailly. Van Steenwyck's earlier works often take up the genre of still life but around the mid-1600s, he began to depict *vanitas* scenes. *Vanitas* symbols, also seen in *The Doctor's Surgery*, conveyed a Christian message discouraging vanity and urging the viewer to abandon earthly delights to secure salvation. In this painting, musical instruments and a sword and shield allude to the pleasures and power that one can acquire on earth. However, the skull and hourglass serve as reminders of death, the ephemerality of life, and the passing of time. The faint light emanating from the corner, highlighting the skull, suggests a connection between the natural and spiritual worlds, reminding the viewer to consider their salvation when making decisions plans for terrestrial life.

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HENDRICK CORNELISZ. VAN VLIET
Dutch, Delft, 1611/12–1675

The Tomb of Admiral Jacob Van Wassanaer in the Choir of the Jacobskerk, 1667
oil on canvas

Museum Purchase, Florence C. Quimby Fund in memory of Henry Cole Quimby,
Honorary Degree 1916
1971.6

Honoring an admiral in the powerful Dutch navy, this painting represents the centuries-long struggle of European nations to control expanding maritime trade routes and new territories around the globe. A Dutch Golden Age painter, Hendrick Cornelisz. van Vliet's depicts the memorial to Jacob van Wassanaer van Obdam in the Protestant Jacobskerk in Delft, The Netherlands. The Dutch Republic gained global supremacy through maritime dominance under leaders such as van Wassanaer. He was killed, however, in 1665 when the Dutch suffered a stunning defeat to the English, who then began their rise as a global power. Details of the battle are incorporated into the sculpture. The Italian Renaissance influenced Dutch architecture, but here designers simultaneously embraced traditional Gothic elements, seen in the high vaulting decorated with medieval shields. Van Vliet also introduced a *trompe l'oeil* innovation, conveyed by the curtain framing the interior that provides not only depth but also creates a dramatic point of access for the viewer.



CLAES JANSZ VISSCHER after a work attributed to Cornelis van Dalen the Younger
Dutch, 1587–1652
Dutch, 1638–64

Africa and America from The Four Continents, ca. 1650
engraving

Gift of David P. Becker, Class of 1970
1994.10.336–337

Personifications of the Four Continents became widely popular in European art throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and appeared in a variety of media. These allegories varied greatly depending on their context, illustrated by Pieter Van de Aa's *Nova Orbis Terraquei Tabula Accuratissime Delineata*, on view nearby. In Visscher's engraving, the allegorical figures are in various states of despair, mourning the death of Portuguese prince Theodosius III (d. 1653). Broken weaponry and armor connect these scenes, suggesting the continuous battles for military power among these competing empires. These personifications also reveal European sentiments about each continent. Africa, flanked by two lions, despondently gestures toward the heavens, as if seeking

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help from outside sources. America, partially clothed with a feather headdress, carries a broken bow and arrows. The inclusion of weaponry reminds us of Indigenous and Europeans' vicious fight for control over the New World's land and resources. As if to emphasize this, various goods are placed at America's feet, signaling the bounty of resources to be found in there.

CLAES JANSZ VISSCHER after a work attributed to Cornelis van Dalen the Younger
Dutch, 1587–1652
Dutch, 1638–1664

Asia and Europe from The Four Continents, ca. 1650
engraving

Gift of David P. Becker, Class of 1970
1994.10.334–335

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europeans often depicted the four continents as female allegories. Their personifications became widely popular in art and appeared in a variety of media. In this series of prints, the continents vary greatly from the representations seen in Pieter Van de Aa's *Nova Orbis Terrarum Tabula Accuratissime Delineata*, also on view. The allegorical figures are all in various states of despair, mourning the death of Portuguese prince Theodosius III (d. 1653). Broken weaponry and armor connect the scenes, suggesting the continuous battles for military power among these groups and competing empires. These personifications also reveal European sentiments about each continent. Cloaked in fine silk and a turban, Asia rides an elephant. The combination of the turban and silk lends itself to the exoticness found in what was considered the Orient during this period. Europe, riding a bull, wears an ornate helmet and shield with a spear in hand, signaling the military power and control held by the continent.



BONAVENTURA PEETERS THE ELDER
Flemish, 1614–1652

Naval Engagement, Bay of Messina, Sicily, ca. 1634–1652
oil on canvas

Gift of Colonel George W. Boyd, Class of 1810
1852.9

Bonaventura Peeters the Elder—Flemish painter, draughtsman, and etcher—was one of Europe's leading marine artists, typically depicting battle scenes, storms, and views of the harbors and coasts. Here Peeters depicts a battle off the coast of Messina, Sicily. England and likely Spain's presence is based on the artist's use of national and squadron flags, identifying these two naval powers. However, it is unclear whether the artist illustrated a historical event near the port city or a fictitious battle. At the time, Sicily was controlled by the Spanish monarchy, governed by viceroys living on the

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island. The Ottoman Turks, French, and Dutch were also present in Messina. While the painting depicts the Sicilian landscape, including Mount Etna in the background, it is doubtful that Peeters traveled to there and likely derived inspiration from available engravings, drawings, or paintings of the island.



CHARLES-FRANCOIS GRENIER DE LACROIX
French, 1700–1782

Seaport with Fortress, 1754
oil on canvas

Bequest of the Honorable James Bowdoin III
1813.31

Charles-Francois Grenier de LaCroix studied in Rome under Claude-Joseph Vernet, one of Europe's great eighteenth-century landscape painters until 1753. Painted the next year, *Seaport with Fortress* echoes Vernet's methods of composition and technique with some subject matter that LaCroix appears to have drawn directly from the work of his teacher. In *Seaport with Fortress* as in his other seascapes, LaCroix creates an ambitiously descriptive composition: fishermen tend their nets on a shore full of human activity before a military stronghold rendered in soft colors with ethereal light. The massive fortress, however, serves to remind viewers of the importance of trade and continued naval and military presence as European countries sought to increase and maintain control over their empires. When Sarah and James Bowdoin III acquired this picture in Paris around 1806, they sought to associate themselves as collectors with artistic European traditions as part of a cultured "Old World."



ADRIEN MANGLARD
French, 1695–1760

Sea Fight, ca. 1725–50
oil on canvas

Bequest of the Honorable James Bowdoin III
1813.40

A French painter and engraver, Adrien Manglard worked in Rome for much of his life and became renowned for his maritime paintings. This picture celebrates European maritime dominance, depicting a naval battle between Turkish and European ships, perhaps one of the Venetian wars against the Ottomans. Manglard uses the subject of ships engaged in battle to display his mastery of the atmospheric effects of light and smoke. The yellow sky and massive black ship, looming in the foreground, contribute to the picture's ominous mood. A member of important European art academies, he secured a wide patronage. James Bowdoin III likely acquired this picture while in France, reflecting his attention to the importance of bringing European fine art to America. *Sea Fight* was among the approximately seventy European and American paintings that Bowdoin bequeathed to the College at his death in 1811.

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LE PAGE DU PRATZ
Dutch, ca. 1695–1758

Histoire de la Louisiane
Paris: Chez de Bure, 1758

Courtesy, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives, Bowdoin College Library

Tucked away in James Bowdoin III's book collection are volumes that provide insight into scenes of North America as it was known in the eighteenth century. *Histoire de la Louisiane* details European travels and explorations through French-controlled lands with descriptions of the geographical landscape of present-day Louisiana and the Native Americans communities residing there. Several accounts document the culture, customs, and dress of tribes situated in Louisiana, serving as a document of colonial contact between Europeans and Indigenous communities. This publication, printed in French, provided European and Euro-American readers a distanced look at the natural resources and people living in disparate parts of the "New World."

ANTONIO DE ULLOA
Spanish, 1716–1795

A Voyage to South America, vol. 1 of 2
Dublin: Printed for Alexander Ewing, 1765

Courtesy, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives, Bowdoin College Library

A Voyage to South America is one of several books in James Bowdoin III's collection that taught Europeans and Americans about the southern regions of the so-called "New World," areas which Europeans began to discover and exploit from the time of Renaissance. First published in Spanish and translated into English, this volume details Antonio de Ulloa's explorations of cities across South America. It provides insight into the social, religious, and economic transformations imposed by Europeans in colonial Spanish America. Both volumes also feature ethnological descriptions of Indigenous communities. Books such as this provided Euro-American audiences a mediated look at the culture and customs encountered by Europeans in the "New World" and a chance to learn about how European powers were colonizing these regions.

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ZACHARIAS TAURINIUS

Travels through the Interior of Africa
London: Printed for R. Phillips, 1801

Courtesy, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives, Bowdoin College Library

Travels through the Interior of Africa contains three fictional accounts that guide the reader through the African continent. The voyages are narrated from the viewpoint of colonizers as they traversed its vast interior. The frontispiece emphasizes the message of cross-cultural contact and colonization, showing several African men exchanging words with a European man. James Bowdoin III, a man of worldly interests, likely collected this book in order to better understand African cultures and kingdoms. Travel literature was popular for introducing the reading Euro-American public to regions of the world newly explored by Europeans.



UNIDENTIFIED TURNER
American, New York (New Amsterdam)

Side chair, 1680–1710
painted cherry

Gift of Donald E. Hare and Ann F. Hare
2017.42.7

This side chair made in seventeenth-century New York (then New Amsterdam) represents Dutch furniture traditions. In the Netherlands, *stoelendraaiers* (or turners) specialized in furniture made of lathe-turned parts, readily assembled with dowel joints, and affordable to a wide range of citizens. Exceedingly popular, this seating furniture appears in paintings of Dutch interiors, including Heemskerck's *The Doctor's Surgery* on view in this gallery. Made of cherry, the chair's glossy black paint simulates a costly exotic wood such as ebony which would have been imported from Africa or Asia. This chair also provides a marked contrast to the Joined Great Chair seen nearby because *stoelendraaiers* did not use its labor-intensive mortice-and-tenon-joint construction.



ROBERT FEKE
American, active 1741–1750

Brigadier General Samuel Waldo, ca. 1748
oil on canvas

Bequest of Mrs. Lucy Flucker Thatcher
1855.3

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Samuel Waldo's full-length portrait commemorates the 1745 British and American victory over the French during the Seven Years' or French and Indian War. The massive fort at Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, is visible in the background. In the portrait, considered Robert Feké's masterwork for its painterly quality and monumental size, Waldo symbolizes his status as a brigadier-general with a baton. Instead of a uniform, however, he is dressed in the attire of a prosperous merchant. One of many Anglo settlers who sought control of Maine lands, Waldo secured thirty square miles in what is now mid-coast Maine (the Waldo Patent). He orchestrated its colonization by recruiting German and other settlers. In the process, however, indigenous Wabanaki were dispossessed from their homelands. New research also reveals Waldo's extensive role in enslavement. His wealth, like that of many other Bostonians of his time, was derived as a slave trader in Guinea and Gambia and as an enslaver in Boston as early as 1728.



WILLIAM SEARLE, attributed to
English, 1634–1667, active in Ipswich, Massachusetts, 1663–1667

Joined Great Chair, 1663–67
white oak

Gift of Ephraim Wilder Farley, Class of 1836

1872.1

An accomplished joiner born and educated in Devonshire, England, William Searle emigrated to America in 1663. He is believed to have produced this carved chair for his home in Ipswich, Massachusetts. The handsomely carved ornament, with anthropomorphic figures decorating the stiles, is based on the geometric Mannerist strapwork, promoted in Northern Europe through prints and pattern books. Seen on English furniture from the region in which Searle trained, the designs were carried on by at least two generations of joiners in New England. The use of carving increased a chair's cost, but furniture of local oak furnished many households of Anglo settlers in Massachusetts. Originally given to Bowdoin College for use of the president at Commencement, the chair is now recognized as among the nation's finest examples of seventeenth-century furniture. It provides a marked contrast to the Dutch side chair, made of lathe-turned parts, on view nearby.



JOHN SMIBERT after Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665)
Scottish, 1688–1751, active in America, 1728–1751

The Continnence of Scipio, ca. 1726
oil on canvas

Bequest of the Honorable James Bowdoin III
1813.10

The College's founder James Bowdoin III (1752–1811) understood European artistic traditions to be essential to education and bequeathed his art collection to the College

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upon his death. He acquired this copy after Nicolas Poussin's *The Continnence of Scipio* of 1640 (now at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow) from the Boston, Massachusetts, studio of John Smibert, where it served as an exemplar of the classical style for a generation of American artists. It tells the story of the Roman general Scipio, who returned a female captive to her fiancé rather than enslaving her. As a parable of self-control and the expansion of empire through virtue and valor, the scene became exceptionally popular when the burgeoning United States built its own identity. In this spirit, the painting was understood to provide moral guidance to Bowdoin students in the College's early years.



NATHANIEL SMIBERT, attributed to
American, 1735–1756

The Reverend Samson Occum, 1751–56
oil on canvas

Bequest of the Honorable James Bowdoin III
1813.4

This portrait of Samson Occum (1723–1792), a member of the Mohegan tribe, was likely created by Nathaniel Smibert. He classicizes Occum's Native identity, figuring him in a draped robe and elevating his status to one that Euro-Americans found in portraiture. Occum converted to Christianity at an early age, studying in 1743 with Eleazer Wheelock, a Congregational minister. At Wheelock's request, Occum traveled to England to raise funds for a school for Native American education, leaving his family in Wheelock's care. Following his successful trip, Occum arrived home to find his family in a state of extreme poverty and ill health. The funds he raised were used to found Dartmouth College, which, although established to educate Native Americans and Euro-Americans, only graduated 19 Native students in its first 200 years. While this portrait recognizes a leader among European settlers and Native Americans, Occum's lived experience demonstrates the complexities of colonization and its adverse effect on Native Americans.



JOHN BREWSTER JR., attributed to
American, 1766–1854

The Reverend Daniel Little, 1796–1801
oil on canvas

Gift of Professor William A. Moody, Class of 1882
1898.23

Deaf and mute from birth, John Brewster Jr. was the son of a Connecticut doctor who encouraged him to learn to read and write. Exhibiting a natural talent for painting, Brewster was professionally trained, and his earliest portraits reflect the style of prominent Connecticut artists. Beginning in 1796 Brewster often lived with his brother, Royal, and sister-in-law, Dorcas Coffin Brewster, in what is today Buxton, Maine, and his compelling likenesses of many southern Maine residents survive. Brewster likely

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secured this commission for the Reverend Daniel Little (1724–1801) of nearby Wells through Paul Coffin, Dorcas’s father and pastor of Buxton’s Congregational Church. Little’s direct gaze and sharp features convey his forthright character. A learned Congregational minister, Little was recognized for his mission to the Wabanaki for whom he compiled a dictionary. However, his work focused on creating a more effective way to convert Wabanaki people to Christianity rather than to document their language and culture.



UNKNOWN ARTIST
American, active 1830s

Portrait of an Unknown Gentleman, ca. 1830
oil on panel

Museum Purchase, Hamlin Fund
1964.5

Neither the sitter nor the artist of this portrait has been identified. However, the Black subject’s attire and pose suggest a certain level of affluence and distinction that was rarely found during in the antebellum period. This painting was purchased for the Museum’s seminal exhibition, *The Portrayal of the Negro in American Painting* (1964), which examined mostly positive portrayals of African Americans in art between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



JOSHUA JOHNSON
American, born ca. 1765–after 1825

Portrait of a Man (Abner Coker), 1805–10
oil on canvas

Museum Purchase, George Otis Hamlin Fund
1963.490

This painting is a rare example of an early portrait of an African American by the African American artist Joshua Johnson (occasionally spelled Johnston). Johnson’s naturalistic style eschewed the theatricality and painterly panache of his contemporaries. Instead, he emphasized the details of the sitter’s likeness and downplayed the role of color, perhaps to enhance his subject’s sobriety and dignity. Johnson, born enslaved and later self-emancipated, appeared in Baltimore city directories as a portrait painter, with nearly 100 canvases, mostly of white individuals, attributed to him. He may have learned to paint while working for the artist Charles Willson Peale’s extended family. This portrait likely depicts the Reverend Abner Coker (ca. 1767–1833) of Baltimore’s Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The A. M. E. Church was first established in Philadelphia in 1816 by African Americans seeking independence from white Methodists. The denomination quickly grew throughout the mid-Atlantic states, with Coker leading the Baltimore congregation.

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GILBERT STUART
American, 1755–1828

Thomas Jefferson, 1805–07
oil on canvas

Bequest of the Honorable James Bowdoin III
1813.55

A man of the Enlightenment and the principal author of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776, Thomas Jefferson famously asserted the right to “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” in response to a tyrannical British Empire. This principle, however, did not apply to the many individuals denied citizenship in the new nation: African Americans, Indigenous people, indentured servants, and women. Given the heavy reliance of Jefferson and other early framers of the American republic on the labor and expertise of enslaved individuals, not to mention deep personal connections with them, the irony of the disregard for individuals of non-European descent reflected in the founding documents of the United States is glaring. As the third president of the United States, Jefferson appointed James Bowdoin III as minister plenipotentiary to Spain, inspiring Bowdoin to commission from Gilbert Stuart, one of America’s leading artists, this portrait of Jefferson and that of his Secretary of State James Madison.



THE REVEREND JOHN PRINCE (1751–1836)
UNIDENTIFIED CABINETMAKER
Salem and Boston, Massachusetts

Air Pump, ca. 1783
mahogany, eastern white pine, brass, glass

Transferred from Bowdoin College to Museum Collection, 17.2007



SIMEON SKILLIN JR., attributed to
American, Boston, Massachusetts, 1756–1806

Air pump finial, ca. 1783
mahogany

Bequest of Mrs. Sylvia E. Ross by exchange
2007.29

During the Enlightenment, scientific achievement was one avenue by which Americans kept pace internationally. Wealthy amateur scientists commissioned costly instruments, such as this air pump, in order to conduct their own experiments and gain favorable notice of learned British and European societies. Used to demonstrate the properties of pneumatics or vacuum, this air pump arrived at Bowdoin in 1803. One of America’s finest instrument makers, John Prince advanced air pump design with this

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instrument. As founding president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1780, James Bowdoin II included Prince's research of his air pump among the Academy's first published papers in 1785. Also noteworthy is the pump's mahogany case with columns, frieze, and pediment creating the conceit of a temple of learning. A costly status symbol, the mahogany was extracted in the British West Indies, Honduras, Jamaica, and Cuba by "white cutters" who supervised indentured and enslaved Indigenous and African workers.



GILBERT STUART
American, 1755–1828

James Madison, 1805–07
oil on canvas

Bequest of the Honorable James Bowdoin III
1813.54

In this portrait of Secretary of State James Madison, painted as a companion to Thomas Jefferson, seen nearby, the leader of a new democratic nation is solemnly depicted without the trappings of royalty or aristocracy. Like his fellow Virginian Jefferson, Madison is considered a Founding Father of the United States, and helped to draft the Constitution. A brilliant political theorist, he helped ensure the Constitution's ratification by the States by outlining the amendments found in the Bill of Rights. His ideas of liberty, however, did not extend to the hundreds of enslaved men, women, and children who labored on his plantation Montpelier in Orange County, Virginia.



GILBERT STUART
American, 1755–1828

Phebe Lord (Mrs. Thomas C. Upham), ca. 1823
oil on canvas

Gift of Edward D. Jameson
1919.1

In his compelling portrait of twenty-year-old Phebe Lord, garbed in a fashionable dress and an embroidered scarlet shawl, Gilbert Stuart captures her determined gaze, suggesting a woman of keen intellect and commitment to principle. A Kennebunkport, Maine, native and the daughter of a wealthy ship owner, she married Thomas C. Upham in 1825 and moved to Brunswick, where Upham served as Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy. An early supporter of the antislavery movement, Phebe befriended novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. An active member of the First Parish Church, Phebe organized prayer meetings and lobbied for women's voting rights. She also wrote several books on religion and theology, including a pamphlet highlighting the piety of the formerly enslaved woman Phebe Ann Jacobs, who was also a First Parish Church member.

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LOUIS-LÉOPOLD BOILLY
French, 1761–1845

Sarah Bowdoin, ca. 1806–08
oil on canvas

Gift of Donald, Class of 1956, and Susan Zuckert
2000.6

Louis-Léopold Boilly, well known for his genre scenes and portraits of the middle class, created this wistful portrait of Sarah Bowdoin. She sat for her likeness while living in Paris with her husband James Bowdoin III, who was on a diplomatic mission for the Jefferson administration. While in France, Sarah documented the family's daily life in her diary, now in the College's George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives. It reveals her active involvement in the couple's acquisition of fine art and books, collections later bequeathed to the College. After the death of James Bowdoin III in 1811, Sarah married Henry Dearborn, a Revolutionary War veteran and Thomas Jefferson's secretary of war.



EDWARD GREENE MALBONE
American, 1777–1807

The Honorable James Bowdoin III, ca. 1804
Elizabeth Bowdoin, Lady Temple ca. 1804
watercolor on ivory

Gift of Mrs. Dorothy Hupper in honor of President and Mrs. Kenneth C. M. Sills
1951.7–.8

The intimate portrait miniature, an artistic tradition imported from England, reached its height of popularity in America in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Born in Rhode Island, Edward Greene Malbone sought clients in cities from Boston to Charleston. His fine likenesses on ivory of James Bowdoin III, the College's founder, and his sister Elizabeth Bowdoin Temple reveal his talent as the leading miniaturist of his time. A costly material prized for its creamy color, natural beauty, and translucence, ivory was thinly sliced from tusk or whalebone. With advances in sea trade, elephant ivory was exported from East Africa in ever increasing amounts. Harvesting elephant tusks was slave-dependent and hundreds of thousands of Africans are believed to have died in this trade. As demand for ivory continued into the 1800s, it decimated the African elephant.

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UNIDENTIFIED ARTIST
American, nineteenth century

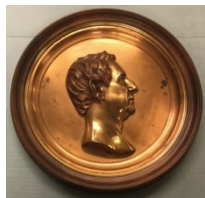
Portrait of an Unidentified Man, ca. 1840
watercolor on ivory

Museum Purchase, Art Purchase Fund
1964.27

Since the Museum's acquisition of this miniature portrait in 1964, the names of the artist and sitter have remained a mystery. Unlike the subjects of the adjacent Malbone miniatures, the Black gentleman is unidentified; his name was not recorded when the miniature was acquired. The exorbitant pleating and ruffling of the sitter's shirt and the looseness of his collar suggest that this miniature was created in the 1840s. The transatlantic trade network that opened up the globe in the sixteenth century complicates the search for this man's identity and, by extension, the production of this miniature. Along with the commodities that crossed the Atlantic were millions of enslaved Africans. A legacy of that involuntary African diaspora, the story of this individual, like countless others, has been drowned by the passage of time, but is no less important to tell.

FRANKLIN B. SIMMONS, artist
American, 1839–1913

WILLIAM H. MILLER & SONS FOUNDRY
Providence, Rhode Island



William H. Seward, ca. 1865
copper alloy, bronze, wood

Gift of Earle G. Shettleworth Jr. H'08
2019.1.1

Maine-born Franklin B. Simmons became a prominent American sculptor. Beginning in 1868, he settled in Rome, Italy, joining a circle of expatriate artists. His works in marble, bronze, and plaster range from monumental public sculpture to portrait busts. Commissioned in 1865 by William Miller, Simmons created thirty-one cast relief portraits for his National Bronze Picture Gallery, including President Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln's Cabinet members, and Civil War generals. Resembling enlarged Roman coins, the medallions underscore the long-held associations between the United States and ancient Greek and Roman republics. In 1861 Lincoln appointed William H. Seward as United States Secretary of State. After the Civil War, Seward began negotiations with Russia to acquire the territory comprising Alaska, over 500,000 acres for \$7.2 million. The ensuing treaty was ratified by a wide margin, but the purchase became known derisively as "Seward's Folly."

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JOHN QUIDOR
American, 1801–1881



Leatherstocking's Rescue II, 1832
oil on canvas

Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
2001.4

John Quidor, a painter of historic and literary subjects, based many of his works on the popular writings of Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper. His lively, vivid scenes provide a visual record of the literature read during the artist's lifetime. This painting's subject derives from *The Pioneers* (1823), one of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, and stresses the dangers of the frontier as explored in the novel. Protagonist Leatherstocking—nicknamed Natty Bumppo—intervenes to save two women from a panther's attack. Its focus is not on Leatherstocking, comfortably traversing the wilderness, but on the fainting, terrified, and "civilized" women. One of many characters in *The Pioneers*, Natty Bumppo appears throughout the *Leatherstocking Tales* series, including its most famous work *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), set during the French and Indian Wars and the struggle between Native tribes and Anglo settlers in what is now New York State.



ANN L. PAYSON SKILLINGS
American, 1825–1905?

New York Landscape, 1857
oil on canvas

Gift of Glenn B. Skillin, Kindness of E. Christopher Livesay
2020.14

The rise of art education in antebellum America provided new opportunities for women, including Ann L. P. Skillings. A native of Portland, Maine, she early earned recognition as "an industrious, studious and promising artist." Likely inspired by artists of the Hudson River School, she traveled in upstate New York where this landscape, the only known surviving example of her work, was painted. Skillings depicts a modest homestead with cows situated in the midst of an undeveloped landscape. This implicit suggestion of ineluctable western expansion—or "Manifest Destiny"—testifies to a sharp contrast in perspectives on the land held by many Euro-American "settlers" and indigenous inhabitants of the region, including the Onondaga and Seneca. Rather than seeking to "tame" the "wilderness," these Native nations embrace a sense of reciprocity with the natural world, as expressed through their cultural animism and spirituality. Such an alternate perspective fails to register in this canvas.

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MARTIN JOHNSON HEADE
American, 1819–1904

Newburyport Marshes, Passing Storm, ca. 1865–70
oil on canvas

Museum Purchase, with the aid of the Sylvia E.

Ross Fund
1964.45

Martin Johnson Heade's views of the salt marshes near Newburyport, Massachusetts, are among his finest works. In these paintings, Heade took the same basic elements—haystacks, flat marshland, a glassy river, and open sky—and arranged them in different ways to achieve a series of harmoniously balanced, horizontal compositions. For a nation torn apart by the Civil War, Heade's salt marsh landscape offered a vision of nature inhabited by an orderly and benevolent deity in which only the passing rain cloud alludes to the nation's troubles. Heade was less well-known in his day than other Hudson River School painters, yet his work has enjoyed wide critical praise since its rediscovery in the 1940s.



WILLIAM TROST RICHARDS
American, 1833–1905

In the Woods, 1860
oil on canvas

Gift of Miss Mary T. Mason and Miss Jane Mason
1955.10

One of William Trost Richards's early landscapes, *In the Woods* helped to establish the artist as a leader of the American Pre-Raphaelite movement. Probably painted in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, during the summer of 1860, the canvas displays the exactness for which Pre-Raphaelite painting was known. From the veins on the leaves in the foreground and the individual blades of grass, details are rendered as precisely as possible. Following John Ruskin's advice, Richards sought to imitate nature as closely as he was able; replicating the original pattern of God's creation, his aim was to represent perceived truth as the highest form of artistic beauty.



WILLIAM STANLEY HASELTINE
American, 1835–1900

Coast of New England (Pulpit Rock, Nahant), ca. 1864
oil on canvas

Gift of Helen Haseltine Plowden
1952.1

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Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, William Haseltine refined his skill as a painter when he joined other American artists studying in Dusseldorf, Germany, from 1855 to 1858. That year he established a studio in New York's Ten Street Studio Building, where Frederic Edwin Church, Albert Bierstadt, and Worthington Whittredge also worked, and furthered his reputation as a landscape painter with regular exhibitions. In *Coast of New England*, he depicts a favorite scene, the shoreline of New England. He is also known for his landscapes of Italy, northern Europe, and the American West.



LOUIS RÉMY MIGNOT
American, 1831–1870

Vespers, Guayaquil River, Ecuador, ca. 1862
oil on canvas

Museum Purchase, Hamlin Fund
1985.18

Louis Rémy Mignot, a native of Charleston, South Carolina, was an artist known for his international landscape scenes. His career reached a turning point when he accompanied artist Frederic Edwin Church on a four-month expedition through Central and South America. Mignot's French-Catholic background, suggested here by the vine-covered bell tower with its crucifix-topped orb, appears to have influenced the works he created. The bell tower's presence in the late afternoon scene testifies to the presence of Christianity in the colonized city of Guayaquil, Ecuador. *Vespers*, the title of this painting, describes the service of evening worship in the Catholic Church.



JAMES HOPE
American, born Scotland, 1819–1892

Waterfall in the Mountains (Stockbridge Fall, Vermont), 1867
oil on canvas

Gift of Miss Susan Dwight Bliss
1948.16

The Western Abenaki and Mohican Nation have inhabited the Green Mountains in present-day Vermont for millennia. They have always had a special relationship with this region as it held sacred meaning and provided natural resources for sustenance. These indigenous groups have long been stewards of the land and have recently begun working with the Forest Service overseeing the Green Mountain National Forest, established in 1923. For the artist James Hope, the four-pronged waterfall and deep gorge reflected a sense of romanticism and sublimity popularized in the nineteenth century. These sentiments are further emphasized by Hope's inclusion of a man standing on the edge of an outcropping, dwarfed by nature.

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ALBERT BIERSTADT
American, 1830–1902

Tuolumne Meadows, ca. 1875
oil on canvas

On loan from the Townsend Avenue Irrevocable Trust

Tuolumne Meadows depicts a romantic, luminous landscape set in California's Yosemite Valley. Bierstadt's composition suggests a frontier untouched by humans. In reality, Native Americans have inhabited Yosemite Valley for millennia and into the present. Bierstadt first traveled westward in 1859 with Frederick W. Lander, a land surveyor for the U. S. government. Westward expansion prompted artists such as Bierstadt and many American settlers to move across the North American continent. Many of them were motivated by the Gold Rush and a belief in Manifest Destiny, the doctrine which asserted that the United States was fated to expand its control, democracy, and colonization across the North American continent. As a result, many Native American tribes were forcibly removed and displaced from their ancestral lands. By the time of Bierstadt's painting, the U. S. government had passed a bill in 1865 advocating for the protection of Yosemite Valley, which later led to the establishment of Yosemite National Park in 1890.



Chinese
Ming Dynasty, Wan Li period, 1563–1620
For the Western export trade

Dish, 1580–1620
hard-paste porcelain with underglaze blue decoration

Bequest of David P. Becker, Class of 1970
2011.69.454



Chinese
Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644

Wine Cup, ca. 1620–40
hard-paste porcelain with blue underglaze decoration

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wilmont M. Schwind Jr.
1984.52

During the seventeenth century, the Dutch and English expanded their trading networks into Asia. Lustrous white porcelain imported from China launched a European craze for refined tableware that often featured blue decoration. The Chinese regularly exported to the West porcelains of lesser quality that did not match what they demanded for themselves. As a result, objects warped in the firing process, a flaw seen

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in this dish, would have been rejected by Chinese society but accepted as desirable by Westerners. This small cup, intended for strong spirits, relates to one discarded circa 1610 in Jamestown, Virginia, North America's first successful English settlement, and reveals the extent of the trade in and demand for precious luxury objects.



UNIDENTIFIED BASKET MAKER
Tlingit, Northwestern North America, nineteenth century

Basket, ca. 1890
split spruce roots, grass

Gift of Mrs. John Dunton
1944.26.1

According to the Tlingit, native to the Pacific Northwest Coast, the Earthly wife of the Sun wove the first basket and passed the skill to other Tlingit women. Using the complex and sophisticated process of twining, this basket illustrates a weaving tradition used for centuries. The imbrication technique creates the geometric pattern here, where decorative grass is folded under each stitch on the outside but is not visible on the inside. Remarkably, it could hold liquids and even accommodate food preparation with hot stones placed inside. As with other Indigenous tribes, European settlers expanding westward showed little consideration for the Tlingit. When Secretary of State William Seward, whose portrait is seen nearby, helped negotiate the purchase of Alaska in 1867, the Treaty of Cession gave U. S. citizenship to all people in Alaska “with the exception of uncivilized native tribes,” underscoring the little regard given to Indigenous people, their governance, and their continued presence in North America.



LEWIS MILES'S STONEY BLUFF MANUFACTORY, attributed to
Possibly made by DAVID DRAKE
American, 1801–after 1873

Jar, ca. 1840s
alkaline-glazed stoneware

Museum Purchase, Lloyd O. and Marjorie Strong Coulter Fund
2020.40

During the nineteenth century, enslaved African Americans created pottery on southern plantations in Edgefield County in western South Carolina, known for its rich clay deposits. This jar represents their production of wheel-thrown utilitarian wares. Its form, handles, and distinctive rim are characteristic of Edgefield wares, and the alkaline glaze, produced by a mixture of clay and ash or lime, derives from a technique used by ancient potters of China, Japan, and Korea. Of the nearly 3,000 enslaved craftsmen who have been identified, David Drake is the only individual whose work can be positively attributed. Beginning in the 1820s, he worked under five different owners. In 1840

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Drake's ownership transferred to Lewis Miles (ca. 1809–1868), Stoney Bluff Manufactory's proprietor, and under Miles, Drake produced his most creative work. Over 150 of his documented examples bear dates, incised inscriptions and verses, exceptional in a culture where laws prohibited literary among enslaved people.

JACOB HURD
American, 1702/03–1758

Grace Cup, December 21, 1744
silver

Private Collection

This Grace Cup, one of colonial America's finest achievements in silversmithing, was inspired by the British and French struggle for North American supremacy. From their stronghold at Louisbourg, Cape Breton Island (now Nova Scotia), the French navy harassed the ships of Britain and its American colonies. In 1744 British Captain Richard Spry and his bomb ketch *Comet* captured a French privateer that had "for some Time infested our Coast." In gratitude, Boston merchants commissioned this cup from Jacob Hurd, a leading Boston silversmith; its engraved inscription to Spry proudly reveals the details of its presentation. With its bold body, two large handles, and domed cover with turned finial, Hurd's late Baroque design reflects the custom of presenting costly silver objects to military heroes, another form of recognition in addition to celebratory portraits, such as Feke's portrait of Samuel Waldo on view nearby.



UNIDENTIFIED SILVERSMITH "BA"
English or Dutch

Coconut Cup, ca. 1620
silver and coconut shell

Gift of Walter G. Gans, Class of 1957
2015.36.11

This cup on its tall footed stem is a typical seventeenth-century form but made of rare materials secured through European exploration, trade, and colonization. Coconuts were such exotic fruit in early Europe that their shells were treasured and converted into elegant drinking vessels. With the scenes engraved on the shell of a couple dining, a woman feeding pigs, and a man departing on horseback, images of daily European life are paired with costly, foreign materials.

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SAMUEL TAYLOR
London, England

Tea Caddy, ca. 1753
silver

Gift of Walter '57 and Katherine Gans
2017.47.2



JACOB HURD
American, 1702/03–1758

Teapot, ca. 1740
silver, wooden handle

Private collection

UNIDENTIFIED SILVERSMITH
Birmingham, England

Nutmeg Grater, 1793–94
silver, metal grater

Lent by Tate House Museum and National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Maine

The British and American silversmiths represented here created these utilitarian forms to house commodities available to consumers on both sides of the Atlantic. Tea, sugar, and nutmeg were produced and consumed across Asia, the Islamic world, and the New World well before Europeans became aware of these goods. Beginning with the Renaissance, European merchants began trading along land and sea routes, bringing these goods back to their countries. This, in turn, exposed new societies to the beverage, sweetener, and spice. By the mid-eighteenth century, intercontinental trade increased the supply of these goods to Europe in an attempt to keep pace with the growing demand.



JOHN READ
London, England

Sugar Bowl, 1712
silver

Gift of Walter G. Gans, Class of 1957
2017.47.4

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HESTER BATEMAN
English, 1708–1794

Sugar Tongs, 1786
silver

Bequest of Mrs. Sylvia E. Ross
1963.44



PAUL REVERE SR.
American, 1702–1754

Sugar Bowl, ca. 1750
silver

Private Collection

The West's burgeoning tea-drinking culture necessitated specialized forms to accommodate all the necessary products for this social ritual: porcelain cups and saucers, and silver spoons, teapots, tea caddies, and sugar bowls. While the wares on display concealed the goods produced for consumption, the labor involved in sourcing these goods should not be ignored. Plantations and involuntary or enslaved labor across Asia and the Caribbean was needed to extract, process, and supply vast quantities of tea and granulated sugar across Europe and the colonies.

REPUBLIC OF HAITI (1806–1849)

6 Centimes Coin, 1846
copper

BOLIVIA (est. 1825)
4 Soles Coin, 1858
silver

PERU (est. 1821)
8 Reales Coin, 1834
silver

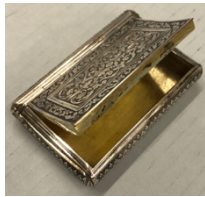
MEXICAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC (1823–1905)
2 Reales Coin, 1830
silver

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Copper, gold, and silver were used for a variety of functional and decorative purposes, including currency. Copper was in vast supply throughout North America while gold

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and silver were available in Central and South America. As early as the sixteenth century, the Spanish Empire controlled most of the regions in the New World with great quantities of silver, copper, and gold. Areas such as Bolivia, Peru, and the island of Hispaniola were hubs for the mining and extraction of these materials. Spanish colonizers primarily used free and unfree Indigenous labor to source these materials that would later be used for European and colonial currency. The examples of silver and copper coins on view from these regions testifies to the continued practice of mining and extracting metals into the nineteenth century.



UNKNOWN ARTIST
American
Tobacco Box, 1831
silver with gold plating

Museum Purchase
1967.1

Tobacco boxes, similar in shape to snuff boxes, were often deeper in order to hold larger, thicker shreds of smoking tobacco. This box features an engraved description, “I. Bowdoin/ 1831,” possibly identifying the owner as James Temple Bowdoin, son of Elizabeth Bowdoin Temple. Tobacco, like snuff, was long used among Indigenous groups in the Americas. As tobacco culture swept through European and American society, fashionable smokers added this new, smaller type of object as personal possession. The tobacco box and its high quality demonstrate the consumer’s status in upper-class society. Tobacco production involved the enslavement of, first, Native Americans and, later, Africans to harvest and process the leaves into a usable commodity. With the end of the Civil War came economic and labor challenges to maintaining the agricultural boom of the antebellum period.



UNKNOWN ARTIST
Probably French
Snuff Box, ca. 1790
watercolor on mother-of-pearl, tortoiseshell, fruitwood

Bequest of Miss Mary Sophia Walker
1904.78

This snuff box commemorates British General Charles Cornwallis’s surrender to George Washington at the Siege of Yorktown in 1781, leading to peace negotiations between the British and colonists during the Revolutionary War. While its watercolor illustrates the colonists’ military victory, this box itself represents the growing popularity of snuff and other imported goods, such as mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell. Snuff, a finely ground tobacco, was first used by Indigenous people throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. After European nations invaded and colonized the New World, explorers

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took note of the practice and brought snuff to Europe, where it was a luxury among the wealthy. Small devices such as this box made the product readily accessible to the owner. By 1790, the trade in tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl were well established, making them available for crafting finely decorated objects.



GORHAM MANUFACTURING COMPANY
with design attributed to HARRIET SARAH WALKER (1844–1898)
American, Providence, Rhode Island, 1863– present

Mug, 1879
silver

Bequest of Miss Mary Sophia Walker
1904.157

The Gorham Manufacturing Company of Providence, Rhode Island, was one of America's pre-eminent producers of fine silver tablewares. This small mug, with ferns and butterflies, is executed in the Japanese taste, an example of the Aesthetic Movement in America. It is engraved with the Arms of the Mystic Owls, a private club in Atlanta, Georgia, that is believed to be associated with merchants in the cotton trade, which was re-established following the Civil War. Through her uncle Theophilus Wheeler Walker's cotton manufacturing interests, Harriet Walker is believed to have been a member of this society and may have designed the heraldic device depicted here. After she and her sister Mary Sophia Walker became their uncle's heirs, they commissioned in his memory the Walker Art Building, in which this gallery is located.

JAMES GELDARD
American, nineteenth century

Hand-book on Cotton Manufacture; or, A Guide to Machine-Building, Spinning and Weaving; with Practical Examples, All Needful Calculations, and Many Useful and Important Tables: the Whole Intended to be a Complete Yet Compact Authority for the Manufacture of Cotton
New York, New York, 1867

Collections of the Maine Historical Society

A Massachusetts resident, Theophilus Wheeler Walker benefited from his success in shipping, trade, and new industrial manufactures. In 1860 he founded the Androscoggin Mill in nearby Lewiston, Maine, seen in this early printed view. Although no enslaved people labored at his enterprises or at his neoclassical estate Gore Place in Waltham, Massachusetts, the Atlantic system of race-based slavery made cotton manufacture and his tremendous wealth possible. Bowdoin College benefit from this activity. It recognized Walker's financial contributions in support of the Chapel when it named its first dedicated art gallery there to honor his mother. In 1891 Mary Sophia

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Walker and Harriet Sarah Walker, his nieces and heirs, commissioned the Walker Art Building in his memory.

England

Reign of James I

Unite (20 shillings) coin, 1606–07

Laurel (20 shillings) coin, 1623

gold

Collections of the Maine Historical Society, 819*18 (left), 819*24

Gold and silver mining by Spain and Portugal in the New World provided a nearly unlimited new supply of these precious metals in Europe and North America. It gave rise to an expanded European monetary system based on the minting of coins but had profound consequences for the Indigenous tribes who were exploited to work under hazardous conditions in not only the mines but also the toxic refining mills.

England

Reign of Charles I

Sixpence, 1625

silver

Collections of the Maine Historical Society 819*2

The struggle in Maine between Wabanaki tribal members and early settlers is dramatically illustrated by the life of Englishman Walter Bagnall, who established a trading post in 1628 at Richmond Island off the coast of Cape Elizabeth. These gold and silver British coins were among the horde found in 1855 when a stoneware jar, in which they were hidden, was recovered from a field on the island. Bagnall traded furs with the Wabanaki, but soon became known for defrauding them, including Warrabitta, one of several female Wabanaki leaders known from deeds. The Wabanaki asserted their jurisdiction when Skitterygusset, Warrabitta's brother, killed Bagnall in 1631. Massachusetts Governor John Winthrop acknowledged that "Bagnall. . .was a wicked fellow, and had much wronged the Indians."



AMBROISE ST. AUBIN FAMILY, KNOWN AS THE BEAR FAMILY, attributed to Maliseet Nation of the Wabanaki Confederacy
American, Prospect, Maine

Covered Box, 1834

birch bark and split spruce root

Transfer from Bowdoin College to Bowdoin College Museum of Art

This oval box represents the material culture of Wabanaki people—Abenaki, Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot—living in what is now Maine and Canada's Maritime Provinces. Attributed to the Maliseet Nation, it is made from the bark of white

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or paper birch, which continues to be a reliable and useful material that Wabanakis use to craft an array of objects. The double-scroll motif on this box, a typical Wabanaki design, was scratched into the soft fibers to reveal the lighter bark within. The skill needed to create this form attests to the artistry of Wabanaki craftsmanship. Beginning in the seventeenth century, European explorers and settlers marveled at birchbark's versatility and Native Americans' use of the material. Inscriptions on the inside cover includes the date 1834 and "Bought of Dr. Bear[s] [?] of Prospect," providing a rare reference to the Native family associated with the box's origins.

UNIDENTIFIED SILVERSMITH
Eastern Canada or Maine

Wabanaki Trade Brooch, ca. 1780
silver

Lent by Maine Historical Society, bequest of Mary Purrington Putnam, 1938, 2420*3

From the time of European contact, Wabanaki traded with settlers, even as they were dislocated from their homelands. This brooch, fashioned from a sheet of rolled silver, is engraved with the same double-scroll motif favored by the Wabanakis and seen on the adjacent birchbark box. The Wabanaki use brooches, large and small, to ornament their dress. One was used by Denny Neptune, a member of the Passamaquoddy tribe in Eastport, Maine, seen in this rare 1817 portrait.



Courtesy, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum.



UNIDENTIFIED BASKET MAKER
Penobscot, probably Indian Island, Maine

Band Basket, ca. 1860–70
split ash

Anonymous Gift
2018.13.47

Wabanaki artists have long excelled as basket makers. These works have an important utilitarian purpose, in addition to connecting to the tribe's creation story. When Gluskabe, the cultural hero, shot an arrow into an ash tree, the People of the Dawn came forth. The Wabanaki have used ash for generations to make canoe paddles and snowshoes, in addition to historic and contemporary baskets. This particular form mirrors shapes made for household use in other materials – wood, paperboard or pottery – by non-Indigenous people and on view nearby. Today the Emerald Ash Borer

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Beetle, an invasive species from Asia and first identified in 2002, threatens Maine's trees and has the capacity to destroy all the ash trees in North America. A consortium of Wabanaki tribal governments, Maine State agencies, and private natural resource organizations are working to mitigate the pest's effects and its threat to Indigenous ways of life.