

BIRDS

ART CONNECTIONS > Recommended for all ages

Fly through the Museum in search of feathered friends! Use your hawk-like vision to see if you can spot the birds hiding in the art in the European, Chinese, and American galleries. Start in **Gallery 142**, a first-floor gallery with art from Europe.



Meissen Birds (Gallery 142)

Perch in front of the big white birds in this gallery. These birds are made out of **porcelain** (pore-sah-lin), a kind of clay that is baked in a very hot oven called a kiln. These birds lived in the palace of Augustus II in the city of Dresden, Germany, where Augustus kept a porcelain zoo with hundreds of bird and animal sculptures.

- > Many birds like these were colorfully painted. Over time the paint flaked off or was removed. With your Museum buddy, talk about the colors the feathers might have been.
- > Pick out your favorite bird. Look at its beak. Is it long or short? Pointy or round? What do you think your bird eats? What are some of the things that make your bird different from the other porcelain birds?

Two different sculptors made these birds. Johann Kändler's sculptures are more lifelike because he studied real birds in zoos and in nature. The other sculptor Johann Kirchner looked at books and pictures of birds for inspiration.

- > Strike a pose like one of the birds you see.
What do you notice?

FUN FACT: Did you find a dragon? In the Dresden palace, there were three porcelain mythical creatures—a dragon, a unicorn, and a sphinx. Wing your way across the Shapiro Family Courtyard to the first floor of Art of the Ancient World.

Front side panel of outer coffin of Djehutynakht (Gallery 119)

Find this wooden panel at the end of a long display case in the wall. This is a panel of a coffin, made for a man named Djehutynakht (Je-hooty-knocked). He was a governor in Egypt more than 4,000 years ago! The coffin is decorated with pictures of things that Djehutynakht wanted to take with him to the afterlife. On the right hand side, priests are bringing supplies and offerings for him.

- > How many different types of birds can you see?
- > Choose one of the birds to look at closely. What details can you see? What noise would it make if it were real?
- > Find the two geese. Notice how one has its wings up and the other has its wings folded. Look at the different types of feathers he painted.

When you leave the Museum, if you pass by some real geese, look at their feathers. Be careful not to get too close, though—they bite!



Museum of Fine Arts Boston

Bird-Shaped Chariot Fitting (Gallery 273)

Next, search for something very small. Make your way to the second-floor Chinese Bronze Age gallery. Use your eagle eyes to find the bird-shaped bronze figure in the large display case. It is hollow (empty on the inside) with a small bronze ball in it that makes noise when the bird moves.

- > Imagine what a horse-drawn chariot would look and sound like with this bird adornment (decoration).
- > Now look carefully at the features of the bird. Does this bird remind you of other birds you have seen? What is different or similar to the Meissen birds that you just saw?

After your visit BECOME A BIRD-WATCHER!



Build your own binoculars for bird watching using two cardboard toilet paper rolls, tape, and a piece of string. Decorate the rolls with markers or collage paper and then tape the two rolls together side by side. Attach the ends of the string to each roll, so you can wear your binoculars around your neck. You are now ready to head out and look for birds around your home, school, or park. Sketch the different birds you see.



FRONT: JOHANN JOACHIM KÄNDLER, **FIGURE OF A HERON**, ABOUT 1735. HARD-PASTE PORCELAIN. KIM AND EDWARD M. PFLUEGER COLLECTION. BEQUEST OF EDWARD M. PFLUEGER AND GIFT OF KIM POWERS PFLUEGER. ON VIEW IN THE ANGELICA LLOYD RUSSELL GALLERY. **FRONT SIDE PANEL OF OUTER COFFIN OF DJEHUTYNAKHT**, EGYPTIAN (FOUND IN DEIR EL-BERSHA), 2010–1961 BC. CEDAR. HARVARD UNIVERSITY—BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS EXPEDITION. ON VIEW IN THE STANDFORD AND NORMA JEAN CALDERWOOD GALLERY. **BACK: BIRD-SHAPED CHARIOT FITTING**, CHINESE, 12TH CENTURY BC. BRONZE; THE HOLLOW BODY OF THE BIRD CONTAINS A SMALL BRONZE BALL THAT JINGLES WHEN IN MOTION. GIFT OF C. T. LOO. ON VIEW IN THE PAUL AND HELEN BERNAT GALLERY. ALL IMAGES © MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. © 2015 MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.



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