

# DISCOVERING DIFFERENCE

AN EXHIBITION CURATED BY THE STUDENTS OF HN315D/AH307D

The centuries following Columbus's "discovery" of America in 1492 were marked by an unprecedented degree of contact, conflict, and exchange between formerly unconnected cultures. This exhibition examines how images, objects, and ideas travelled between Europe, America, and Asia. Prints were used to bring European ideas and culture to new places (1 & 2) and to convey knowledge of the newly expanded world to Europe (3 & 4). Objects too travelled. Chinese porcelain (7) was highly valued in Europe (and America) and interest in this import led to the creation of European delftware (5), which imitated the appearance of this foreign luxury. Finally, new plants and animals entered the Old World from the New. "Soft drugs" like tobacco (6), tea (7), coffee, chocolate, and sugar changed European and American life and created new behaviors and social rituals. (BN.)

## Object List

1) **Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurf, *Last Judgment*, from the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, 1493 (Nuremberg, Germany), woodcut.** This woodcut print of the Judgment Day comes from the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, a Christian history of the world published in Nuremberg, Germany in 1493. The image is featured in the portion of the *Chronicle* centered on the Apocalypse and the Coming of Christ at the end of the world. Based on the Book of Revelation, the image contains the expected iconography of Christ raising the faithful to Heaven, and damning the sinful to Hell. European depictions of the Judgment Day, such as this particular print, played a significant role in the colonization of the New World by the Spanish. They appeared often in New World monasteries and chapels, as the symbolism of these images served as a tool of conversion and a reminder of the Spanish goal to convert the natives to Christianity before the impending Judgment Day. These images were made by native artists, who attempted to retain the European iconographical features while simultaneously incorporating native stylistic techniques (fig. 1). This combination resulted in the development of a hybrid artistic style that has come to be known as the tequitqui style, after

the Nahuatl word for "subject person" or "vassal." (OC/MR/JR.)



Fig. 1 *Last Judgment* from southwest posa chapel at San Andres, Calpan (Mexico) 2<sup>nd</sup> half of sixteenth century.

2) **Crispin de Passe, *Horus Voluptatum: Garden of Love*, ca. 1600 (Netherlands), engraving.**

This print revolves around the theme of gardens of earthly delight and the evolving culture of love in the Low Countries, especially the Netherlands. During this time the social construct of love was changing rapidly as the youth began pull away from the rigid laws of the church and adventure into the more clandestine areas of premarital love and seduction. This new culture of love found its way onto prints being made in the Low Countries. Prints such as these were then sent with other goods to Japan and were copied by Japanese artists. This style known as Namban (Southern Barbarian) became immensely popular and coveted by upper-class individuals in Japan. As Christian images were banned by the new ruler Hideyoshi, who feared Christianity's effect on his personal

power, secular European subjects were in high demand. Images like our print were desired particularly for their foreign depictions of instruments, leisure, and especially romance and this imagery was adapted for Japanese screens (fig. 2) painted by Japanese artists for the domestic market. (ND/SV).



Fig. 2 Detail of Japanese Namban screen, early 17<sup>th</sup> c.

3) **Johann Adam Schall Von Bell, from Athanasius Kircher, *China Illustrata*, 1667 (Amsterdam), engraving.** This engraving published by Athanasius Kircher in his book *China Illustrata* represents the German Jesuit Johann Adam Schall Von Bell. He was one of many Jesuits who made the journey east to spread his knowledge of religion, science, and mathematics. During the late 16th and early 17th centuries Jesuits were constantly finding new ways to spread the faith to the Far East. The Jesuits quickly learned that in order to be accepted, they needed to be open and flexible, adopting elements of the host culture as seen in Schall's dress. Through the many

objects represented in this print it is clear that the Jesuits also utilized Western science to gain access and influence within the Chinese court. In Europe, prints such as this helped shape European understandings of the Chinese. (MG/CM.)

**4) John Lodge, *The People of Florida Sacrificing Their First Born to the Sun* from William Russell, *The History of America, From its Discovery by Columbus to the Conclusion of the Late War, 1778* (London England), etching and engraving.** This print is based on a 1591 engraving by Theodore de Bry, who had never seen Native Americans in the flesh and instead drew on preexisting visual sources. Ultimately de Bry created a classicizing representation of these individuals. Despite this, de Bry's image was seen as canonical even as it was reworked to reflect different cultural and societal views of the New World. Lodge's print, though produced nearly two centuries later, reinforces de Bry's depictions of natives, as it shows them as both barbaric and vaguely classical at the same time. This image was included in Russell's text because English audiences would have expected to see some sort of wild native image filled with nudity and human sacrifice in a book about the New World. Furthermore, this print allowed Russell to comment on Spain's role in colonizing Florida, and their obviously inadequate attempt to civilize the Floridian natives. (CC/LR.)

**5) Dutch, delft tile with bird decoration, ca. 1600-1670 (Delft, Netherlands), earthenware.** The object is a square, white Delft style earthenware tile ornamented with the blue image of a bird standing in water and four single flowers at each corner of the tile. Although the tile was manufactured in the Netherlands, its blue and white enamel glaze and iconography were deliberately made to resemble

Chinese porcelain. In the an age of flourishing trade, the Dutch desired imported crafts, particularly from China, in order to evoke the worldliness, economic prosperity, and the superior taste of the period. However, the expense of imported porcelain caused the Dutch to look for other means to capture these ideas. Delftware emerged as a way to quench their desire for Chinese porcelain via domestic production. By creating their own objects that mimicked Chinese porcelain, the Dutch showed off their wealth and worldly knowledge while celebrating their own craftspeople. Thus, the Delftware tile speaks to not only what the Dutch thought about the Chinese, but what they thought about themselves. (KF/SW)

**6) Clay pipe, ca. 1660-1700 (English?), clay.** This clay pipe would have been used by Europeans in the second half of the seventeenth century. The fragment is only a portion of the entire length, which, complete with the full stem, would have measured to approximately 33-45cm. Originally, pipes were created and utilized in the Americas, only to be brought over to Europe after the introduction of tobacco from the New World to the Old World. The social, medicinal, and economic implications of tobacco use were significant forces behind the trade of the product. The standard for English clay pipes, as seen in this piece, is a singular bowl and stem, as opposed to later pipes which utilized a separable bowl and stem construction. The socio-economic status of the user for whom the pipe would have been created was low due to the simplicity in construction and design. Pipe smoking would have been a custom practiced by people of different social statuses; however, the amount of detail would have been indicative of a user's status. (MR/PI.)

**7) China, Tea Bowl, late 18th to early 19th centuries (China), porcelain.** This Chinese porcelain tea bowl dates somewhere between the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries and was likely imported to America at this time. The floral decorations on the bowl's exterior seem to be native Chinese flowers, the most obvious being the rose-colored tree peonies and orange Chinese lantern seeds. The orange designs along its interior and exterior rims are not particularly unique and do not help date the work. The use of Chinese items, such as this tea bowl, evoked curiosity of the East and fueled the American imagination of the foreign land. Elements, such as the Chinese flowers on this bowl, acted as a base upon which one could construct his or her image of China. The trade of porcelains was also directly related to the tea trade between U.S. and China. Many of the tea sets—much like ones this tea bowl would have been a part of—retained qualities that adhered to traditional Chinese practices of drinking tea, such as handleless cups. As these practices became part of American civility, they aided in the construction of a global identity of tea, an identity ultimately associated with porcelain objects similar to this tea bowl. (AG/NM.)

For a full catalog of the exhibition see: <https://goo.gl/k5drFY> or scan

