



Decorative Arts Galleries

tracing 600years of style and design



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About the Galleries

Introduction

This suite of three galleries provides the opportunity for a unified presentation of the decorative art collections at Norwich – notably ceramics, glass, silver, jewellery, textiles and costume. Each gallery has a guiding principle and a different emphasis.

The first is the Twinings Teapot Gallery and presents the history of design and decoration through one form of domestic object – the teapot.

The second and central gallery is the Arts of Living Gallery, which brings together the many decorative arts and shows their mutual, stylistic influences.

The third gallery is entitled Treasure, Trade and the Exotic, and focuses on the influences of the wider world on decoration and design in the home, and on the collecting of non – European arts.

Gallery Themes

The Twining Teapot Gallery

This gallery looks at the story of the teapot from 1700 to the present day. It displays shows a selection from the largest collection of British ceramic teapots in the world. The teapots are arranged according to their date, material and shape.

The Arts of Living Gallery

This gallery tells the story of how Decorative Arts reflect style through the ages from the year 1400 up to the present day. From the earliest times people have wanted to decorate objects for their homes and own adornment.

We choose to surround ourselves with decorative art objects for a variety of reasons: to use, to wear, to display for others, or simply to enjoy owning. They are the 'arts of living', an expression of our tastes and sense of ourselves. These objects tell many stories and

many different factors affect their appearance – historical, technical, aesthetic, political and personal.

The displays show links between art, people, history, culture and contemporary events within a chronological framework but focusing on themes relevant to each century. These are:

- Style – emphasising the key characteristics and motifs of evolving styles in decorative objects from Medieval Gothic to Twentieth Century Art Deco.
- In the Home – focusing on changes in domestic life (home decoration, eating and drinking) through the development and availability of materials, technologies and foodstuffs.
- Textiles and Dress – looking at what people wore; jewellery, textile construction and decoration over the centuries.

Treasure, Trade and The Exotic Gallery

This gallery exhibits artefacts which have been brought here from abroad or are influenced by British trade and activity beyond Europe. Maritime and military activities, developing international trade and colonisation inform the objects on display.

Different sections of the gallery show collections from Africa, Tibet, Japan, China and India and address;

- themes eg. ceremony, celebration, commemoration and slavery.
- imported materials and processes eg. porcelain, lacquer ware, enamel, shell and ivory
- sources of inspiration eg exotic human, animal and plant forms.

The Paston Treasure - mid 1670's. Oil on canvas. Dutch school Unknown artist.

This unusual and unique still life painting is displayed within this gallery. It was commissioned by Robert Paston, the 1st Earl of Yarmouth, of Oxnead Hall, Norfolk.



The painting records some of the once vast collection of treasures owned by this wealthy, cultured family. One of the most important paintings of its kind, the artist has used symbolic devices and allusions to convey a more profound meaning.

The composition consists of many objects that can be seen to represent wealth, the exotic and the fleeting, temporary nature of life. The watch, clock, hour glass and candle all serve as symbols of the passing of time. There are two figures in this busy painting, a black servant to the left hand side, elaborately dressed and with a monkey on his shoulder; and a girl in the bottom – centre of the composition, presumably one of the Earl's daughters'.

The picture has been meticulously painted, highlighting the detail in all the objects on display. The colours mainly consist of warm reds, browns and yellows.

An enamel flask depicted in the painting is owned by the museum and is displayed alongside.

An interactive in front of the picture tells the full story of the work and the symbolism within it.

Teachers can download a more detailed description of this painting and an image from our website.

Curriculum Links

A visit to The Decorative Art Galleries at Norwich Castle Museum can support learning across the curriculum.

English:

- encourage speaking and listening skills , develop specialist technical vocabulary.

Design and technology:

- recognise and manipulate materials and their properties; investigate manufacturing methods.

Citizenship :

- understand how individuals fit into their own community and the wider world (sameness, difference and diversity).

Art & Design:

- collect visual and other information to help develop ideas.
- compare ideas , methods and approaches in others work.
- understand differences and similarities in the work of artists, craftspeople and designers in different times and cultures.
- recognise the development of style and the factors which may have affected this, such as cultural or political change or international influences.

- understand how codes and conventions are used to represent, ideas, beliefs and values in works of art, craft and design (stylistic issues, heraldic devices).

History:

- understand chronological progression and change over time.
- relate objects from the past to their lives in the present and begin to understand similarities and differences between them.
- Learn about social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity in Britain and the wider world (Comparing rich and poor) .
- Understand how the past may be interpreted in different ways and at different times(British Empire, early collectors, slavery).
- Look at local history and aspects of the Medieval.Tudor and Victorian periods (how objects fit into peoples lives).
- Understand how expansion of trade and colonisation, industrialisation, war, conquests and political changes affected the United Kingdom including the local area.

Religious education:

- Understand symbols and meanings

Asking Questions

Formulating questions helps pupils to recognise the ways in which objects reveal information.

Questions asked should be open-ended, encourage dialogue, allow for interpretation and call upon pupil's prior knowledge.

Questions should:

- Encourage pupils to describe the physical features of the object – what you can see and if appropriate, feel, hear and smell. Look and talk about shape, colour. Pattern, texture, weight, size, material, chips, bumps, holes, smell sound, function, construction and design.
- Develop skills of deduction – make decisions about the object based on observation and prior knowledge. For example, about the people who made it and used it, how it is used and where it came from. Deductions can provide the basis for additional research.

- Develop creative thinking skills by encouraging pupils to make broad links and comparisons and develop their own learning.
- Provide an opportunity for pupils to give their opinions about the objects on display in the galleries.
- Develop pupil's descriptive language and technical vocabulary.

Images of 6 objects from the Decorative Arts Galleries are included here, accompanied by sample questions and background information.

For more details and to make bookings,
please telephone 01603 493636
or email museums@norfolk.gov.uk



Stained glass Panel of an Angel Musician, c1450-60.

Found in Great Witchingham Hall, originally from a Norfolk Church.



- What can you see in this panel?
- What colours are in it?
- What is it made of?
- How are the different pieces joined together?
- Why were these particular materials used?
- What does the image represent?
- What message do you think it was trying to convey?
- What meaning does this image communicate to you now?

Background information

Height :585mm

Width: 360mm

- This angel musician would originally have been one of a pair and shows a Gothic archway with an angel playing a cittern underneath. It has a red background with a yellow star and sun in the top corners.
- The most likely designer of this panel was William Heyward of Norwich. He also ran a memorial brass workshop.
- Made in the workshop of John Wighton, Norwich.
- William was a prominent craftsman and , with John Wighton, designed and made the glass for St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, which can still be seen in the church today.

Bone, wood, steel, gold and textile crossbow.

German, possibly Augsburg or Nuremberg, 1580-1600.



- What shape is the object?
- Why is it this shape?
- Is it decorated? How?
- How many different materials is it made of? What are they?
- Are the materials rare or unusual? What effect does this have on the object?
- How would it have been used?
- What sort of person would have used it? Rich/poor, man/woman?
- How would it feel to use this object?
- What words would you use to describe this object?

Background information

Height 800mm

Width 800mm

Depth 100mm



- This crossbow is covered with ivory strips and inlaid with various metals and painted with a floral design in green and gold. It is rare to find such intricate engraved and gilded decoration on a crossbow.
- The engravings depict hunting, pastoral and classical themes. Of particular note are the hunter with his gun, and the dogs retrieving the waterfowl from the river.
- The crossbow was a deadly weapon both for war and hunting, even after the invention of the gun.
- Hunting was a popular pastime among the nobility, but this bow is so heavy it may have been of limited practical use.
- This example would have been a magnificent fashion accessory and status symbol for a wealthy man.

Silver Tureen, 1738-9.

Made by George Wickes, London, for Sir Robert Walpole, Houghton Hall, Norfolk



- What is a tureen?
- Why does it have feet, a lid, handles?
- Why is it so big?
- What is it made of?
- Why is the object made from this material and not another?
- How are the different pieces joined together?
- How many different design motifs are there?
- How are the raised areas produced?
- How would it have been used?
- Do you think it would have been used everyday?
- Who might have used it?
- What is it worth: to the people who made it?
To the people who used it?

Background information

Height 220mm
Diameter 360mm

- This tureen is one of a few known surviving pieces of silver commissioned by Walpole from George Wickes, a leading silversmith from Suffolk who worked for royalty and aristocracy.
- It was originally one of a large set which would have created a glittering effect on the dining table.
- It has many different raised motifs and textures, such as the lion design feet, and could possibly have been used for important occasions and groups.
- Walpole's entertaining at Houghton was legendary for its lavish style and extravagance.
- Walpole, as chief minister for both George I and George II, was effectively the first British Prime Minister and dominated the political arena of the early 18th century.
- Houghton Hall was rebuilt by Walpole during the 1720's and 1730's and employed the finest architects, craftspeople and designers of the day.

Black kid shoe embroidered with flowers, c 1868.



- What colour are these shoes?
- Why are they this colour?
- Have they got any patterns and if so, where?
- What are they made of?
- Why are they made of these materials?
- Why don't they have laces?
- Who were they made for?
- Are they old or new? How can you tell?
- What is the same about these shoes and the shoes you are wearing? What is different?
- What could you do wearing these shoes?

Background information

- These ladies' shoes were high quality and high status.
- Embroidered leather shoes were fashionable at this time.
- The intricate designs were worked by professional craftspeople.
- They would probably have been worn as evening wear.

Glass 'Handkerchief' Vase, 1960's Chance Glass, Smethwick.



- What shape is this object?
- Why is it this shape?
- What is it made off?
- Is it a natural or manufactured substance?
- Is it made of more than one piece?
- Is it decorated? How?
- How long do you think it took to make?
- How would it have been used?
- What ideas does the object convey?

Background information

Height 250mm

Width 160mm

- This vase was made as a cheaper imitation of an Italian original in the 1950's
- The vases were printed with a variety of patterns to imitate real handkerchiefs, incorporating stripes, checks and polka dots in bright colours.
- The unusual and witty design made it popular and new variations were still being produced into the 1970's

Antelope Mask, wood, Ibo Tribe, Onitsha, Nigeria. Early 20th century



- What do you think this mask is made from?
- Who might have worn it? Why? Where?
- Do you think the mask would have been worn with anything else?
- What might the wearer do when the mask is on?
- Do you think the mask has a special meaning? If so, what?
- Who might be watching the wearer?
- How do you feel when you look at this mask?

Background information

Length 435mm

Width 160mm

- This antelope mask is highly stylised with elongated and exaggerated features. This may have been done to ensure that the mask was recognisable as an antelope from any angle.
- It is a dance mask and was used for public events, as opposed to religious ritual