

# THE VIRTUES OF SIMPLICITY

# AMERICAN

# ARTS & CRAFTS

## FROM THE MORSE COLLECTION

### FAMILY GUIDE

#### THINKING ABOUT THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

**B**efore the 1800s (19th century), most Americans lived on farms, but by the late 19th century, many Americans were moving to cities to work in factories.

Factories created objects with machines in huge quantities (mass production) that Americans used to make by hand. This change is known as industrialization. A machine-made object was more affordable to buy, but it was identical to the thousands of others created and often of poor quality. Dishes, glasses, furniture, and clothes—all the

things that factories made—lost the unique look and qualities of handmade things. Designers who didn't like industrialization started the Arts and Crafts movement. Their mission was to produce beautiful handmade items of high quality once again.

#### DIGNITY IN WORK

Arts and Crafts designers believed that factories and machines took pride and dignity away from workers. These designers wanted workers to have a more active role in making items. American Arts and Crafts objects were made by combining machine work with handwork.

**Above:** Women who worked for Gustav Stickley, a leader of the Arts and Crafts movement, are shown here sewing by hand on machine-made fabrics and textiles.

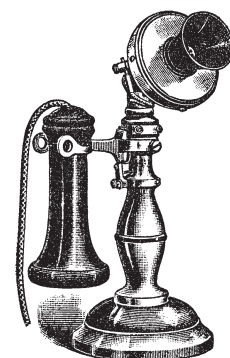
**Left:** This detail of a linen lotus flower from a door curtain made at Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Workshops was likely sewn on by hand.



**Do you make or buy valentine cards for friends or family? A valentine you make would be considered handmade; a valentine you buy would be considered mass-produced.**

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- The Arts and Crafts movement started in England.
- Industrialization brought many conveniences such as the telephone and the light bulb.



# Animal Scavenger Hunt

Detail of squirrel design cabinet door, c. 1892. Mahogany and iron; attributed to the Henry Dibblee Company, c. 1880-96, Chicago.



## In Gallery XII, Chicago, find:

1. Cabinet doors with squirrels.
2. Bookend with a deer.

## In Gallery XIII Art Nouveau, find:

3. Vase with an octopus and sea horse.
4. Vase with a squid.
5. Pin with a flamingo.
6. Vase with a bird.
7. Mirror with peacock feathers.

## In Gallery XIV American Art Pottery, find:

8. Three vases with fish.
9. Vase with a salamander and crawfish.
10. Vase with a bat.
11. Vase with a frog.

### SCAVENGER HUNT Answers

- |                                   |                       |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Chicago, Platform 1            | 7. Platform, Object 2 |
| 2. Other American Regions, Case 4 | 8. Cases 17 and 20    |
| 3. Case 15                        | 9. Case 1             |
| 4. Case 15                        | 10. Case 17           |
| 5. Case 17                        | 11. Case 19           |
| 6. Case 17                        |                       |

## AMERICAN ART POTTERY (GALLERY XIV)

Frequently used to decorate rooms, pottery was a big part of the Arts and Crafts movement. Pottery pieces—shaped from moist clay and hardened by heat—were often made in molds and then finished by hand. The companies that began to make pottery became known as art potteries. One of the most famous and successful art potteries was Rookwood Pottery in Cincinnati, Ohio, founded by Maria Longworth Nichols in 1880. Rookwood and other American art potteries gave women more career opportunities during the late 19th century. Many women painted china in the late 1800s as a hobby—some had even turned it into a career—but art potteries gave them a chance to design and create pottery as well.



### What is the frog doing?

Vase, c. 1882. Glazed white clay, Rookwood Pottery, 1880-1967, Maria Longworth Nichols, decorator (Gallery XIV, Case 19).

## UNITY OF DESIGN

Arts and Crafts designers wanted interior rooms that were simple, attractive, healthy, coordinated, and calm. They focused on the “unity of design,” the harmonizing of color, pattern, building materials, and style.



Writing desk, c. 1905. Oak, Stickley Brothers Company, 1891-1926, Grand Rapids, Michigan (Gallery XII, Other American Regions, Platform 2).

## Design a Piece of Arts & Crafts Furniture

Look at the furniture in Gallery XII. How is it similar? What materials were used? Now it's your turn! Try to make your piece of furniture go with what you see in the exhibition so that you have “unity of design.”



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