

THE POSTMASTER'S PORCELAIN:
COLLECTING EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ART IN MIDDLE AMERICA

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School at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

THE POSTMASTER'S PORCELAIN:

COLLECTING EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ART IN MIDDLE AMERICA

presented by Sarah S. Jones,

a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Professor Ilyana Karthas

Professor Kristin Schwain

Professor James van Dyke

For Soumya D. Sanyal, my husband and cheerleader.

Thank you for pushing me!

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146. Johann Joachim Kändler for Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, *Putto as a Lady with Powder Compact*, modeled ca. 1750, porcelain, 8.9 x 4.0 x 4.2 cm., Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden
147. Morris Burke Parkinson (American, 1847-1929), *Cupid Asleep*, 1897, photograph, 21.7 x 29.3 cm., The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas
148. *Woman in Ball Gown*, German, Late Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century, ceramic, 15 in., Strain Collection, G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture, Kearney, Nebraska

149. *Dress*, Great Britain, 1878-1880, jacquard-woven silk, 55 in., Victoria and Albert Museum, London
150. Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, After Johann Joachim Kändler, *The Good Housekeeper (Leserins am Spinnrocken)*, Mid- to Late Nineteenth Century, porcelain, 7 in., Strain Collection, G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture, Kearney, Nebraska
151. Louis Surugue (French, ca. 1686-1762), After Jean Baptiste Siméon Chardin (French, 1699-1779), *The Amusements of Private Life (Les Amusements de la Vie privée)*, 1747, etching, 376 x 272 mm., British Museum, London
152. François-Hubert Drouais (French, 1727-1775), *Madame de Pompadour at her Tambour Frame*, 1763-64, oil on canvas, 217 x 156.8 cm., The National Gallery, London
153. Maria Christina, Duchess of Teschen (Austrian, 1742-1798), After Johann Casper Heilmann (Swiss, 1718-1760), *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1765, gouache, Schönbrunn Palace, Vienna, Austria
154. Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, After Michel-Victor Acier (French, 1736-1799), *Sleeping Woman*, Nineteenth Century, porcelain, 8-1/4 in., Strain Collection, G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture, Kearney, Nebraska
155. Michel-Victor Acier for Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, *The Happy Parents*, modelled 1775, biscuit porcelain, 23.7 cm., Victoria and Albert Museum, London
156. Giorgione (Italian, 1477-1510), *Sleeping Venus*, ca. 1510, oil on canvas, 108 x 175 cm., Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden
157. Titian (Italian, ca. 1488-1576), *Venus of Urbino*, before 1538, oil on canvas, 119 x 165 cm., Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy
158. François Boucher, *The Interrupted Sleep*, 1750, oil on canvas, 32-1/4 x 29-5/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City
159. François Boucher, *Portrait of Madame de Pompadour*, 1756, oil on canvas, 212 x 164 cm., Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany
160. Jean Honoré Fragonard, *The Love Letter*, ca. 1770, oil on canvas, 32-3/4 x 26-3/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

PREFACE

This dissertation provides a case study of a type of art collecting that has not received significant scholarly attention, one based on the collecting activity of middle-class Americans living in the Midwestern United States, but who nonetheless are interested in the appeal of European “high” art. I intend to show that collecting and the appreciation of art are not limited to those with the financial acumen of a Rockefeller, Guggenheim, or Saatchi. The following analysis centers on Philip and Mildred Strain, a postmaster and schoolteacher, and the obstacles they overcame to amass a collection that reflected their interest in eighteenth-century European aesthetics.

Typically, collectors attract the attention of scholars when they have access to art and artists that become revered enough to be placed in the art historical canon. Access to the work of those artists necessitates the ability to connect with dealers, as well as the artists themselves, in global cultural centers like Paris, New York City, or London. In 1958, Aline B. Saarinen published a book titled *The Proud Possessors*, which is composed of fifteen biographical sketches of American art collectors. It established a canon of American collectors on which the scholarship of collecting is based.¹ Saarinen, an art critic for *The New York Times*, narrates the lives of men who built the physical, economic, and political infrastructure of the United States, women whose names now adorn major American museums, and the world travelers who brought the work of modern artists like Picasso and Matisse to America. Saarinen writes that “the

¹ A few recent works on art collectors in America include William Middleton, *Double Vision: The Unerring Eye of the Art World Avatars Dominique and John de Menil* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018), Kathryn Porter Aichele, *Modern Art on Display: The Legacies of Six Collectors* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2016), Charles Molesworth, *The Capitalist and the Critic: J.P. Morgan, Roger Fry, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016) and John Ott, *Manufacturing the Modern Patron in Victorian California: Cultural Philanthropy, Industrial Capital, and Social Authority* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

overpowering common denominator” that unites these collectors is that “collecting art was a primary means of expression” and that their “involvement with art collecting was passionate and urgent.”²

Saarinen’s comments about the motives of the socially prominent collectors, whose financial resources and connections allowed them access to the international art market, can also be applied to Mr. and Mrs. Strain. The Strains also used their collection to express an identity of their own making. However, the Strains could be categorized as “outsider collectors,” a term that echoes the concept of the outsider artist, a recognized genre in the art-historical canon. Outsider artists operate separately from mainstream art establishments; they are often self-trained and labor for years in obscurity before being discovered by a dealer, curator, or scholar. The Strains built their store of connoisseurial knowledge through secondary sources such as auction catalogs and collecting guides. Their close relationship with Jack Drew, an art and antiques dealer in Omaha, mimicked the relationships between the canonical collectors and dealers, galleries, and auction houses with Drew serving as a consultant facilitating access to the art and antiques markets of metropolitan cultural centers. The Strains lacked the financial and social resources of Saarinen’s canon of collectors, but they shared a passion that motivated their appreciation of the art to which they were most attracted.

I approach the Strains’ collecting activities as Saarinen approached wealthy collectors. This dissertation will examine the Strains’ biography to locate the origin of their interest in the art they collected. It includes a detailed documentation of the methods they used to display their collection in their home, since that environment no longer

² Aline B. Saarinen, *The Proud Possessors: The Lives, Times and Tastes of Some Adventurous American Art Collectors* (New York: Random House, 1958) xx.

exists. Their collection has been dispersed and their residence remodeled for future inhabitants. My discussion relies on interviews with individuals who knew the Strains in order to understand how they lived with their collection. My analysis provides another chapter to the story of art collectors in America, expanding our understanding of the human impulse to express ourselves through the objects we possess.

I. INTRODUCTION

Kearney, Nebraska, is 4,916 miles from Dresden, Germany, the home of the Meissen Porcelain Manufactory. This is the geographic distance traveled by many of the objects in the Strain Collection of Decorative Arts. The cultural distance between the two locations is even greater. Kearney is the model of an American Midwestern college town where families spend Saturdays tailgating at the University of Nebraska Kearney Lopers football games. (Fig. 1) Dresden is a cultural capital of Europe with a history that spans almost 750 years with Baroque churches and palaces dominating the architectural landscape. (Fig. 2) Kearney's history of 150 years is a blink of an eye by comparison. This dissertation is the story of one couple who created a sanctuary of European style and history in the center of a quintessentially American space.

Edward P. (Philip) and Mildred Strain lived in Kearney, Nebraska, for the entirety of their sixty-year marriage. They are buried in Kearney Cemetery near his parents. They both received degrees from the University of Nebraska Kearney, which was established in Kearney in 1904. Undeniably, their ties to the community were strong, but not reflected in the interior of their home. Inside their brick, ranch house at the center one of Kearney's oldest neighborhoods, they created a replica of an elite, eighteenth-century European interior that could transport them to a location 5,000 miles and 200 years away.

Mr. and Mrs. Strain had no children to whom they could pass along their collection and home. In their later years, they knew they wanted their collection to outlive them. The Strains contacted their alma mater in an effort to prolong the life of their project. The Kearney office of the University of Nebraska Foundation, the fundraising body of the university system, worked with the Strains on their estate gift beginning the mid-1990s. Mrs. Strain suffered a stroke in the late 1990s and Mr. Strain cared for her

until his death in 2003, at which time she moved to a nursing home. Betty Becker-Theye, a neighbor and friend of the Strains' who served as a confidante to the couple during their negotiations with university development officers, reported that Mr. Strain was devoted to caring for his wife during their final years together. She provided evidence of the Strains' connection to their collection when she described the emotional reaction the couple had to the idea that they would no longer be able to enjoy their creation after the end of their lives.³

When Mrs. Strain died in November 2008, the couple's estate lawyer executed their will and the process of transferring the Strain estate to the university began. The couple's estate plan allowed the university the flexibility to accept the gift in a way that honored the Strains' wishes and made financial sense for the university and its historic house museum, the Frank House (now known as the G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture).⁴ Although the Strains would have liked their home and collection to remain in situ and serve as a host site for visiting artists and scholars, this disposition of the estate did not meet the needs of the university. The estate plan also allowed the university to preserve a portion of the collection and sell the real estate and remaining objects to fund the care of the objects retained. Decisions as to which objects would be transferred to the Frank House were made by a committee of university administrators; the directors of the two museums connected to the University of Nebraska Kearney, the Frank House and the

³ Betty Becker-Theye, personal correspondence with the author, January 2015.

⁴ Jim Ganz, *Will of Philip and Mildred Strain*, ca. 2000. The G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture, a historic house museum, is located on the western side of the campus of the University of Nebraska Kearney. Until 2014, the museum was known as the Frank House. The museum is named for George W. Frank, an early investor in Kearney responsible for building the town's first electric utility. Mr. Frank and his family lived in the house from 1889 until 1900. I was able to view the Strains' will during my employment at the Frank Museum in 2011. I reviewed the files available to me at the Ganz Law Office in December 2013.

Museum of Nebraska Art; and Dr. Jason Combs, a certified antiques appraiser, University of Nebraska Kearney faculty member and member of the Frank House's advisory committee. The objects chosen to become the permanent representation of the Strains' forty-year project also cohered with the collecting mission of the Frank House, which signifies an elite American household in the late nineteenth century.

My relationship with the Strain Collection began during my tenure as the interim director of the G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture, then known as the Frank House, in 2010-2011. Located on the University of Nebraska Kearney campus, the Frank House is a historic house museum located in a three-story Richardsonian Romanesque mansion built in 1889. Previously, I served as a student tour guide at the museum from 2006 to 2008 while completing my bachelor's degree in art history. After completing coursework for my master's degree at the University of Missouri, I was asked to return to Kearney to oversee the museum while the director, to whom I had reported as a student employee, took a leave of absence. I worked on many projects during my year in the administrator's seat, but by far my favorite was contributing to the Strain Collection project.

My first introduction to the Strain Collection occurred in the spring of 2011 when I was escorted to the Strains' home by the university's vice-chancellor of finance. He wanted to discuss contracting me to assist with moving the collection from the Strains' home to the Frank House, a trip of about 1-1/2 miles. My previous academic study of porcelain objects and practical experience with museum collections made me the local option for the job. The registrar from the Museum of Nebraska Art could have assisted but was not versed specifically in the care of historical artifacts as that museum deals

primarily with fine art objects like paintings, sculptures, and works on paper. My self-taught knowledge of the conservation of such materials came from information provided to the public by the National Park Service and other reputable sources. Some practical knowledge was gained during my work with the objects already in the Frank House's collection.

I knew from my reading that porcelain and glass were most at risk from damage caused by handling mishaps and the microscopic grit found in dust. The years that the objects were left alone worried me. No one had lived in the house in almost nine years when I was brought in to clean and pack. Objects were no longer in their original positions and I spent many hours contemplating what the house must have looked like when the Strains lived there. I tried to imagine how they would have lived their daily lives among their collection.

Unfortunately, I was never able to meet Mr. or Mrs. Strain. Our time in Kearney overlapped during my undergraduate years at University of Nebraska Kearney and Mrs. Strain's last years in the Mother Hull nursing home, a Kearney institution since 1889, as she passed away in 2008, the same year that I graduated with a BA in art history.⁵ Mr. Strain passed away the winter before I moved to Nebraska in 2003. My knowledge of the couple comes from speaking with people who knew them.

I spent most of the month of July 2011 in the house on my own. I cleaned each porcelain object with distilled water and cotton swabs. I wrapped each porcelain figure acid-free paper, cotton muslin, and bubble wrap, and then entombed them in the archival

⁵ Ella Melton Peck, "The Origins of The Mother Hull Home, 1889-1929," *Buffalo Tales*, v. 3, no. 6, Buffalo County Historical Society (June, 1980) http://www.bchs.us/BTales_198006.htm, accessed July 31, 2017. Obituaries, "Mildred Strain, Kearney Resident, 93" *Kearney Hub* (Kearney, Nebraska) November 25, 2008.

box that would be their new home. The house seemed sad and lonely as I sat at a folding table in their living room and completed the work to dismantle the Strains' carefully arranged tableaux. With the Strains both gone, the house and their collection had been left behind as silent evidence of their passion. The interior of the house was dimly lit and quiet; it made me wonder if this feeling was similar to the way the house had been when the Strains lived there. With the stereo and television concealed, I imagined a house where sounds echoed in the noiseless space even when the Strains lived there surrounded by their soundless objects.

This dissertation takes the format of a collection catalog, a document that honors the Strains and their relationship to their collection. They carefully curated their home through meticulously planned purchasing and display schemes. Their enduring relationship with their dealer, Jack Drew, signals the kind of collectors they considered themselves – those who intentionally collect with a specific theme in mind. They were not assembling the items decorating their home in a random or haphazard manner. There was a method to their actions and intentionality to their decisions.

II. THE STRAIN COLLECTION OF DECORATIVE ARTS: AN OVERVIEW

The Strain Collection of Decorative Arts is the result of a bequest by Edward P. (Philip) and Mildred Strain to the University of Nebraska Kearney. The constituent objects cross boundaries between medium, geographic origins, and chronology. The objects can be generally described as decorative arts, luxury goods that may serve both an aesthetic and utilitarian function. The collection consists primarily of porcelain and glass objects representing the Rococo, Neoclassical and Art Nouveau styles originating in both western European and American manufactories.

The collection is currently housed at the G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture, a historic house museum on the campus of the University of Nebraska Kearney. When the bequest was accepted by the museum administrator and university finance officers in 2009, a decision was made to accession a portion of the Strains' entire collection as a representative assortment of their gift, into the museum's authority. One-hundred items were added to the museum's permanent collection; additionally, approximately one-hundred objects, including rugs and reproduction furnishings, were kept to enhance the atmosphere of the house museum's period rooms. The largest portion of the segment added to the museum's permanent collection, twenty-five items, are porcelain objects related to the tabletop: cup and saucer sets, compotes, a *jardinière*, one full miniature tea set, platters, and various serving pieces. The porcelain tabletop items all derive from major European manufactories: Sèvres, Royal Vienna, Royal Berlin, and Meissen. Another significant portion of the objects represent a category that I will call small accessories. This subset includes a Sèvres inkwell, a Meissen snuff box, a Limoges music box with a clock inset, and an assortment of Limoges enameled miniatures

including a carriage, a piano, a chariot, and a sleigh. The remaining items in the collection represent three producers of fine art glass that operated primarily in the late nineteenth century: Louis Comfort Tiffany, Émile Gallé, and the Steuben Glass Works. The glass objects include bowls, vases, lidded dresser boxes and a tulip lamp.

Figure groups and individual figures comprise another significant portion of the collection. The subjects of these small, porcelain sculptures include figures from classical mythology, gardener children, and fashionable ladies. The objects were created primarily in the eighteenth-century Rococo and Neoclassical aesthetics of Meissen's master modelers, although the maker's marks indicate that the objects date from later in the company's history, largely between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The collection includes four original oil paintings. A landscape scene by Henri Biva (1848-1929), a French painter known primarily for sedate landscapes and floral still life paintings, is done in an ethereal Symbolist style.⁶ This painting hung in the front entry hall of the Strains' house. A pastoral scene reminiscent of the *fête galantes* of Antoine Watteau, painted by Frederick Ballard Williams (1871-1956), hung in the Strains' bedroom and features three women in a forest setting, one woman plays a lute. Along with Watteau, Williams' work displays influence from the Barbizon school.⁷ Another painting, which hung in the Strains' living room, is a similar *fête galante* scene featuring six women arranged in two groups of three under the shelter of yellow and green foliage, along a lighted path leading to a shimmering lake. The last painting is pastoral landscape depicting a wide stream flanked by brightly colored flowers and green

⁶ Janet Whitmore, "Biography – Henri Biva (1848-1928)," *Rehs Galleries*, http://www.rehs.com/Henri_Biva_Bio.html, accessed March 3, 2018.

⁷ "Frederick Ballard Williams (American, 1871-1956), *Pierce Galleries*, http://www.piercegalleries.com/artists/iart_williams_f_b.html, accessed March 3, 2018.

foliage with a rustic barn in the mid-ground. This canvas was painted by Louis Aston Knight (1873-1948), who was born to American parents in France. Knight exhibited at the Parisian salons and is known for his French landscapes in the Barbizon style.⁸ Only one of the paintings is currently on display; the Aston Knight landscape is hanging in the Chancellor's conference room in the university's main administration building.

An ancillary set of objects from the Strains' house was taken into the Frank Museum and dubbed the "for use" collection. These items may not become part of the accessioned property of the museum but would be useful in the exhibition of the Strain permanent collection. This set of objects includes display furniture used by the Strains to exhibit the collection in their home. Other items are chairs, rugs, a set of cast iron garden furniture, and the Strains' Louis XV salon furniture set that was the main feature of their living room.

The two cultural institutions related to the present circumstances of the Strain Collection are the G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture, the repository of the collection, and the Museum of Nebraska Art. The G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture, formerly known as the Frank House, is historic house museum that preserves the Richardsonian Romanesque mansion located on the west side of the university's campus. At the time the house was built in 1889, George Washington Frank (1830-1906) and his family were one of the leading families of Kearney, developers of the town's early electrical system, and acted as boosters by bringing investors and businesses to the town. By providing electricity to Kearney, the Franks activated the industrial development of the town. They were investors in local business, both in Kearney and in their hometown

⁸ "Louis Aston Knight: A Study of Light and Water," *Rehs Galleries*, <http://www.rehs.com/louis-aston-knight-exhibit.htm>, accessed March 3, 2018.

in upstate New York. The house museum's mission is preserving the history of the family, house and their role in the founding of the town but has been expanded in the last few years to focus on the development of Kearney as a center for commerce and culture.

Restructuring of the University Relations department in 2012 brought the Frank Museum under the purview of the director of the Museum of Nebraska Art (MONA). This streamlining of the museum's governance has allowed for a broadening of the mission's scope to include the development of Kearney as a burgeoning urban center in Central Nebraska. MONA has maintained a more autonomous relationship with the university than the Frank Museum had in the past. The collecting mission of the Museum of Nebraska Art centers on art made in and about Nebraska, as well as by artists who have called Nebraska home. Kearney's location in the center of Nebraska makes the museum accessible to the citizens of the entire state. The objects collected by MONA sit firmly in the realm of fine art with highlights from the collecting being prints by John James Audubon, an early explorer of the Nebraska territory; a painting by Robert Henri, a towering figure in the history of American art who was born in Nebraska; and a monumental ceramic sculpture by Jun Kaneko, a Japanese-born artist who has lived and worked in Omaha, Nebraska, since 1986.⁹

While MONA's collection focuses on fine art, the collection of the Frank Museum reflects its status as a historic house museum with the majority of objects categorized as decorative art. The addition of the Strain Collection greatly expanded the depth of the Frank Museum's decorative art collections and complements objects already under the protection of the museum. The permanent collection of the Frank Museum

⁹ "History," *MONA: Museum of Nebraska Art*, <https://mona.unk.edu/mona/about/history/>, accessed March 3, 2018.

features objects that belonged to the Frank family and other period pieces that enhance the experience that the visitor is entering a world set in the distant past. The display of the Strain Collection appropriately augments the exhibition spaces in the Frank Museum because they were manufactured during the nineteenth-century revival of interest in the Neoclassical and Rococo styles of the eighteenth century. Wealthy families like the Franks would have been able to afford original eighteenth-century specimens, as is evidenced by the eighteenth-century Sèvres urn in their collection. This urn, one of the most prominent objects in the collection, dates to 1776 and has traditionally been on display in the dining room's built-in hutch where a large mirror allows viewers to see both the back and front decorations simultaneously. During the Franks' tenure in the house, the Sèvres urn was displayed in Mr. Frank's office as a signal of the family's wealth and good taste. Business associates and potential investors invited to socialize in the family's home would have been impressed by the elegance of the house which may have influenced their decision to invest in Mr. Frank's businesses or the community. The urn can be seen in photographs of the house's interior taken by A.T. Anderson and commissioned by Augustus Frank, vice-president of the Frank companies and elder son of G.W. Frank, during their "Fifty Views of Kearney" project.¹⁰ This series of photographs depicted Kearney landmarks creating the narrative of a young metropolis. Augustus Frank's motive for commissioning the photographs was marketing the town as an attractive investment for wealthy Americans living in the eastern part of the United States, specifically New York where the Franks had business connections through George

¹⁰ Marian Dettman Johnson, "A.T. Anderson, Photographer," *Buffalo Tales*, v. 5, no. 9 (Kearney, NE: Buffalo County Historical Society) October, 1982, online, http://www.bchs.us/BTales_198210.htm, Accessed March 19, 2016.

W. Frank's brother, a merchant and former congressman from western New York. The "Fifty Views of Kearney" project is one example of the economic contributions made to the community by the Frank family and serves as one example of the historical content of the museum's narrative.

The deposition of the Strain Collection into the control of the Frank Museum not only enhances the museum's ability to serve its audience through expanded exhibition opportunities. It also honors the wishes of the Strains to maintain their objects as a carefully curated assemblage with educational potential. The Strains also included language in their will expressing their desire for the collection to be used for study by the students of Kearney. Both Mr. and Mrs. Strain earned degrees from Kearney State Teachers' College, the name of the college between 1921 and 1962.¹¹ They understood the amount of knowledge that was to be gained from the objects in their collection. The emphasis in the will is on the collection as a resource for students enrolled in the college's fine arts programs. The Strains often attended musical and dramatic performances at the school; from this information, we can logically assume that they also attended fine art exhibitions at the university's student/faculty gallery and at the Museum of Nebraska Art.¹² The Strains' gift was not just to the university as an institution, but to its students with the goal of expanding their cultural intelligence as the Strains did for themselves with their collection and patronage of the university's cultural programming. The gift of the collection to the Frank Museum also provides a cultural benefit to the

¹¹ University of Nebraska at Kearney, "UNK History," <http://www.unk.edu/about/history.php>, Accessed September 30, 2016.

¹² Betty Becker-Theye indicated that she met the Strains while attending musical/dramatic performances at Kearney State College. Betty Becker-Theye, email correspondence with the author, January 2015.

Kearney community but the students were the Strains' primary concern according to anecdotal information and the language used in their will.¹³

At this time, the Strain Collection has not yet been announced publicly. The Frank Museum benefitted from an estate gift from another life-long Kearney resident, Carol Cope, in 2014. An endowment for the maintenance of the house and programming offerings in the amount of \$262,500 is currently supporting renovations of the exhibition rooms, collections storage, and office spaces.¹⁴ The collection gift will be announced at a later date with the support of the Office of the Chancellor when renovations of the museum allow the Strain Collection to be exhibited in a method that meets current museum industry standards.¹⁵

¹³ Roger Jones (retired University of Nebraska Foundation development professional) in conversation with the author, December 2013.

¹⁴ "Alumna Carol Cope leaves lasting legacy with \$12.6 million estate gift," *NU Foundation*, (Sept. 4, 2013) <https://nufoundation.org/-/article-alumna-carol-cope-leaves-lasting-legacy-with-estate-gift>, accessed September 30, 2016.

¹⁵ The Frank Museum recently announced the Strain Collection and completed their renovation project. Tyler Ellyson, UNK Communications, "Director of Frank House adds more layers to Historic Home," *Kearney Hub* (Kearney, NE) April 6, 2018, online, accessed April 30, 2018 http://www.kearneyhub.com/news/local/director-of-frank-museum-adds-more-layers-to-historic-home/article_3bdb8d5c-39b3-11e8-bb32-a72b38d280be.html.

III. EDWARD PHILIP AND MILDRED C. STRAIN

This section provides a biographical synopsis of Philip and Mildred Strain of Kearney, Nebraska, the collectors who amassed the collection that is the focus of this catalog. By examining their individual biographies, we may come to understand the origin of the Strains' interest in European culture and their drive to create the unique environment found in their home.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Strain were born in Nebraska and earned college degrees, an unusual feat for Americans of their generation as in 1940 only 4.6 percent of Americans possessed a college degree.¹⁶ They married in 1943 and built their house in 1952 in a neighborhood within walking distance of the city's primary cultural offerings including the University of Nebraska Kearney's fine arts venues, Harmon Park's outdoor concert hall, and the Kearney Public Library.¹⁷ Mr. Strain spent his life in Kearney, a city initiated by the railroads that connected the Midwest to the rest of the country. Due to this connection, Kearney has always possessed a cosmopolitan element to its culture. Mrs. Strain grew up in Geneva, Nebraska, a much more rural environment without the connection to major railroad lines. However, as the county seat of Fillmore County, the town served as a commercial capitol for its small geographic radius. Both Mr. and Mrs. Strain belong to the class of Nebraskans who did not mature on a farm or ranch.

Edward Philip Strain was born in Kearney, Nebraska, on November 11, 1915. His father, Edward, was alternately a farmer and salesman, but his main employment was as a

¹⁶David Morgan, "1940 U.S. Census data released online," CBS News, April 2, 2012, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/1940-us-census-data-released-online/>, accessed March 3, 2018.

¹⁷Margaret Stines Nielsen and Buffalo County Historical Society, "History of the Kearney Public Library", *Buffalo Tales*, v. 13, no. 3 (March 1990) online http://www.bchs.us/BTales_199003.html.

clerk for the electric utility company.¹⁸ His mother, Emma, was born in Iowa, married Edward Strain in October 1914, and as many women of her generation did, became a homemaker.¹⁹ The Strains had one other child, a daughter, who died in infancy. Commonly known as Philip, Mr. Strain lived his entire life in Kearney, graduated from Kearney High School and Kearney State College (now University of Nebraska Kearney). Philip Strain died in Kearney on December 23, 2002, at the age of 87 years.

An examination of the Strain family structure provides a method to understand the influences on Mr. Strain's tastes and interests as a collector. The Strain family's roots in Kearney seem to begin when Edward, father to Philip, came to the town to attend the Commercial Course at Kearney Normal School in 1908. He is listed as the president of the Senior Commercial course students in the 1908 college yearbook.²⁰ The commercial course was intended to prepare students to work in business and included mastery of skills such as shorthand and bookkeeping. Edward engaged in campus activities, playing on the baseball team and serving as manager for the football team.²¹ Edward P. Strain began his job as a clerk at the electric office after having been in Iowa at the home of his parents, James and Jennie, during the month of September, 1907.²² Sometime between 1908 and 1910, Edward's parents joined him in Kearney as they are listed as living in Kearney in the 1910 U.S. Census. James Strain, Edward's father, is listed in this census as being 64 years old. Archival records indicate that James began receiving a Civil War

¹⁸ "1930 U.S. Census," *Ancestry.com* and National Archives and Records Administration. Also, "1940 U.S. Census," *Ancestry.com* and National Archives and Records Administration

¹⁹ "1930 U.S. Census," *Ancestry.com* and National Archives and Records Administration. Also, "1940 U.S. Census," *Ancestry.com* and National Archives and Records Administration

²⁰ Class of Nineteen Hundred and Eight, *Blue and Gold: A Book for Kearney Normalites*, vol. 1 (Kearney, NE: Kearney Hub Press, 1908), 68.

²¹ *Kearney Hub*, October 8, 1908.

²² *Kearney Hub*, September 9, 1908; *Kearney Hub*, October 24, 1908.

veteran's pension in 1890, which was transferred to his widow upon his death in 1917.²³ The family's residence was situated near the town center. The *Kearney Hub*, the local newspaper, reported in June 1910 that Mrs. Jennie Strain entertained the women of the Phil Kearny Circle, the ladies' auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), in their home on East Twenty-Fifth Street.²⁴ This event demonstrates that the senior Strains were active and prominent in their community's social circles.²⁵ With James' status as a veteran pensioner, it is likely that Edward was the main source of financial support in the home during this time. In 1910, the Strain's household also included Edward's co-worker at the electric company, John Betts, who is listed as a roomer and would have contributed financially to the household.²⁶ By 1910, one of Edward's two sisters, Mrs. Mary Morrow, had also relocated to Kearney with her husband, a dentist.²⁷ The Morrows owned a home on Fourth Avenue in Kearney where they resided with their children according to the 1910 U.S. Census. The two households were situated within walking distance of each other and the downtown commercial area. Using these facts about the Strain family, we can classify them as belonging to a white-collar, middle class social stratum. Their lives were not centered on agriculture, in contrast to many in the area, and their social time was spent largely with other city-dwelling families.

²³ Ancestry.com, *Civil War Pension Index, General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934*, accessed September 12, 2016.

²⁴ The Grand Army of the Republic was a veterans' organization, much like today's Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), organized by former soldiers and sailors from the Union armies mustered during the Civil War.

²⁵ The population of Kearney in 1910 was approximately 6,200 people, a large town for the region and time period. The population is likely attributed to the founding of the Kearney State Normal School (now UNK) in 1905. State of Nebraska, "Population of Nebraska Incorporated Places, 1860 to 1920," <http://www.neded.org/files/research/stathand/bsect5a.htm>, accessed March 3, 2018.

²⁶ *Kearney Hub*, October 21, 1908, described John Betts of Lake Geneva Wisconsin as a supervisor at the electric utility.

²⁷ Ancestry.com

Emma Smith married Edward P. Strain in October, 1914; the wedding was held in the home of her parents and attended by family, friends, and Edward's co-workers from the electric company.²⁸ As noted on multiple occasions in the *Kearney Hub*, Emma and Edward's chief pastime was traveling by car; by October, 1957, the senior Strains had completed automobile trips to all 48 states and six provinces of Canada.²⁹ Philip, and eventually Mildred as well, often accompanied the senior Strains on their journeys. Family photographs show Philip and his parents visiting relatives in the Pacific Northwest.³⁰ According to Jeanne Hobelman, Mrs. Strain's niece, his parents' interest in travel did not transfer to Philip. She reported that he did not like to travel and often stayed behind in Kearney when Mildred visited her family in Geneva, Nebraska.

Anecdotal evidence about the junior Strains traveling to Europe provides contradictory information about their travel habits. Mrs. Hobelman could not recall if the Strains had traveled to Europe. Roger Jones, the University of Nebraska Foundation development officer who facilitated the Strain's estate gift, reported that they traveled to Europe on multiple occasions and brought back objects purchased on their trips.³¹ Dr. Betty Becker-Theye, a friend and neighbor of the junior Strains, also stated that the couple had visited France, either separately or together. However, Jeanne Hobelman, Mildred's niece who had a close relationship with her aunt, stated that Mildred and Philip never visited Europe. As referred to above, Hobelman recalled that Philip was not fond

²⁸ *Kearney Hub*, "Edward Strain and Emma Smith Married," October 3, 1914.

²⁹ *Kearney Hub*, October 15, 1957.

³⁰ Bonnie Anderson, email correspondence with the author, August 29, 2016.

³¹ Roger Jones (retired University of Nebraska Foundation development professional) in conversation with the author, December 2013.

of traveling and that Mildred often attended family functions alone when the occasions were held in towns other than Kearney.³²

It is also a logical conclusion that the couple traveled to Omaha to visit their antiques dealer, Jack Drew, and partake in the cultural offerings of the largest metropolitan area in the state. The Strains developed a friendly relationship with Drew and would likely have visited his shop in person. They also were known to frequent the arts offerings of Kearney, including the University of Nebraska Kearney theater productions and the local symphony. We can extrapolate from this activity and their close relationship with Jack Drew that they likely took advantage of the cultural offerings of Omaha including the Joslyn Art Museum, theater, and music performances. Even though we have no definitive evidence of the Strains' travel habits, we can presuppose their interest in the elements of artistic culture that were readily available within their geographic reach.

Philip's mother, Emma Blanche Smith, was born in Kearney in July 1889, the same year that the Frank House was built. Before her marriage to Edward, she graduated from Kearney High School, attended Kearney State Normal School, and later was employed as a bank clerk in town.³³ Her parents, Otis and Eliza Smith, came to Kearney in 1884 and her father was employed as a carpenter during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.³⁴ The Smiths settled in Kearney around the same time as the Frank family and many others during a boom period in the city's early development. Eliza was

³² Jeanne Hobelman, email correspondence with the author, September 20, 2016.

³³ *Kearney Hub*, June 1910.

³⁴ "1880 U.S. Census," *Ancestry.com* and National Archives and Records Administration; "1890 U.S. Census," *Ancestry.com* and National Archives and Records Administration.

born in England and came to the United States in 1852 with her mother and sister.³⁵

According to correspondence with Bonnie Anderson, a distant cousin by marriage, the Smith grandchildren often visited their grandmother, Eliza, at her home in Kearney as it was near their school. Otis died in 1918 when Philip was toddler, so he may not have exerted much of an influence on the young Philip. However, Eliza died when Philip was 11 years old and her English heritage may indeed have left a mark on Philip's interest in all things European.

Philip enhanced his academic interest in European culture at Kearney State Normal School, where he studied in the 1930s. The 1935 university yearbook indicates that Mr. Strain was a member of the French honor society. His college transcripts evidence his interest as they list three years of advanced French language classes and a year-long course in European history, alongside general business courses and courses required for his major in chemistry.³⁶ Philip's studies in chemistry may account for his interest in porcelain as the early history of the material in Europe relates heavily to eighteenth-century notions of alchemy and other early scientific processes. The manufacturing process for porcelain requires chemical precision to achieve successful results.³⁷

Military service in Europe during World War II may have further augmented Philip's appreciation of European culture. Philip was inducted into the military in 1943 during the height of World War II, but per Mrs. Strain's niece, he was dismissed from service for an unknown medical reason and would have been sent home to Kearney never

³⁵ Bonnie Anderson, email correspondence with the author, September 9, 2016.

³⁶ University of Nebraska Kearney Special Collections and Archives, "Academic Record of Philip Strain," September 14, 1932.

³⁷ Thanks to Elizabeth A. Williams at RISD Museum for thoughts on this topic.

having been stationed in overseas.³⁸ After his dismissal from service, he returned to his position at the Kearney post office where he was employed until his retirement in approximately 1980.³⁹

Mildred C. Ough was born in Ohio, Nebraska, like her later husband also in 1915. She was the oldest child in a large family.⁴⁰ She was a graduate of Geneva High School in Geneva, Nebraska, received a teaching certification at Peru State College in Peru, Nebraska, and a bachelor's degree in home economics at Kearney State Normal School in 1943. She died in Kearney in November 2008.

The Strains were married on January 23, 1943, at the home of her parents in Geneva, Nebraska. At the time, Philip was employed as a clerk at the post office and she as a school teacher. As a young woman, Mrs. Strain was actively involved with Kearney civic women's groups, serving as president of the Kearney Women's Club from 1949 to 1951. The Strains were also members of the Kearney Community Concert Association with Mrs. Strain serving as the group's secretary in the mid-1950s.⁴¹ In her role in the Buffalo County Home Economist's Club, Mrs. Strain presented programs about interior design. They were often hosted by his parents in their home and hosted her parents in their home. In 1952, the Strains applied for a permit to build their home on Twenty-Eighth Street, that would become the home in which they would amass and display their collection of decorative arts.⁴²

³⁸ Jeanne Hobelman, email correspondence with the author, September 20, 2016.

³⁹ Mr. Strain was 65 in 1980, the common age of retirement.

⁴⁰ "1910 U.S. Census," Ancestry.com and National Archives and Records Administration, accessed September 7, 2016.

⁴¹ *Kearney Hub*, "Community Concert Schedules for this Area Announced", September 24, 1956.

⁴² *Kearney Hub*, "Building Activity Picking Up; Three Homes Planned," April 3, 1952

The Strains never had children and seem to have devoted their lives to their decorative arts collection; multiple sources described their collection as “their children.”⁴³ However, Mildred liked children, trained as a teacher, and dedicated her career and time to mentoring young people in her community. She worked in small, isolated schools after receiving her teaching certificate. Later, she spent many years of her career as a counselor at the Youth Residential Treatment Center (YRTC) in Kearney. The at-risk youth of Nebraska have been placed at state-run YRTC since 1881.⁴⁴ Photographs, taken by Solomon D. Butcher, chronicler of Midwestern life at the turn of the twentieth century, show students among gardens and buildings. (Fig. 3) Jeanne Hobelman indicated that Mildred asked her nieces to write letters to the young men that she was counseling at the rehabilitation center.⁴⁵ Mildred also served as a troop leader for the Campfire Girls and Kearney’s 4-H Sewing Club.⁴⁶

Mrs. Hobelman’s recollection further indicated that Philip and Mildred acquired the majority, if not the entirety of their collection, through art and antiques dealers in Omaha and Kansas City. The Strains seem to have amassed a large portion of their collection primarily through their relationship with the Drew family, long-time art and antiques dealers in Omaha, Nebraska, the closest metropolitan city. Long before digital communication allowed the individual consumer access to a world-wide supply network, Jack Drew offered a connection to the European antiques trade to the wealthy residents of Omaha. Established in 1928, Drew’s Antiques and Art Objects operated in the Bradford-

⁴³ Roger Jones interview; Betty Becker-Theye correspondence.

⁴⁴ Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, “About YRTC,” http://dhhs.ne.gov/children_family_services/Pages/jus_yrtc_aboutyrtck.aspx, accessed September 10, 2016.

⁴⁵ Jeanne Hobelman, email correspondence with the author, September 20, 2016.

⁴⁶ *Kearney Hub*, “Society Notes,” May 7, 1956, October 16, 1953, and January 19, 1956.

Pettis Residence, a historic house in Omaha's affluent Gold Coast-Blackstone neighborhood. Jack and Louis Drew, sons of a prominent Omaha contractor, owned and managed the business until the 1980s.⁴⁷ Jack became a friend to the Strains, as demonstrated by their postcard correspondence spanning over 40 years. He performed a complete inventory and appraisal of their collection in 1976.

The postcard correspondence gives great insight into the Strains' relationship with Jack Drew. Archived by the Strains' estate lawyer after Mr. Strain's death in 2003, the postcards span thirty years of friendship, beginning in the 1960s and continuing until the 1980s. The front of each postcard chosen by Mr. Drew displays an elegant Baroque or Rococo interior space from the palaces of European monarchs and aristocrats. The text of the postcards lists the cities that Drew visited and reports on his antique buying activity, citing visits to Paris, Vienna, London, Berlin, Budapest, and Amsterdam. The 1964 postmark dates the earliest card and provides a clue to the beginning of the Strains' collecting practice. The couple built their house in 1952 and the date of the postcard leads to the conclusion that they remodeled their home's interior in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Several of the postcards feature interior spaces from Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna including the Napoleon Room, the Lacquer Room, the *Millionenzimmer*, and the Gobelins Room. (Fig. 4) Schönbrunn Palace, the summer palace of Empress Maria Theresa, has served as a tourist attraction and museum since the 1960s and was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites List in 1996.⁴⁸ These images exposed the Strains to expertly applied interior details like gilded boiserie, wall-sized tapestries, Baroque

⁴⁷ Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission, "Resolution on Bradford-Pettis Residence," City of Omaha, July 24, 1979.

⁴⁸ Schönbrunn Palace, "Discover Schönbrunn Palace," <https://www.schoenbrunn.at/en/about-schoenbrunn/the-palace/> accessed 18 September 2017.

furniture, and the placement of decorative arts objects for display. The images that Drew chose to send to the Strains evidence his understanding of their interests in European art and likely provided examples to be duplicated in the Strains' Kearney home.

Photographs from the archives of the Durham Museum in Omaha provide insight on the arrangement and display of objects in Drew's shop. An image from around 1950 shows Clyde W. Drew in a showroom staged with objects. (Fig. 5) A portrait in an ornate gilt frame hangs above a simply shaped desk, made possibly of walnut based on the grain patterns of the surface. On the desk, a group of ceramic objects, likely porcelain, features two pastoral figures reminiscent of objects in the Strain collection. A cavalier with an upraised hand sits on the right, while his maiden counterpart sits on the left-hand side of the desktop. These figures share a Rococo base structure that signifies their relationship to each other. This Rococo base is also found on many figures in the Strain collection.

The card table with porcelain inlay is the most important object in this image of Clyde W. Drew as the image pertains directly to the Strain collection. This Rococo card table sat in the Strains' front hallway at the time of the university's acquisition of the collection. Comparison between the Drew image and an image taken at the Frank House in 2015 corroborates this assumption. The table is also listed as part of the items located in the front hallway of the home in the 1976 inventory of the collection recorded by Jack Drew.⁴⁹ The Strains possessed several pieces of similar casework that featured finely treated wood surfaces augmented with Sèvres plaques. This table features a porcelain basin center surrounded by four wing spaces also decorated with porcelain plaques. A pastoral scene of a couple with a troubadour decorates the large center basin which is

⁴⁹ Jack Drew, "Inventory of Strain Collection", 1976.

trimmed with a Sèvres turquoise border and floral insets with gold edges. The floral insets on the wings are repeated on the base and shelf with a pair of cherubs included on the base's center inset. Intricate ormolu trim adorns the edges of the dark wood body. This card table is physical evidence of the Strains' patronage of Drews' Antiques. Several porcelain objects also retain the gold labels with the Drews' Antiques name. Using their connection with the Drews and other dealers, the couple overcame major geographical limitations to acquire the objects that met their collecting mission.

In 2008, upon the death of Mrs. Strain, their will was executed and their estate was bequeathed to their alma mater, the University of Nebraska Kearney. Their house stands only blocks away from the university's main administration building and the Strains' original wish was for the university to maintain their house as a residence for visiting artists and scholars. I suspect the ulterior motive of the couple was to maintain their collection in the manner in which it was housed during their lifetimes. However, the couple displayed Midwestern practicality in the multiple options they allowed for the disposition of their estate. In the end, UNK administrators chose to retain a small selection of objects and dispose of the rest of the belongings and real estate at auction to provide funds for maintaining the collection.

One question that remains is the reason why the Strains chose to remain in Kearney, rather than move to a metropolitan area where their collecting habits might have seemed more at home. A larger city would also have provided access to more dealers and other outlets for acquiring objects for their collection. I suggest the answer lies in family connections. As an only child, Mr. Strain assumed the responsibility to care for his mother after his father's death in 1968. The elder Mrs. Strain lived until 1986 and she

would have depended on her only son for financial and other support. At the time of his mother's death, Philip Strain was 71 years old, well past the age when most people make a life-changing move. Mildred Strain often spent time with her family members who lived within a short drive of Kearney. These family ties bound the Strains to Kearney, but their collection allowed them to bring the outside world into their private space.

IV. THE COLLECTION IN THE HOME

For a young man living in a geographically isolated city on the American Great Plains, the European past was an exotic fantasy world profoundly removed both geographically and chronologically from his immediate experience. Kearney has culture that is distinctly American, yet Philip and Mildred Strain chose to live in a home filled with the material remnants of a culture that was not their own. Through objects, the Strains brought the culture of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe into their home. The passion of the couple for European culture was primarily influenced by their life experiences, through academic study but potentially through travel as well.

The Strains' passion for European decorative art seems out of place in a Midwestern American town like Kearney, Nebraska. Their modest home appeared to be an unassuming brick ranch house on the outside but was designed to look like an eighteenth-century Parisian hôtel on the inside. They slept in a nineteenth-century English walnut bed underneath a Venetian glass chandelier. Their living room furniture was Louis XV-style and covered in silks, velvets and tapestry scenes. Mr. Strain, a lifelong employee of the United States Postal Service, and Mrs. Strain, a community volunteer, teacher, and seamstress at a local department store, lived quietly in Kearney while amassing an amazing collection of European and American decorative arts. In their home, the Strains displayed their collection in presentation furniture designed to emulate an eighteenth-century aesthetic. Their interior furnishings, wall and window treatments, floor coverings, and dim lighting mimicked, as closely as they could achieve, the environment of an eighteenth-century upper-class residence. They designed their home as a showcase for their collection. Mildred's niece, Jeanne Hobelman, visited their home

often in the 1980s while she was attending college. She recalls that the Strains lived in a very small the area of their home. They ate meals in their small kitchen; their television was kept in the front hall closet and they would bring chairs from the dining room and sit in the hall to watch it.⁵⁰

A description of the Strains' house provides insight into the development of their collection and the meaning assigned to it by the collectors. Jean Baudrillard recognized that in, "the domestic setting [the object] is free to represent the whims of its inhabitants" and that "the modern homeowner has become a symbolic technician – one who dominates, controls, and orders objects."⁵¹ The arrangement of objects within the Strains' house shows the ways in which their collection was a central element of their daily private lives, but the architecture of the house itself speaks more to their lives before they began collecting. They built the house in 1952, the year before they celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary.⁵² During this period in their lives, Mr. Strain was a senior member of the post office staff having been employed there for over fifteen years. Mrs. Strain worked as a teacher and was active in local groups like the Kearney Symphony board and the Kearney Women's Club. Their jobs, teacher and postal worker, were stable and would have paid well enough to afford them a comfortable lifestyle. Having come of age during the Great Depression, the Strains were likely frugal and prudent in their routine spending leading them to invest in a modest home in a desirable location.

⁵⁰ Jeanne Hobelman, email correspondence with the author, September 20, 2016.

⁵¹ Baudrillard, Jean. "The System of Objects," quoted in Woodward, Ian. *Understanding Material Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 2007) 75.

⁵² *Kearney Hub*, "Building Activity Picking up; Three Homes Planned," April 3, 1952.

The neighborhood in which the Strains purchased a plot on which to build their home is located three blocks from the main administration building of the University of Nebraska Kearney.⁵³ The house is also one block from Harmon Park, which is the oldest city park in Kearney, dating to 1876. The park is the location for the annual Art in the Park fair, started in 1971, and features the Kearney Symphony's outdoor performance space, erected in 1938.⁵⁴ This cultured atmosphere informed the daily lives of the Strains, who often attended performances at the University of Nebraska Kearney and Harmon Park.⁵⁵

The architectural form of the Strains' house can be described as a ranch house, characterized as a single-story structure with a low-pitched roof and long, horizontal form. The style is associated with the rising population of the American suburbs after World War II and the idealized, middle class lifestyle pictured in advertisements and television programs. The Strains' choice of this style in 1952 speaks to their connection with a more urbane way of living than that seen in vast swathes of rural Nebraska where Victorian-style clapboard houses were the norm. The Strains could have searched out the newest ranch house plans in books and periodicals, located through conscious effort on their part. The brick exterior and a garden house are additional architectural elements seen in the Strains' home that are not common in the Kearney area and point to the Strains' desire to replicate a more cosmopolitan lifestyle that might correspond with the environment of a traditional concept of an upper-class art collector living in a larger metropolis than Kearney.

⁵³ *Kearney Hub*, April 3, 1952.

⁵⁴ Alice Shaneyfelt Howell and Buffalo County Historical Society, "Harmon Park," *Buffalo Tales*, v. 11, n. 7 (July/Aug, 1988) http://www.bchs.us/BTales_198807.html, accessed March 25, 2017.

⁵⁵ Betty Becker Theye, "To Roger Jones," personal correspondence, February 9, 2004.

The *Kearney Hub* noted a building boom in the town in the spring of 1952. At the time that the Strains were making plans to build their house, two other men planned new construction projects: “Erik Nelson plans a 28 x 36 house and garage...” and “Virgil Yager has made application for construction of a 28 x 46 home...”. The construction prices listed for these projects provide some indication of the Strains’ financial situation. Their project is listed at the cost of \$15,000 while the other homes would cost \$9,500 and \$6,000 respectively. Today, the home built by Virgil Yager still stands at 1721 Fourth Avenue in Kearney, Nebraska.⁵⁶ (fig. 6) Like the Strain property, this house can be classified as a ranch house with its single story above ground, low profile, and attached garage. The existing house features a roof that slopes at a low angle with a deep overhang very similar to the Strains’ house. Both houses feature a front door set slightly to the left of the center of the front façade, situated next to a large picture window. The attached garages of both houses face the street with short driveways. Expanses of green lawn and grey sidewalks create an extremely symmetrical composition of rectangular shapes topped up by the angles of the roofline that come point in a long line running parallel to the curb and street below. The cost of construction significantly distinguishes the two homes with the Strains spending over twice the amount invested by Virgil Yager.⁵⁷ The financial variance may be explained by the choice of materials as photographs show the Strains’ home with a brick exterior and the Yager home with clapboard siding. Both houses presumably were built to house a single nuclear family unlike the much larger,

⁵⁶ Realtor.com, “1721 4th Ave.” https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-detail/1721-4th-Ave_Kearney_NE_68845_M81783-20828, accessed 10 December 2017.

⁵⁷ Virgil Yager is mentioned in the *Kearney Hub* on April 1, 1953 as an employee of the city water department. This job places Mr. Yager in the blue-collar working sector, whereas Mr. Strain as a manager in the U.S. Post Office might have been considered higher in social status.

multi-storied Victorian era houses that populate the oldest neighborhoods in Kearney which were built in the town's first decades when multiple generations of a family would share a domicile.

We must consider the choice of the ranch style by the Strains and what that means in the context of their interest in European culture. The architectural style of ranch houses developed as a common trope in the rise of the suburbs in the United States after World War II. Architectural historian, Dr. Thomas Hubka, recognized the ranch house as a "reconciliation between the forces of vernacularism and modernism."⁵⁸ He defines vernacularism as the translation of traditional tastes and values into architectural form. In Kearney, the vernacular examples of architecture detailed in the Buffalo County Historical Society's book, *Images of America: Kearney's Historic Homes*, include houses of the wealthy men who brought businesses to the town, creating a hub of commerce from a railroad stop. Nineteenth-century revivalism dominates the styles of these houses that Mr. Strain would have spent his formative years viewing. The home of Mr. Strain's parents was near the center of the town, the oldest district located nearest to the railroad tracks. The downtown buildings employed Romanesque details like triangular pediments over symmetrically placed windows and sculpted finials placed on the corners of the pediments in the style of ancient akroterion. (fig. 7) Domestic examples include homes in Queen Anne and Eastlake styles, both popular in late Victorian America. An extant example is the home of C.E. Hanson, which has been the headquarters of the Kearney

⁵⁸ Thomas Hubka, "The American Ranch House: Traditional Design Method in Modern Popular Culture," *TDSR (Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review)*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Fall, 1995) 33-39.

Women's Club since 1930.⁵⁹ The details of the home most strongly exhibit the characteristics of the Queen Anne style including a cupola tower with stained glass decoration, window shapes informed by round and pointed arches of Medieval architectural styles, and decorative wall treatments as seen in the fish-scale exterior shingles.⁶⁰ (fig. 8) The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey noted the house's asymmetrical forms and multiple roof details calling the building an "American ornamented cottage" likely not employing the term, Queen Anne, due to the smaller size of the building.⁶¹ The term, cottage, would have applied to many houses in Kearney built to accommodate the working-class members of the community. (fig. 9) These architectural examples of Kearney's previous generation may have inspired the Strains' to choose a more modern style of architecture in order to demarcate themselves as members of the new generation of culturally astute Kearney residents. The ranch house, using Hubka's definition, would have suited the Strain's need for modernism, while maintaining a connection to Kearney's vernacular architectural history.

Examples of ranch houses could be found in Omaha as early as 1946 as documented in an image from the Durham Museum's archive of Omaha historical photographs. (fig. 10) In the decade following the end of World War II, Peterson Construction Company in Lincoln, Nebraska, popularized the mid-century ranch houses using plans garnered from *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine. Peterson and other

⁵⁹ Barbara DeWitt, "Kearney Woman's Club House is meant for the Everywoman," Kearney Hub (July 23, 2016) http://www.kearneyhub.com/news/life/kearney-woman-s-club-house-is-meant-for-the-everywoman/article_1174f42c-5026-11e6-b850-bfbddc8f2377.html, accessed January 2, 2018.

⁶⁰ Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, "Queen Anne Style 1880-1910," Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide, <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/queen-anne.html>, accessed January 2, 2018.

⁶¹ Nebraska State Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office, "Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Buffalo County, Nebraska" (August 1, 1993) 65.

builders created the Homebuilders Association of Lincoln in the early 1950s and collaborated on a model home that was an early example of a ranch home to expose potential home buyers to this new style of architecture. By the mid-1950s, Peterson had successfully established one of Lincoln's first subdivisions, a planned community on the edge of the city populated with ranch houses built with basements and garages.⁶² The arrival of ranch houses in the two largest metropolitan areas of Nebraska signaled the modernization of the state's culture. As Hubka notes, the ranch house is "a product of a civilization that has fully exploited industrial, capitalistic, commercial and democratic opportunities."⁶³ While the overall economy and culture of Nebraska remained agricultural throughout the twentieth century and to the present, the arrival of the ranch house signaled the transition of these communities, as well as Kearney, to modern centers of nonfarm commerce. While the earliest origin of the ranch house was influenced by the mythology of the ranches of the American West, "embedded in a popular American ideal of romantic outdoor living," it was soon connected to the American suburbs during the population and housing boom following World War II.⁶⁴

Hubka recognizes several influences on the composition of the ranch house including the Prairie School of architecture and ideas about modular construction and mass housing borrowed from the International School of modernist architecture.⁶⁵ Architectural characteristics of the ranch house was undoubtedly influenced by the popularity of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie style architecture. The characteristics of the

⁶² Linda Ulrich, "Ranch-style Homes Have a Rich History in Lincoln," *Lincoln Journal-Star* (August 15, 2009) online, accessed December 10, 2017.

⁶³ Hubka, 37.

⁶⁴ Hubka, 34.

⁶⁵ Hubka, 34.

style include long, horizontal lines especially seen in the roof design and long, cantilevered overhangs. The Midwestern landscape, flat and vast, complemented Wright's philosophy of Prairie style architecture as "'organic architecture,' meaning, in essence, that the structure should look as if it was a natural part of the landscape it inhabits."⁶⁶ Harvey P. and Eliza Sutton of McCook commissioned the only house in Nebraska known to have been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright himself. Built in 1905, the Sutton home is a two-story structure with a tan stucco exterior and dark brown trim.⁶⁷ (fig. 11) The colors reflect the earthen inspiration of the prairie found in Wright's Prairie style architecture. Strict ninety-degree angles are created by long horizontal and short vertical lines in columns around windows and on the corners. A massive, cantilevered roof juts out above the deep -set front door and patio. Eliza Sutton discovered Wright's designs in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, a method through which the Prairie style spread across the Midwest while "promoting the taste for a new, uniquely American and middle class architectural vocabulary."⁶⁸ According to Hubka, this cantilevered projection, or any projection, was not a feature found on the typical ranch house until after 1960; he describes early ranch houses as "low and box-like."⁶⁹ However, we can see an example of this elaboration in the projection of the living room space of the Strain home from the primary volume of the house.

The room placement of the Strain house follows the description that Hubka applies to the archetypical ranch house. Although, the ranch house was touted for its open

⁶⁶ Bob Nelson, "The Frank Lloyd Wright Stuff," *Omaha Home* (July 17, 2015) <http://omahamagazine.com/articles/the-frank-lloyd-wright-stuff/> accessed December 25, 2017.

⁶⁷ Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, "Harvey P. and Eliza Sutton House," <https://flwright.org/researchexplore/wrightbuildings/suttonhousescheme3>, accessed December 25, 2017.

⁶⁸ Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, "Harvey P. and Eliza Sutton House," <https://flwright.org/researchexplore/wrightbuildings/suttonhousescheme3>, accessed December 25, 2017.

⁶⁹ Hubka, 34.

plan design, meaning that there are few division between living spaces. The openness between living spaces shows the influence of Modern architecture on the ranch house, but ranch houses did not employ this technique to the extent that Modernist homes did. “In actual practice, the degree of openness in the ranch-house plan was quite restricted and was usually limited to a degree of open connection between the kitchen and dining room, or between the dining room and the living room.”⁷⁰ Clifford E. Clark, Jr. examined the social history of the ranch house in his essay, “Ranch-House Suburbia: Ideals and Realities.” Clark notes that the ranch house was divided into “zones” based on the living activities designated to take place in those zones.⁷¹ We see this combination of theories, openness and zones, at work in the Strains’ house plan. The large, archways between the foyer, living room, dining room, and breakfast room create a public zone. The bedrooms and bathroom branch of a narrow hallway creating a private zone. Hubka underscores this separation between public and private; he states, “Bedrooms were organized for privacy, and were always strictly separated from more public rooms.”⁷² When displaying items from their collection, the Strains did not discriminate between public and private space in their home as will be described further below.

The Strains’ house sat on a corner lot with a meticulously landscaped lawn and driveway leading to a one-car attached garage. (fig. 12) Hubka and Clark recognize these two characteristics as features of the ranch house. Hubka calls the ranch house “a basic rectangular form...sat by itself on a machine-graded landscape, scraped clean of existing

⁷⁰ Hubka, 35.

⁷¹ Clifford E. Clark, Jr., “Ranch-House Suburbia: Ideals and Realities,” in *Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War*, ed. Lary May (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) 178.

⁷² Hubka, 35.

vegetation and then replanted and renaturalized with grass and shrubs.”⁷³ Clark agrees recognizing that “the ranch-house designer helped create a sense of continuity between the indoors and the outside.”⁷⁴ Here, the ranch house shares an element with houses of the eighteenth-century aristocracy and haute bourgeoisie which employed highly landscaped gardens as settings for pleasurable social activities. In the composition of the Strains’ site, two large trees, one deciduous and one conifer, towered over the house on either side of the concrete path dividing the front lawn. Shrubs, at multiple heights, surrounded the landing and bordered the velvety lawn, adding to the variety of natural textures. The back yard also featured large trees and a full-height hedgerow creating a private garden space comparable to those that might be found in an eighteenth-century bourgeois estate, but on a small scale that was affordable on the Strains’ middle-class income. As the centerpiece of this private garden, behind and detached from the main house, a brick and glass enclosure provided sanctuary and solitude. Furnished with wrought iron settees and tables, the Strains also used this space to display some large pieces of American pottery. (fig. 13)

Unlike the highly decorated exteriors of Kearney’s Victorian houses, rough brick coated the exterior of the Strain’s home in an extremely regular and symmetrical pattern, and wood shake shingles on the roof added texture and warm colors to appearance of the house. Hubka describes the exterior of ranch houses as “[relying] on simple, repeatable rules to create an aesthetic vocabulary.” The Strain home uses symmetrical geometry in the same fashion as the home built by Virgil Yager and the earlier home built outside Omaha. Each home is composed of long rectangular and flattened triangular shapes.

⁷³ Hubka, 36.

⁷⁴ Clark, 178.

However, Hubka points out that some home owners used “applied touches of architectural style to express a minimum of occupant individualization.”⁷⁵ For the Strains, the brick exterior related their house to older brick buildings in the vicinity of their new home, like the buildings of downtown Kearney, but the ranch house shape brought their brick home into the modern era. Other touches to the exterior also elevated the style of their home above the common, clapboard-sided ranch house exemplified by the other two ranch houses examined here. A square brick pedestal placed at the end of the front walk held a black lantern-style light; the pedestal was repeated with two identical examples placed near the street-facing end of the drive way leading to the garage. The drive way pedestals were topped with metal sculptures in the shape of a pineapple, which have oxidized to a greenish hue. The color of the pineapples matches the green color of the garage door which was decorated with metal rosettes in a symmetrical pattern. Hubka recognizes these minor personalizing features stating, “...generally, self-expression was limited and channeled to specific, community-sanctioned areas ..., the style of the front door, the house color, the architectural details around windows....”⁷⁶ The details the Strains added to their home allowed them to apply some of the identity creation methods they employed in the interior of their home to its exterior.

Inside, the house featured two levels, a main-floor living space and a partially finished basement. Most of the collection was housed on the main floor which was composed of a bedroom, office, hallway and foyer, living room, dining room, breakfast room, and kitchen. The color scheme of the house was inspired by the pastel greens, blues, pinks of the Rococo porcelain objects in the collection. Wall coverings of toile and

⁷⁵ Hubka, 36.

⁷⁶ Hubka, 36.

damask patterns, silk and tapestry upholstery, and carved wainscoting and moldings provided a canvas on which the Strains painted their chosen aesthetic using the pieces of their collection as the primary subject matter. In the intricate and precise ways that they displayed their collection, the Strains formed their private identities. They rarely invited guests to share their private space.

Upon entering the front door, which featured a filigree screen on its exterior, the house offered the viewer a small foyer with inset shelves on either side of a square-arched entryway to the living room to the right of the front door. These shelves housed two pairs of vases, arranged symmetrically with half of each set placed on either side of the archway: one set was Royal Berlin porcelain decorated with pastel flowers and gold Classical elements and a set of gilded metal vases with a thick, columnar base and basket-style cup. A round bottom shelf protruded from the inset and topped a carved, Rococo wall ornament. Throughout the house, moldings, wainscoting, ornamental cabinet and door knobs, and architectural ornaments mimicked the boiserie of a Rococo interior. To the left of the front door, a Rococo card table, decorated with Sèvres porcelain plaques, sat under a mirror bordered with porcelain flowers. Next to the card table, a closet with louvered doors hid the remnants of the modern world: a television and stereo on rolling carts that could be pulled from the closet when in use. The Strains' motive for hiding these electronics was the compartmentalization of their modern world into an accessory to the fantastical world they created with their home's interior. Opposite the front door, a rear hall lead to the back door of the house. To the right of the doorway to the rear hall, a dark wood, side table with cabriole legs held a Tiffany compote and a pair of candelabra stood against a wall papered in a green-tinted ivory scheme of alternating glossy and

matte vertical stripes and chair-rail height wainscoting. On the wall above the table, a landscape painting of trees and a body of water by Henri Biva (French, 1848-1929) hung in a gilded frame. Biva's style recalled the Barbizon school of landscape painters and his contemporaries, the Impressionists. The light wall covering continued from the foyer into the hallways, paired with wainscoting and moldings, contrasted with a dark, hardwood floor covered with Oriental rugs.

The foyer was the nexus of the main floor with access to the living room, kitchen, hallways, and stairs to the lower level. To the right of the front door, the viewer could step into the carefully arranged living room. This space equated to the mid-century American concept of the "formal living room," a space meant more for display and entertaining than family leisure time. A square archway separated the living room and foyer; egg-and-dart molding and bronze rosettes decorated the space above the archway and rectangular, stained glass panels with a floral pattern were inset into the vertical jambs. This transitional element deftly delineated the division between spaces, creating a ceremonial process for entering the living room space.

The north wall of the living room, to the left as one entered from the foyer, featured a combination of sateen and flocked wall covering in a vertical scheme with pilaster-style boiserie divisions formed by thick, layered molding and lattice-work screens through which the viewer glimpsed the reflection of the living room in the hidden mirror background. (fig. 14) The wall covering, also found on the room's other walls, featured a large damask pattern in cream and pale green hue and provided an elegant background for the entire space. The Strains' use of decorated wallpaper underscores my supposition that they were attempting to recreate the feeling of a highly-ornamented

Rococo interior through affordable and accessible means. Wallpaper offered an economically-sound opportunity to cover the wall with ornament as opposed to the hand-carved, artisan-made boiserie seen in elite, European interiors that date to the eighteenth century and the birth of the Rococo. Other wallpapers used by the Strains can be characterized as printed replicas of the wall covering schemes from these original settings, as seen in the boiserie replica used in the Strains' study. (Fig. 15)

The furnishings arranged on this wall follow a strong, triangular compositional format with a tall secretary desk, decorated with porcelain floral plaques trimmed with Sèvres teal blue, flanked by a marble-topped table and a glass display case of similar height. Small objects populated the flat surfaces of this assemblage. A pair of potpourris and a decorative vessel sat atop the secretary. (fig. 16) A Tiffany lily pad lamp, egg-shaped clock, and carved glass dish were found on the surface of the oval table and a miniature grand piano, enameled with Watteau-esque scenes trimmed in gold and pink, sat on the lower shelf. The table had a green marble top, gilded Neoclassical legs, and carved grapes as ornament. Objects were also hung on the walls above the furniture including a boiserie ornament, a porcelain platter decorated with a portrait of Napoleon, and another platter with a mythological scene. Two framed and matted personal photographs also hung on these walls while the Strains were in residence. The inclusion of family photographs straddles the division between a modern, middle-class interior populated with mechanically produced images and the early modern elite interior containing painted portraiture. The tradition of honoring family members through images continued, but the medium of those images reflected contemporary methods of production.

A glass display case sat on the other side of the secretary desk, filled with a subset of the collection: Limoges enameled miniatures in a variety of forms including a sedan chair, settees, a sleigh, boxes, cups, and others. The case itself featured a gold velvet lining on the bottom shelf, a glass top and middle shelf allowed the viewer an unobstructed view of objects on the bottom shelf. Dark wood with floral and gilded ornament composed the structure of the case. The Strains' house contained several glass-fronted cases displaying subsets of their larger collection. They used display furniture as a method for classifying and organizing their collection in a systematic way, grouping objects with shared characteristics into sets. These cases demonstrate the influence of museum display practices to the Strains' approach to their collection as museums used similar classification-based display methods in arranging their collections. This manner of display showed that the Strains consciously understood that display tactics were an essential part of enjoying their collection as they may have enjoyed visits to museums. They did not regularly share their collection, with except their most intimate confederates, so it can be extrapolated that the display methods enhanced the Strains' personal enjoyment of their collection. The Strains displayed their collection in a manner that replicated their prior experiences with similar objects in museums with the aim of recreating the enjoyment they received from their museum visits.

On the exterior of the house, the chimney in the center of the low roof made a bold architectural feature and inside the resultant fireplace was also a central element in the living room. Of course, fireplaces were crucial components of eighteenth-century homes as a source of heating and light. In the Strains' home, the working fireplace provided warmth, but also served as a significant contributor to the European aesthetic of

the room due to its white marble fireplace surround and matching mirror, an Art Nouveau fire screen, and Rococo andirons featuring c-curves and putti. A more typical Midwestern house might have a fireplace surround of carved wood such as this example from the Frank House. (fig. 17) Objects displayed in a symmetrical line on the mantle included a pair of cylindrical Sèvres urns on gilded bases, two *blanc de chine* male figures, and a rectangular mantle clock with gilded ribbon and floral ornamentation. A Rococo porcelain plaque featuring a central mythological scene surrounded by floral ornamentation and medallions hung on the mirror above the fireplace. The central scene of the plaque depicts a god on a chariot, attended by maidens and a winged putto, chasing a female figure draped in pink and gold robes. The surrounding scenery of clouds, sky, and a distant landscape indicate that the chase is being carried out across the sky. The decorative border features four medallions: two small medallions with sunbursts on either side and two medallions with mythological figures on a gold ground are placed on the top and bottom. White and royal blue c-curve decorations fill the spaces between the medallions. A small, multi-drawer chest with porcelain and gilded ornament holding a porcelain urn transformed into a lamp with silk shade and Tiffany compote stood on the north side of the fireplace near the entryway from the foyer. Several of the lamps in the home were made by adding electrical components to antique objects. These lamps show that when purchasing practical objects, like lighting, the Strains were cognizant of their aesthetic goals.

Opposite the fireplace, a half-circle commode with red marble top sat against the wall. An oil painting hanging over the commode depicted a circle of women in eighteenth-century dress seated in a clearing surrounded by woods and a lake. The

paintings in the Strain home were not created by high profile artists, but rather seem to have been purchased as accompaniment to the decorative arts objects in the collection. Most walls were decorated with sculptural architectural ornaments, mirrors, or decorative porcelain platters with hanging hardware attached. Like every flat surface in the house, the commode's top held pieces of the collection; in this spot sat a bulbous, green Tiffany glass vase and pewter sculpture of a swan.

A large picture window dominated the south wall overlooking the concrete paths from the driveway and sidewalk to landing leading to the front door. The house was oriented facing south and this window would have received year-round sunlight. Heavy, golden drapes lined with sheer curtains, all floor-length, softened the south end of the living room and protected the furnishings and objects in the room from the harmful effects of the strong sunlight coming through the south-facing, picture window. The furniture and room-size Oriental rug also contributed to the softer textures in the living room. A Louis XV salon set, covered in a cream silk decorated with damask floral embroidery, included a settee placed under the east window and matching arm chairs anchored the center of the room where a low table displayed an assortment of Meissen boxes. Adjacent to the center grouping, two armless side chairs, upholstered with white silk, employed Rococo attributes including curved legs, gilding, and gold embroidered ornament. The most ornamented chair in the living room featured a seat covered in soft mint green velvet, a Neoclassical gilded Louis XV wooden frame, and a tapestry back depicting a scene of two ladies in *Ancien Régime* dress lounging in a wooded *fête galante* scene. A Louis XV desk with gold velvet writing surface and accompanying chair sat facing the picture window in the center of the south wall. The desk also held a large

Sèvres-style urn, a Sèvres inkwell with floral decoration on a turquoise field, and an ornate metal letter holder. Another small chest with a red marble top and two glass-top tables held more pieces of the collecting including two large Gallé vases and a gold Tiffany dish. Bronze sculptures composed the bases of the glass-top tables: one was a large cherub sitting on a Rococo base decorated with garlands and a medallion; the other had a bronze human figure on a white porcelain base with a gold stripe. The glass table tops would have provided a surface for display without blocking the viewers' visual access to the table base.

The Strains did not neglect any spaces in their plan to decorate their home in a scheme that complemented their collection. Specifically, the ceilings of the living room and dining room illustrate this point. A large, stained glass panel hung from the living room ceiling; no skylight was visible on the roof outside, so we might assume that it was illuminated artificially. No images of this ornamental panel are available, but my own recollection is that the panel was an idealized, semi-abstract floral design more reminiscent of 1970s America than the eighteenth century. The main colors employed in the design were red, yellow, and green with strong black leading lines dividing the sections of colored glass. By contrast, the dining room ceiling mimicked the wall decorations of an eighteenth-century Robert Adam interior architectural scheme. (fig. 18)

Using modern wallpaper, the Strains created a pattern of white, blues and greens on their dining room walls meant to replicate the Classical ornament of an Adamesque interior. A thick, white strip of molding divided the walls horizontally, at waist level, with a turquoise field of solid color below in a shade matched to the Sèvres blue found in many of objects in the collection. Above the molding, printed on the wallpaper, thin gold

stripes contained a horizontal register of blue flowers and green leaves topped by a repeating row of scalloped areas filled with idealized flowers and c-scrolls bounded by a thick, gold line. A corresponding register of matching horizontal floral band and scallops ringed the room at the junction of ceiling and wall. The centerpiece of the wall decoration in the Strains' dining room was the ceiling medallion composed of two-dimensional, concentric rings of floral ornamentation and gold lines. In the center of the medallion, the bronze metal base of a floral chandelier added three-dimensional texture and the electric candles mimicked lighting available in eighteenth-century homes. Metal flowers garlanded around the arms of the fixture recall the porcelain flowers created by the Vincennes manufactory in France. We can compare the Strains' fixture with a pair of candelabra in the collection of Marjorie Merriweather Post's Hillwood Estate; the primary differences between the objects is the preciousness of the materials and date of manufacture, but aesthetic similarities include pastel and gold colors and a flowing form. (fig. 19)

The visitor entered the dining room through a large archway directly across from the entrance from the foyer to the living room, creating a traffic pattern that bypassed much of space in the living room. At the center of the room, a sizable ceramic vase with Asian-style decoration in the shape of a ginger jar seated into a metal base served as the support for a thick, glass top, which combined with its base, composed the Strains' formal dining table. Six cream side chairs, with gilded accents, cabriole legs, a back composed by a variety of Rococo shapes, and cushions upholstered in cream and copper-colored solid stripes alternated with floral stripes, accompanied the table and were placed around the room and adjacent breakfast nook. An assortment of case furniture lined the

walls of the room. On the north wall, a sideboard with a gilded floral garland-and-bouquet ornament mounted on the cabinet door and a floral border under the rim of the marble top supported a pair of cranberry glass candleholders, decorated with dangling crystal teardrops, and a square vase with a Neoclassical scene. A large decorative plaque with a Sèvres aquamarine rim and central portrait of Marie de' Medici hung on the wall above the sideboard.⁷⁷ A landscape of a river with wooden cottage in the middle ground, painted by Louis Aston Knight (American, 1873-1948), hung over a three-drawer chest, also with a marble top, along the east wall. A two-drawer commode with ormolu handles and other applied metal ornament settled under the large, drape-covered window on the south wall and held a tall ceramic platter on an extremely ornate stand with Rococo filigree and two female nudes supporting the platter with their shoulders and upraised arms. A wide turquoise band rimmed the edge of the porcelain platter on the stand and a coat-of-arms, for an unidentified family or royal court, sat in the center of the platter's main field of white. Undoubtedly, this piece would have been a focal point of a lavish table scape. Across the room and tucked into the corner between the two entryways, a tall cabinet with a curved glass front displayed another subset of the collection – an assortment of souvenir cup and saucer sets made as gifts for trading rather than as part of a dining set. An ornate Sèvres porcelain clock sat on top of this cabinet. Other pieces of the collection kept in the dining room included a Tiffany peacock blue, bulbous vase on a tall, carved stand and a tall, Gallé vase with a blue floral design on a round, marble-topped side table with gold, fluted Louis XVI legs.

⁷⁷ Marie de' Medici (1575-1642) was queen of France in the seventeenth century. See catalog entry for figure 55.

On the north side of the dining room, a large entryway with a garlanded, floral architectural ornament on the wall above led to the breakfast room. The arrangement of this small space centered on another glass-topped table, sized for two people. The wall covering, a toile print in dark green on a cream background, dominated the aesthetic plan for this space. The images found on the wallpaper recall Classical motifs, including two-handled vases filled with reeds, a female figure in Classical dress seated on an ancient Greek-style chair, female figures in short Classical dresses, putti carrying garlands of ribbon, and an assortment of birds including peacocks and sparrows. Collection objects in this room included a Meissen figure of Walther Schott's *The Bowler*, a female athlete in Classical dress, and multiple etched glass vases and an etched glass compote with a gilded handle in the shape of a griffin.⁷⁸ The glass-topped table held a gold Tiffany three-handled cup and a three-tiered Sèvres serving piece with teal and white porcelain plates supported by a gilded, ornamental post. A distressed wood post with s-scroll ornament, capped with an idealized leaf motif, served as the base of the table. Two chairs with cane backs and pink, green, and yellow striped upholstery accompanied the table. Unlike the living room's hardwood floor with rugs, the dining room and breakfast room featured wall-to-wall carpeting which provided comfort and warmth, but the Strains still covered the carpet with Oriental-patterned rugs to add their specific aesthetic to the spaces.

The Strains' personal aesthetic extended to the utilitarian areas of the house like the kitchen, which could be entered from the breakfast room or through a door leading from the rear hall. The kitchen followed a U-shaped plan, bisected by a walkway spanning the distance between the two entrances to the room. The cabinetry, painted a

⁷⁸ See catalog entry for figure 130.

medium yellow-green tone, coordinated with the printed wallpaper in the pattern of a green lattice work and contrasted with white Formica countertops. The double sink was located on the center of the kitchen counters which lined three walls on the northern side of the pathway from door to door. As seen in many homes of the midcentury era, a window, framed with a wooden cornice and gauzy green curtains, was placed above the sink overlooking the back yard. The refrigerator was located directly across the room from the sink in an alcove framed with a wooden cornice painted to match the cabinetry. Completing the working triangle of the kitchen, the stove and microwave oven were placed to the left of the sink along the west wall of the room. Objects of decorative art from the Strains' collection could also be found in this working space. Two art glass lamps in Tiffany's iridescent style in a yellow-green shade to match the color scheme of the wallpaper and cabinets were placed in a symmetrical composition in the corners of the kitchen counter. A pair of Staffordshire bone china birds accompanied one lamp and added to the "garden" theme of the kitchen with its green color scheme. A framed set of silver dollars hung on the wall near the refrigerator, an anachronous choice in a collection of decorative arts that shows the Strains' eclectic tastes. Perhaps the coins were the choice of only one person, rather than a joint decision. Other items in the room included a ceramic vase holding artificial flowers, a covered ceramic vase in an Asian decorative scheme, and Mary Gregory and Bohemian glass vases. The Strains' kitchen shows that they chose to be surrounded by objects that exemplified their collecting interests even when completing the mundane tasks of everyday life like cooking, cleaning, and eating.

The inclusion of their objects into their daily lives can also be seen in the bathroom, which was decorated primarily in white with accents of pink, gold, and green,

and located on the border between private and public space between the bedrooms and the foyer. A vignette outside the bathroom door, tucked into a corner, featured a marble-topped chest of drawers below a wall-mounted clock covered in brass Rococo ornament with a white porcelain face featuring bold, black Roman numerals. A Tiffany-style turquoise glass vase and small, porcelain covered vase with a pedestal base in a Neoclassical style were displayed on the chest. Inside the bathroom, a white wallpaper decorated with embroidered pink flowers covered the upper half of the walls and white, square tile lined the lower portion. The bathroom's design follows a basic modern plan with sink, tub and toilet in a functional arrangement. However, the Strains' collecting activity could be seen in the chosen accessories. The mirror over the sink's vanity cabinet, placed there for practical purposes, was framed in gilt, Neoclassical style with carved ornament and finials on the top corners. Two Art Nouveau wall sconces provided lighting; brass, curved plant forms extending from a Satyr's head ended clear, etched glass covers with fluted edges. Built-in drawers featured brass handles with floral details. Again, we see the Strains using their collection objects to individualize the spaces of their home, blending the necessary modern conveniences of kitchen and bathroom into their fantasy of the eighteenth-century bourgeois home.

The Strains' collection extended beyond these more public spaces of their home into their private domain. Past the bathroom, two bedrooms were located off a hall that adjoined the front foyer; a chandelier composed of brass palm fronds with teardrop crystals hanging from the end of each leaf provided illumination to the dark space. On the wall, a nod to the twentieth century is seen in an aerial photo of the Strains' home, a

common accessory in many middle-class homes showing pride of ownership and visually evidencing the owner's acquisition of the American Dream.⁷⁹

An architectural ornament, in the shape of a floral swag, marked the door of the Strains' master bedroom. Located in the front corner of the house, the room held the Strains' double bed, a French-influenced walnut object with short cabriole legs and an arch-topped headboard. Plush rose-tinted, wall-to-wall carpet covered the floor; the wall decoration encompassed a wainscoting and silk-like wallpaper scheme in cream. On the south wall, a large set of windows, softened with gold, floor-length draperies with a swag cornice, overlooked the front yard. The assemblage on the south wall was founded on three large pieces of furniture. To the left of the window, a glass-fronted cabinet held the Strains' extensive collection of mythological figures in highly detailed porcelain. To the right of the window, a cabinet on tall, cabriole legs sat along the wall; details included a Sèvres-style porcelain plaque on the door, ormolu decorations including rosettes, floral swags, and human figures on the knees of the cabinet legs, and a red marble top. On top of both tall cabinets, the Strains displayed more collection objects: a peacock blue Steuben vase, a pair of small porcelain scent jars, and an agate sculpture of a mother and baby bird. A Royal Vienna porcelain plate with a mythological scene at the center and Neoclassical border around the rim hung on the wall above the glass-fronted cabinet. In the center of the wall in front of the windows, a small console cabinet held a large Meissen urn and a pair of small decorative boxes, a porcelain one by Meissen and one in enameled metal. Three chairs sat between the cabinets: an armchair upholstered in a rose silk-type fabric with a cane back, a Neoclassical side chair with striped upholstery and

⁷⁹ To understand the ubiquity of the practice of private aerial photography, see the 18 million photos cataloged by Vintage Aerial. <https://vintageaerial.com/>.

tapered legs, and an armchair with a seat upholstered in rose velvet and a tapestry back with a floral design. A small square side table sat next to the tapestry-backed chair held a peacock blue Tiffany candlestick lamp and another Neoclassical porcelain covered vase similar to the one displayed in the hallway near the bathroom door.

A window was centered on west wall of the bedroom. Between the window and the north wall, a six-armed porcelain candle sconce by Meissen hung over a mid-sized Rococo covered urn on a wall-mounted display shelf with a green marble top. An electrified amber and clear glass chandelier in the style of Venetian glassmaker Murano hung over the bed. Above the headboard, a grouping of three object hung in a triangular arrangement: two portraits on porcelain plates with navy blue and gold ornamented rims and a round painting on porcelain of two women in a square gold frame. According markings on the plates noted in the 2009 inventory referred to below, the two portrait plates depict Madame du Barry, mistress to Louis XV, king of France during the mid-eighteenth century. The second plate depicts Mademoiselle de Sombreuil, daughter of a French nobleman who saved her father from the guillotine during the French Revolution. Her story, based in fact, became mythologized in early nineteenth century French literature. She is said to have drunk a glass of blood from victims of the guillotine upon the demand of the warden of the Prison of the Abbey where her father was being held in order to secure his release. In truth, the young woman likely pleaded his captors who investigated her father and declared him innocent. A print from the Carnavalet Museum in Paris depicts the apocryphal event. (fig. 20) As astute collectors, the Strains may have been aware of the story of Mademoiselle de Sombreuil and most certainly would have

known of Madame du Barry, two women who represent the apogee and nadir of the French aristocracy.

An oval table with a green marble top, gold braided trim and Neoclassical fluted legs painted gold sat next to the bed holding an electric lamp with a Bohemian ceramic vase as its body and a cream lamp shade with a scalloped edge. An amber, gold and brown dresser jar with the signature of Emile Gallé sat next to the lamp. A large, porcelain figure of a woman in a ball gown stood on the table as well. The only nod to the modern age on the table was a small, plastic alarm clock, an indication of the Strains' daily life included in the vignette created by their collection objects.

A closet with bi-fold, louvered doors painted the same color as the wallpaper blended into east wall of the Strains' bedroom. Brass floral Rococo handles added a sense of elegance to the mid-century style of the pre-fabricated doors. Between the entrance door and the closet, a three-drawer commode featured graceful floral marquetry, gilt-bronze handles and corner embellishments in Rococo floral design, and marble top in shades of copper and tan. On top of the short commode, three items were aligned in a triangular composition. A jade-colored favrile glass bowl by Tiffany sat on a teak platform in the center of the commode's top, accompanied by two bisque potpourri urns with brass accents and pedestal bases on either side in a symmetrical configuration. Throughout the house, small teak and marble pedestals elevated many objects off the surface of tables indicating the Strains' intention to mark these objects as display pieces much like museums use vitrines and pedestals.

Above the commode, a painting by Frederick Ballard Williams (American, 1871-1956) depicted a group of four women in a *fête-galante* scene set in an idyllic wood in

tones of green and gold. Each woman wears a gown in the off-the-shoulder style of the mid-nineteenth century. An example of this style of dress can be found in a print in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The image depicts the French dancer Mademoiselle Fleury in a white gown with a low neckline decorated with lace and a flower. (fig. 21) Like the women in Williams' painting, Fleury's hair is pinned up at the back and swept away from her face accentuating the exposed skin of her neck and shoulders. Like the other paintings in the Strains' home, the Williams painting assists creating a tone of eighteenth-century elite formality with its' academic style and especially as it was framed in a wide, gilded frame with Rococo shell-like ornament.

Architecturally, the ground floor of the Strains' home contained two bedrooms, their master bedroom and a second space on the back corner of the house. A leather-topped desk and grouping of side chairs demarcated the room as a study. The wallpaper applied in this room replicated the wall treatments of eighteenth-century salons with framed panels arranged in two registers with a chair rail dividing the upper and lower sections. An example of this wall treatment composition is found in the Library of the Arsenal, a mid-eighteenth-century work of Germain Boffrand, architect to the Parisian elite which was restored in 2009. (fig. 22) The Strains used a printed wallpaper to emulate the expensive boiserie found in the original early modern interiors, an affordable solution made possible by twentieth-century manufacturing processes. The wallcovering in this room was manufactured by Louis W. Bowen, Inc. as evidenced by a sample card in the collection of the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian National Design Museum. (fig. 23) The sample card, and presumably the wallpaper, was produced between 1954 and 1968.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, "Accession record for *Mural Miniatures, Boiserie Regence and Border*, 1954–68; Designed by Lanette Scheeline ((American, 1910–2001)); screen printed on paper;

Jeanne Hobelman, niece of Mrs. Strain, reported that the Strains often purchased items for their collection through catalogs and this is presumably the method they used to purchase the boiserie wallpaper from Bowen's New York City company.⁸¹

As in the other rooms of the Strains' home, furniture in the study was arranged in a symmetrical fashion around the walls of the room. On the south wall next to the entrance door, a large, Henredon desk with a leather top and ball-and-claw feet in the style of Thomas Chippendale's Queen Anne designs held an assortment of objects.⁸² A pair of peacock blue Steuben vases dominated the scene due to their twelve-inch height. The other items included a Sèvres dresser box decorated with a scene of two women reading, a small metal and porcelain bust of Julius Caesar, a cobalt blue bowl of enameled metal at its center an image of a knight in armor on horseback and his squire in a white on blue grisaille-style scheme. Above the desk, a wall-mounted triangular Rococo bracket shelf held an intricately decorated Sèvres oviform clock with ormolu ornament and porcelain pedestal. A brass register of Roman numerals ringed the diameter of the egg. The Victoria and Albert Museum holds two similar objects in their collection. (fig. 24, 25)

Around the walls of the study, three other small cabinets held large porcelain objects. Near the door to the room and next to the desk, a two-drawer stand on tall cabriole legs with harlequin marquetry veneer supported a tall-necked porcelain urn

39.5 x 68.5 cm (15 9/16 x 26 15/16 in.); 1969-18-8-k,"

<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/102334881/>, accessed March 3, 2018.

⁸¹ Jeanne Hobelman, email correspondence with the author, September 20, 2016.

⁸² The Henredon Furniture Company was founded in 1945 and targeted customers interested in fine furnishings. They partnered with Dorothy Draper and Frank Lloyd Wright. See Henredon Furniture, "About Us." <http://www.henredon.com/About-Henredon/> or Cooper-Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, "Heritage-Henredon Company," <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/people/420568337/>.

closely related in shape to a loutrophoros, a two-handled ceremonial urn from antiquity.⁸³

Two more cabinets flanked a window on the west wall of the room. To the left, a single-door commode on tall cabriole legs held a large Sévres urn with a clock embedded in the front of the porcelain body. This commode stands out from other pieces of furniture in the Strains' house as it is painted in a cream finish rather than in a natural wood texture. To the right of the window, a single-door cabinet with a porcelain floral plaque inset in the door displayed the large Meissen figure group of Cupid restrained by Venus, a gold Tiffany bowl, and a small pink and brown Gallé vase with a tree motif. A Louis XV arm chair with a rose-velvet seat and floral tapestry back and a glass-topped table supported by a gilded putto on a white porcelain base filled the space in between these two cabinets in front of the window which was covered with gold draperies and a square cornice. Coordinating with the gold draperies, a gold Tiffany vase sat on the glass-topped table. The grouping on the north wall of the room was centered on a pair of round-back Louis XVI chairs with striped gold and white upholstery. A glass-topped display case with dark wood frame and gold velvet base on the bottom of the rectangular vitrine; small objects including a porcelain patch box in the shape of a women in masquerade mask, enamel needle cases, and an enameled egg-shaped box were displayed. Another window was found behind the display case and chairs. A round-front cabinet with short legs, a drawer under the marble top, and a tall door with a central floral marquetry design stood to the right of this window and supported a gold, bulbous Steuben glass vase. The most ornate cabinet in the room stood on the east wall between a closet and the entrance door. The tall cabinet seemed to have been formed from two units, a console table with a five-sided top

⁸³ According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's object description, loutrophoroi were used to carry water in bridal and funerary rights. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/252948>

and four cabriole legs and a rhomboid upper unit with glass panels on the front and sides. The exceptional feature of this cabinet is the application of slim porcelain plaques on the wooden frame around the glass panes, on the fronts of the cabriole legs and apron of the lower console table, accenting the sculpted pediment at the top of the upper unit, and on the bottom apron of the lower edge of the upper unit. (fig. 26) The gloss black finish on the exposed wooden components of the cabinet created a striking contrast with the porcelain plaques' white background and bold colored imagery of both narrative scenes and floral ornament. Porcelain figures of children were displayed inside the cabinet along with a pair of green glass Mary Gregory cups decorated with images of Victorian girls in white dresses.

The Strains' collecting and display practices continued to the lower level of their home, a partially finished basement with one room used as a lounge space and a large laundry work space. The visitor entered the stairs down to the basement level near the kitchen and back door to the house. Again, the Strains' attention to detail in creating their replica of an eighteenth-century interior left no area untouched. A bold black and white toile wallpaper covered the long walls of the basement stairwell. In general, this area of the house exuded a more rustic feeling with bold colors in wall treatments, floor coverings, and upholstery, raw wood objects with thicker dimensions, and weathered brass textures seen on multiple objects. A large brass lantern hung from the ceiling, and paired with two brass and glass sconces, provided illumination in the stairwell. A heavy wooden pedestal composed primarily of a thick English Baroque spiral shaft held a contrasting delicate pastel covered urn with gilded handles. A primitive undecorated cabinet was placed on the corner of the next landing with a large copper and brass pitcher

in the center of the top surface. At the large landing at the bottom of the stairs, a pair of cane-seated straight-back chairs decorated with English Baroque spiral legs and floral ornament panels in a dark wood flanked a walnut sewing table with false drawers upon which sat a large porcelain eagle with wings spread. Two monumental, wooden candle stands, standing 71 inches in height, dominated this space; the large spike on top would have been used to secure a wax candle in place.

The basement lounge room was entered from the southeast corner. Directly to the left, the viewer found the entrance to the laundry room behind a dark green louvered door. The walls in the long, rectangular lounge space were painted forest green with the east wall covered in a gray wood paneling, a matching gray wall-to-wall carpet covered the floor. Two brass panels depicting griffins in an Art Nouveau *japonisme* style hung on the walls flanking a black shelf placed on the south wall of the room between the louvered laundry room door and a matching closet door. Objects on the shelf included a terracotta figure of a cobbler, a Majolica plate with purple floral decoration, a coffee grinder with copper accents, a Daum glass vase with bright red, orange, and yellow leaves on a green ground, and a sixteen-inch-tall ceramic figure of a cockatoo-type bird in brown and black feathers with orange plumage on its head. The grouping of objects on the east wall centered on a primitive chest of drawers in a medium oak tone, a circular mirror with a wide brass frame hung on the wall above. A twelve-inch-tall faience bust of a male figure in workman's clothes with crossed arms, holding a pipe in one hand, sat upon the chest. Two dark wood armchairs with orange striped seat cushions flanked the chest accompanied by brass floor lamps with black lamp shades. Another display piece, a 41-inch-tall tiered shelf with circular glass platforms attached to a gilded pedestal with a

striding male figure as the base, held an assortment of small glass objects. Another round table, this one in oak with four turned legs and ball-and-claw feet, contained a stoneware lamp with a burlap-textured shade. A wooden pedestal table on the other side of the central grouping of chest of drawers and chairs supported a monumental example of Meissen's snow white *Schneeballen* vase decorated with life-size porcelain birds and green vines. As a companion piece to this object, a wooden birdcage containing faux foliage of green vines and red and orange flowers hung from the ceiling near the *Schneeballen* vase.

A second grouping of armchairs and side tables populated the north wall of the lounge room. Two chairs with enclosed arms and black, embossed leather upholstery in a Louis XV style with matching square footstools flanked a pine-topped table with a black metal base with brass accents. The grouping on the table included a pair of brass, spiral candlesticks and a large tureen by Mettlach Pottery, a German manufacturer of stoneware especially known for their beer steins.⁸⁴ Two wooden side tables, one a set of nesting tables, sat on the outside ends of the group and held lamps created from Majolica turkey bases. On the wall above this grouping of chairs and tables, a pair of stoneware shelves decorated with Rococo ornament and figures of birds supported a pair of figures made of pressed tin, a man and woman dressed in peasant garb. Behind these figures, green shutters covered a long row of windows set high on the wall reminding the visitor that the room was below ground level.

The grouping of furniture on west wall of the basement lounge space centered on a long, three-drawer commode with claw feet accompanied on one side by a round-front

⁸⁴ American Museum of Ceramic Art, "Mettlach Collection," <http://www.amoca.org/mettlach-collection/> accessed January 6, 2018.

commode with a brown and tan marble top and a small bookcase with a door composed of spindles in a frame on the other side. Two circular Mettlach stoneware plaques depicting picturesque architectural ruins on a seaside cliff hung on the wall above the smaller cabinets. Over the large chest, a wall clock of wood and bright brass ornament hung surrounded by dark wood architectural ornaments. Two large faience figures, both blond and dressed in peasants' working clothes with bare feet sat upon the top of the chest on either side of a copper pitcher with enamel decoration of brightly colored flowers on a sunny yellow ground. The male figure held a large basket and the female figure carried a bucket in one hand and held her skirt out of the way with the other as if she was walking while carrying out her chores. Completing the west wall grouping were a pair of side chairs in dark wood with yellow and brown plaid cushions and an Louis XV armchair with matching round stool upholstered in bright mustard yellow decorated with a tropical floral pattern in rich green and red.

The figures found in this room reflect a peasant theme common in the production of ceramic figures, from earthenware to porcelain. However, it is interesting to note that the Strains sequestered the figures made of thicker, heavier stoneware material from the light, delicate porcelain figures seen in the upper level of the home. Meissen gardener children were placed in an ornate cabinet in the study, while the faience figures of workers from unknown makers were kept in the space with rustic copper and wood objects. The classification and separation of these objects suggest the Strains' complex decision-making process in the display of their collection. They may have applied a hierarchy to their objects much like the aesthetic hierarchy applied to types of ceramic material, with rough earthenware at the bottom and finely wrought porcelain at the top.

While the existence of a hierarchy is speculative, we can deduce that the Strains applied a theme to each space of their home and purposefully collected objects to meet the criteria of each theme.

Beside the collection itself, little evidence of the Strains' life with their collection exists today. The detailed description above comes from a few textual and visual resources as well as my own memories of my experience of the house. Dr. Jason Combs performed an appraisal of the collection in 2009 and moved many of the objects from their original position to facilitate his work.⁸⁵ At the time of the appraisal, Dr. Combs served as a member of the advisory board of the G.W. Frank House Museum, specifically as a member of the Collections Committee whose task is to consult on decisions regarding the physical holdings of the museum including the building itself. In the view of most people involved with the historic house museum at the time, the house is considered the largest item in the museum's collection and due the same conservation practice as the smaller objects in the collection. Dr. Combs also served as a faculty member in the University of Nebraska Kearney Department of Geography and holds a license and certification in antiques appraisal. In 1976, the Strains worked with their antiques dealer, Jack Drew, to complete an inventory of their collection. This document was retained by the Strains' estate lawyer and provided to me by him. The document contains an almost identical list of items when compared to the 2009 inventory completed by Dr. Combs, but the slight differences in the lists indicate that the collection changed over time. A side-by-side comparison of the two inventories provides a timeline of the objects moving in and out of the collection. Working over thirty years apart, both

⁸⁵ Dr. Jason Combs, "Strain Appraisal – University of Nebraska Kearney," Fall, 2009.

appraisers processed the collection according to the method of display used by the Strains. Each inventory list is arranged by area of the house, detailing each item on display in the named area of the house. The two lists begin with the front hall indicating the first items a visitor would see as they entered the house from the front door.

Notes written on the 1976 inventory by Mr. Strain indicate that their collection was in flux throughout their lives with items being sold by the Strains in the 1970s and 1980s. Mr. Strain made notations when pieces were moved or sold. He crossed out the entire typewritten line and the accompanying value, usually indicating the selling price and the month and year of the sale. New items were also added as a note on page two of the Drew appraisal in Mr. Strain's handwriting indicates a "Belgian chest" being added to the inventory in March 1977 and described the location of the chest as "in dining room." This note likely refers to the "Belgian Chest" listed on the 2009 inventory as still located in the dining room. (fig. 27) Later, Mr. Strain notes a pair of chairs purchased in 1976 and a Steuben vase in 1977 among other new additions to the collection. He also makes note of objects that the Strains moved to new locations in their house. There is no indication as to why these moves took place; Mr. Strain only notes the new location of the object as opposed to its location when Mr. Drew completed his inventory. For example, a six-drawer French chest with Sèvres plaque inlays, listed in the bedroom by Mr. Drew, has an accompanying, handwritten notation under the typed description that reads "in living room." (fig. 28) Comb's inventory places this same chest in the living room in 2009.

Additionally, prior to the 2009 appraisal by Dr. Combs, the University of Nebraska Kearney produced a video documenting the interior of the house and its

contents provided some insight into the original display arrangements, but lacked any wide shots of the entire interior panorama.⁸⁶ Correspondence with Mrs. Strain's niece, Jeanne Hobelman, revealed that meals were eaten in the small kitchen at a bar-height counter rather than their dining room or breakfast nook table.⁸⁷ The modern elements of their household, television and stereo, were hidden behind closet doors in the foyer.

From this documentary information and spending hours in the house interacting with the architecture and objects left behind, I could determine that Mr. and Mrs. Strain put their collection at the center of their daily lives. Every element in their home seemed intentionally chosen because its aesthetic qualities suited the vision they had for the world they were constructing inside their home, a world that could reflect their identities as connoisseurs of eighteenth-century European culture. Each item's location seemed to have been subjected to a lengthy decision-making process; items were grouped with similar items or arranged in a pleasing manner based on their shape and size in relationship to the other items in the vignette. It is through this careful arrangement of objects that we can discern the Strains' goals for their collection as a personal oasis connected to an exotic European past far removed from the Midwestern, middle-class culture of their home town.

⁸⁶ University of Nebraska Kearney Department of Finance, "Video of 521 West 18th Street," 2008.

⁸⁷ Jeanne Hobelman, email correspondence with the author, September 20, 2016.

V. KEARNEY, NEBRASKA, AS A MIDWESTERN CULTURAL SPACE

Philip Strain lived Kearney, Nebraska, for his entire life. For this reason, it is important to understand the cultural environment of his hometown since it influenced his relationship to the world, which in turn influenced his collecting practices. Kearney is not an anomaly in the cultural sphere of the American Midwest but does have elements that are not typical of the common understanding of the region. Its economy is not primarily based on agriculture, although the surrounding communities are steeped in agricultural tradition. It is the home of large, social institutions including a state university, a major healthcare system, several museums, and a youth rehabilitation center that make it unusual for central Nebraska and the Great Plains region in general. It has a century-long reputation as a transportation hub for automobile travel. These elements differentiate Kearney substantially from other cities in the region.

The Midwestern region of the United States is defined by academic geographers as “the 12 states extending from Ohio westward through Kansas and northward to the Canadian border,” including, Ohio, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan. In order to develop a popular definition of this regional label, James R. Shortridge, professor of geography at the University of Kansas, conducted a nation-wide survey of college students in 1985.⁸⁸ The respondents overwhelmingly placed Nebraska and Kansas at the center of the Midwest region.

Pastoral elements figure heavily in the scholarly understanding of the culture of the Midwest. Shortridge wrote one of the seminal analyses of the Midwest and its

⁸⁸ James R. Shortridge, “The Vernacular Middle West,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, v. 75, n. 1 (March, 1985) 48.

regional identity.⁸⁹ The author uses historical research and characterizations of the region in popular literature to identify what he calls the “enigmatic and contradictory” complexion of the region.⁹⁰ Shortridge closely links the region’s identity with pastoralism, defined by the author as “the concept of an ideal middle-kingdom suspended between uncivilized wilderness and urban-industrial evils.”⁹¹ In the visual arts, pastoralism describes a theme in landscape painting that alludes to the conflict or harmony between man and nature. These two definitions share the concept of conflict at their center. For Shortridge, the Midwest mediates the conflict between the sophistication of the East and the primitivism of the wild American West.

A discussion of American Regionalism, a style of art practiced by Midwestern painters in the 1930s and 1940s, can visually demonstrate Shortridge’s concept of pastoralism and provide insight into the national understanding of the Midwest in the 1930s and 1940s during Philip and Mildred Strain’s young adult years. The most well-known artists of this genre include Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, Grant Wood of Iowa, and John Steuart Curry of Kansas. Each of these artists portrayed the American Midwest as a pastoral abstraction of rural areas and agricultural enterprise.

Thomas Hart Benton’s 1937 autobiography, *An Artist in America*, and the Regionalists’ participation in art appreciation radio and television programs from the 1930 through the 1950s helped bring this style of painting to the attention of viewers in large metropolitan areas outside of the Midwest. Although, Benton emphasized the

⁸⁹ Shortridge uses the term “Middle West” to describe the area between Ohio and Kansas and north to the Canadian border. A synonymous term is Midwest.

⁹⁰ James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture*, (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1989) 1.

⁹¹ Shortridge, 6.

“importance of making art meaningful and accessible to audiences far removed from the refinements and dilettantism of Paris and New York,”⁹² the national popularity of American Regionalism also exposed the residents of America’s cities to a version of the Midwest mediated through these artists’ intentionally constructed images.

Major museums provided another method of access for the inhabitants of cities to view American Regionalist works. After his early death in 1942, the Art Institute of Chicago offered a memorial exhibition of Grant Wood’s work.⁹³ Thomas Hart Benton’s *Susanna and the Elders*, a Regionalist translation of the Artemisia Gentileschi masterpiece of 1610, was donated to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco in 1940 after it had been exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1938.⁹⁴ The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired the work, *End of the Hunt*, by Dale Nichols in 1938, only four years after the artist completed it. The Nebraska-born Nichols, like the other Regionalists, represented the state of his birth in his work.

American Regionalism contributed to the notion of the Midwest as a rural, idyllic landscape through careful selection of the details they included in their images. In a review of Wanda Corn’s 1983 exhibition, *Grant Wood: The Regionalist Vision*, a critic noted that “his best mature paintings include no reference to electricity, no machinery more advanced than a horse-drawn wagon or plow.”⁹⁵ Wood’s editorialist approach to

⁹² Leo G. Mazow, “Regionalist Radio: Thomas Hart Benton on “Art for Your Sake”,” *The Art Bulletin*, v. 90, no. 1 (March, 2008) 102.

⁹³ Art Institute of Chicago, “1942 Exhibition History”, online <http://www.artic.edu/research/1942-exhibition-history>,

http://www.artic.edu/sites/default/files/libraries/pubs/1942/AIC1942PandS53rdAn_comb%28clr%29.pdf

⁹⁴ FAMSf, <http://art.famsf.org/thomas-hart-benton/susanna-and-elders-1940104>.

⁹⁵ Joseph McLellan, “Images of the American Past,” review of *Grant Wood: The Regionalist Vision*, by Wanda M. Corn, *Washington Post* (August, 28, 1983) https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/entertainment/books/1983/08/28/images-of-the-american-past-grant-wood-the-regionalist-vision-by-wanda-m-corn-yale-university-press-168-pp-2995/a7f43332-cab8-425d-a90a-3c906059a5c2/?utm_term=.d3e28c0a5928

his compositions contributed to the national understanding of the Midwest as a bastion of an old-fashioned way of life. However, the collective reveries of the American Regionalists' Midwest do not reflect the historical images of Kearney, Nebraska. As depicted in a 1909 photograph, Kearney's downtown featured electrical wires on tall poles and buildings of three, four and five stories, some in a Romanesque Revival architectural style. (fig. 29) Kearney's inhabitants intentionally cast their city as a miniature, modern metropolis since the city's founding contradicting the American Regionalists' idealized Arcadia.

Kearney, Nebraska, is located in Buffalo County in the south-central portion of the state. The town began as a railroad junction in 1871 and founders took the name from a regional Army fort named for a Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny, a leader of the Mexican-American War.⁹⁶ Fort Kearny offered protection for pioneers following the Platte River and Oregon Trail to the west. The extra 'e' in the name of Kearney originated in a spelling error in the paperwork filed to establish the first post office. Reverend and Mrs. Asbury Collins entered the first homestead claim in the summer of 1871 and occupied the first house in Kearney called the "Junction House" which served as the post office, inn, church and school. The town survey was completed in the summer of 1871 and the town was incorporated in 1873 when its population was 245 people with 20 accompanying buildings.⁹⁷ With a current population of just over 32,000, Kearney is

⁹⁶ State of New Mexico, Office of the State Historian, Commission of Public Records, <http://newmexicohistory.org/people/stephen-watts-kearny>, accessed September 13, 2014.

⁹⁷ City of Kearney, "History", <http://www.cityofkearney.org/index.aspx?NID=759>, accessed September 13, 2014. See also, Union Pacific Railroad, "Omaha Promontory: Kearney", https://www.up.com/goldenspike/omaha-promontory.html#kearney_ne, accessed December 25, 2017.

the fifth largest city in Nebraska, a state where almost half of the population lives in just two cities, Omaha and Lincoln, located in the southeastern portion of the state.

Conflict between East and West is a significant component in the foundation character of Kearney. However, Kearney's culture is not based on agricultural production, which complicates our ability to understand the town through Shortridge's characterization of the Midwest. In the 1880s, investors from the eastern United States followed George W. Frank to Kearney, who intended to build an urban center based on a mercantile model and access to transportation. Mr. Frank chose Kearney as the focus of his investment because it was the most developed town near the western junctions of several major railroad lines. A map published in 1874 illustrates Kearney as an ideal site for city building based on its position between transportation and the source of production. (fig. 30) In 1890, the beginning of Kearney's first boom period, about 163,000 miles of steam railroad lines crisscrossed the United States carrying people from the East who settled the land and transporting agricultural goods and raw materials for manufacturing to eastern markets and manufacturers.⁹⁸

George W. Frank of upstate New York, patriarch of a small and wealthy family, built a stone mansion on the western edge of Kearney in 1889 with the intention of attracting investors from the eastern United States to Kearney's businesses. His first investment in the town was the construction of an electric utility company, a key piece of infrastructure for post-Industrial Revolution manufacturing, made possible by the installation of a steam-powered dynamo. The *Kearney Hub*, the town's local newspaper, echoed Mr. Frank's motives stating, "Kearney's great power house, with its water wheels

⁹⁸ Knox College, "Railroads in the Midwest, Early Documents and Images," accessed July 23, 2017, http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/knx_rail#note3

and dynamos, is an inspiration to every visitor and an assurance that Kearney is growing rapidly into the full fruition of her aspirations as a manufacturing city.”⁹⁹ The Franks’ time in the house was shortened when their family fortune was lost to the silver market crash and resulting economic panic of 1893.¹⁰⁰

Less than five years after Nebraska attained statehood in 1867, railroad agents seeking a junction between two major railroads, the Burlington and Union Pacific, chose the site for the town of Kearney Junction. The location was situated near Fort Kearny, a military outpost on the Platte River, which had served as a way station for settlers traveling across the Great Plains on the Oregon and Mormon Trails and along the Platte River. The railroad traffic established Kearney as a crossroads for goods and people. Train and automotive travel is a common denominator in the economic development of many Midwestern towns. Today, the town maintains its status as a hub of transportation with an active railroad line and two major automotive veins, Nebraska Highway 30 and U.S. Interstate 80, bisecting the town.

The Lincoln Highway was an important influence on Kearney’s culture as it brought people from faraway American cities to the town as the country’s interest in tourism by automobile grew. The city was a major stop-over for automobile tourists traveling the Lincoln Highway, one of the first transnational highways dedicated in 1913. The automotive thruway paralleled the railroad tracks along the southern border of Nebraska and the Platte River. Only those people of strong will made the 20 to 30-day

⁹⁹ *Kearney Hub*, October 16, 1891.

<http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/APA/Kearney/default.aspx#panel=home>

¹⁰⁰ For more on the 1893 silver market, see Quentin R. Skrabec Jr. *The 100 Most Important American Financial Crises: An Encyclopedia of the Lowest Points in American Economic History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2014) 113-114.

journey from east to west, averaging a speed of 18 miles per hour.¹⁰¹ The people of Kearney recognized tourism as an important economic advantage for their town. Harmon Park was developed in the 1920s to provide local residents with a community space, but the park also hosted events, like the Chautauqua, that drew crowds from faraway.¹⁰² The first hotels in Kearney opened in the 1870s to service the needs of train passengers passing through the town on their way to destinations in the west, but hotel space increased exponentially in the twentieth century. The three-story Midway Hotel and the Hotel Fort Kearney, a seven-story building, were the grand dames of downtown Kearney from the turn of the twentieth century until around 1970. (fig. 31)¹⁰³ Kearney still recognizes the importance of their history with the Lincoln Highway, celebrating the highway's one-hundredth anniversary in 2013 with a festival that brought over 12,000 people to the town.¹⁰⁴

Kearney was often marketed as the "Midway City" to tourists traveling the length of the Lincoln Highway. Still today, its location on Interstate 80 makes Kearney the ideal location for cross-country tourists to stop for a respite and recreation and, being in the horizontal center of the state, its location also makes it attractive to conference organizers for Nebraska businesses and other groups. Location also contributes to tourism as a central factor in Kearney's economy. Kearney's tourism industry is supported by the town's cultural offerings. Kearney has an exceptionally large number of museums and cultural institutions for a town of its size. Institutions serving the local community

¹⁰¹ US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, "Highway History: The Lincoln Highway," <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/lincoln.cfm>, accessed September 13, 2014.

¹⁰² Alice Shaneyfelt Howell, "Harmon Park," *Buffalo Tales*, Buffalo County Historical Society, (July/August, 1988) online, http://www.bchs.us/BTales_198807.html, accessed July 26, 2017.

¹⁰³ Margaret Stines Nielsen, "The Hotels of Kearney," *Buffalo Tales*, Buffalo County Historical Society, (September and October, 1987) online, http://www.bchs.us/BTales_198709.html, accessed July 26, 2017.

¹⁰⁴ <https://visitkearney.org/lincoln-highway/>

include the Kearney Children's Museum, Buffalo County Historical Society's Trails and Rails Museum, the Great Platte River Road Archway, the Merryman Center for the Performing Arts, the Fort Kearney Museum and the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary. In addition to these, the University of Nebraska Kearney offers the cultural programming associated with a small university. Not only do these institutions serve the citizens of Buffalo County and Kearney, but they support the larger regional tourism industry. In 2013, Buffalo County's revenue from their 1.5% lodging tax alone was just under \$950,000. Tourism sustains these institutions because the regional population would not be able to provide the revenue needed to support so many museums.

Another institution that significantly contributes to the culture of Kearney is the University of Nebraska Kearney, which opened in 1905. In its century of existence, the college changed names several times and only became the University of Nebraska Kearney when it joined the university system in 1989. The school is a highly respected regional university with a current enrollment of around 7,000 students. In the 2013–14 academic years, it conferred 1,045 bachelor's degrees and 342 master's degrees. As alumni, Philip and Mildred Strain possessed a strong relationship to the school which was further strengthened by the proximity of their home to the university campus. They were frequent attendees at university theatrical and musical productions as well as art department events.¹⁰⁵ The stipulations of their will also attest to the Strains' fondness for the arts in that the university was given the option to use the estate to create scholarships for students in the art department.

¹⁰⁵ Betty Becker-Theye, email correspondence with the author, January 2015.

The art museum that the Strains would have had the most direct access to is the Museum of Nebraska Art, located in Kearney, which was examined above. Museum art collecting in Nebraska contrasts with the focus of Strains' collection on European art. Nebraska features a single, encyclopedic art museum, the Joslyn Museum in Omaha. This institution's collection spans from Greek and Roman antiquity to contemporary, international artists. One of their largest and most well-known collections is the Native American section, but the museum also hosts European art sections that present an overview of painting and sculpture from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century. The museum's European collection is especially strong in nineteenth-century work with paintings by French artists including Degas, Monet, Courbet, and William-Adolphe Bouguereau. Jack Drew, the Strain's antiques dealer, and his family established an endowment to support the Joslyn's collecting and exhibiting of eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century European art.¹⁰⁶ In 2016, the endowment allowed the museum to purchase two paintings by Swiss artist, Angelica Kauffman.¹⁰⁷ The Joslyn was founded by Sarah Joslyn, widow of newspaper-publisher George Joslyn, opened in 1931. Given their connection to Jack Drew, it is highly likely that the Strains visited the Joslyn to view the collection on at least one occasion.

Other art institutions in Nebraska demonstrate a variety of more focused themes in their collecting and exhibition strategies. The Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art illustrates the type of museum one might associate with Shortridge's understanding of the

¹⁰⁶ Joslyn Art Museum, *2016 Annual Report*, https://www.joslyn.org/Post/sections/167/Files/joslynartmuseum_2016_annualreport.pdf, accessed September 18, 2017, 13.

¹⁰⁷ Joslyn Art Museum, "Joslyn Art Museum Announces Opening of Reinstalled European Galleries; Four New Acquisitions Unveiled", http://www.joslyn.org/post/sections/157/Files/european_reinstallation_2017_pressrelease.pdf, accessed September 18, 2017.

Midwest as a pastoral land.¹⁰⁸ Founded in 2007, this museum is located in David City, Nebraska, a town of less than 3000 people about 65 miles west of Omaha. They describe their collection as “fine art that pertains to lands, field, and their tenure” and “thematically focuses on all classifications of lands, including grasslands, wetlands, federally protected lands, agricultural lands, and even urban green spaces.” A highlight of their mission is the Dale Nichols Collection, David City native and Regionalist artist in the vein of Thomas Hart Benton. (fig. 32) The Strains would not have visited this museum, but Bone Creek is important to the idyllic understanding of the Midwest and Nebraskan communities’ robust and diverse dedication to the fine arts.

The Strains’ collection is made further unique by examining the collecting practices of other Nebraskans. Collecting art is not a rare phenomenon in Nebraska but seems to occur primarily among the state’s wealthier citizens which does not accurately describe the Strains. Robert and Karen Duncan of Lincoln collect contemporary sculptures and paintings; Mr. Duncan is the chairman emeritus of Duncan Aviation, a maintenance, repair and overhaul company with \$300 million in annual revenue.¹⁰⁹ The Duncans have opened a gallery in Lincoln to share their collection with the community. In 2013, Merle Stalder, who made his fortune in the cattle industry, donated his collection of 100 works by significant American painters and photographers to the library in his hometown of Falls City, Nebraska.¹¹⁰ There is no museum in Falls City to which Mr.

¹⁰⁸ Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art, <http://bonecreek.org/> accessed September 18, 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Kyle Macmillan, “Couple Spans Globe to Build World-Class Art Collection,” Wall Street Journal, online edition (August 29, 2014) <http://online.wsj.com/articles/duncans-build-world-class-art-collection-1409336273>, accessed September 14, 2014.

Duncan Aviation company profile, <http://www.duncanaviation.aero/company/index.php>, accessed September 14, 2014.

¹¹⁰ Bill Kelly, “Big Art for a Small Town: Falls City gets a major collection of paintings,” NET News, <http://netnebraska.org/article/news/big-art-small-town-falls-city-gets-major-collection-paintings>, accessed September 14, 2014.

Stalder could have given his collection. Nebraskans with a true passion for collecting are resourceful people who go to great lengths to share their passion for art with their communities.

VI. THEORIES OF COLLECTING AND MATERIAL CULTURE

To understand the Strains' activities as collectors of European decorative arts, a definition of a collection and its relationship to its collectors must be theorized. Multiple authors have addressed the human activity of collecting and the motivations of collectors. Some collectors are motivated by the financial rewards of collecting, some by the social rewards such as increased esteem from their peers. These concepts may seem simple on the surface, but once we consider the complicated relationship between people and objects, it becomes a complex field of ideas that involves issues as diverse as the crafting of personal identity, definitions of socially acceptable behavior, and object biographies.

John Elsner and Roger Cardinal edited a seminal text about collecting in 1994, entitled *The Cultures of Collecting*. Elsner and Cardinal identify the “compulsion to accumulate, classify, and arrange”¹¹¹ which we might read as a generic definition of the act of collecting. The collective action, the act of putting an object into a collection, is a process that reflects modern society which is organized by categories and collections.

A collection can be defined essentially as a group of objects gathered together by a collector for a purpose defined by that collector. Collections are created through the human activities of gathering and meaning-making. Some collections also involve the process of creation when the objects collected are produced by human processes rather than organic forms of production. Collectors gather together objects which they deem to be related in a specific and definable way. In this process of matching objects with each other, the collector attaches a new meaning to the collection as a whole that is expressed in part by each object in the collection. Scholar Susan M. Pearce notes that “collection-

¹¹¹ Ernest Sturm, Book Review, *The French Review*, v. 68, n. 6 (May, 1995) 1082.

forming is part of the relationship between the subject, conceived as each individual human being, and the object, conceived as the whole world, material and otherwise, which lies outside him or her.”¹¹² To be defined as a collection, a group of objects depends on the collector’s intentional action of building the collection.

Collections can also contain items that have no physical embodiment. The Strains lived in the Midwest, a collection in multiple senses. Not only is the Midwest defined by geography, as it is a set of states with political and topographical boundaries but is also a collection of people with common traits as outlined by James Shortridge.¹¹³ If we can apply the term collection to an abstract concept like “Midwest,” then the term must be applicable to a wider variety of understandings that only material culture.

Collecting is a human action based in the relationship between people and objects. People and objects constitute the matter that composes the material world. The materiality of objects allows people to experience them through sensory inputs including vision, touch, smell, auditory input, and taste. The characteristics of the object can direct the prioritization of the sensory inputs. For example, a person experiencing a porcelain figure might first rely on their sense of sight to analyze the form, color, shape, and composition of the figure. The sense of touch might provide the experience of cool, slick surfaces of skin and cloth and the sharp edges of details like flowers. The senses of taste and smell would not play a major role in the sensory experience of a porcelain object because the function of the object is not to be eaten or inhaled. These sensory inputs combine to provide an intellectual understanding of the object. The total sensory

¹¹² Susan M Pearce, “Collecting: Body and Soul,” in *Museums, Objects, and Collections* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992) 37.

¹¹³ See section on Midwest as a cultural entity.

experience of an object draws the collector to the objects that satisfy the specific criteria they have defined as the meaning of their collection.

If collecting is a human activity, then it necessarily contains a psychological component. A great many authors have explored collecting from this perspective. Werner Muensterberger, author of *Collecting: An Unruly Passion*, contributes a definition of collecting as “the selecting, gathering, and keeping of objects of subjective value.”¹¹⁴ Muensterberger and Pearce agree that subject, or the collector, assigns the value of the collected object. Value assignation by the collector is evident in the Strains’ project. Their desire to connect with eighteenth-century European culture was significant enough that the Strains placed a high value on objects made in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries even though the object’s aura was diluted by its later date of production. They placed a higher regard on the aesthetic character of the object than the ability to date it to the origin of the style.

The authenticity of an object, the “here and now of the thing”, is threatened by its reproduction by technological means. Reproduction detaches the copy from the tradition of the original, substituting the unique existence of the original for a mass existence.¹¹⁵ The ‘unique existence’ is composed of three elements. First, the object’s authenticity, the “quintessence of all that is transmissible in it from its origin on,” or the thing’s pure, concentrated, and real nature conveyed from its origin to the present. This element, combined with its physical being and its biography, constitute the object’s aura, “a

¹¹⁴ Werner Muensterberger, *Collecting: An Unruly Passion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) 4.

¹¹⁵ Walter Benjamin established the concept of the aura of an object in his essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility,” 2nd vers., in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Jennings, Doherty, and Levine, eds. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008) 21.

strange tissue of space and time” which connects the collector with the creator of the object.¹¹⁶

Thus, the aura of an object carries a strong connection to its place and era of origin that is retained, but diluted, in its reproduction through mechanical or manual means. The dates of production complicated the aura of the Strains’ objects, but the dates are outweighed by their aesthetic appeal and their production by the original manufacturers which continued to operate from the eighteenth century to the present. The objects in the Strains’ collection were reproduced by the same manufacturers using the same methods that produced the eighteenth-century originals. This method of creation reinforces elements of the object’s aura, especially its authenticity. It does not rise to the level of the original because it lacks the hefty biography of the original, but the aura is more substantial than a reproduction made using more mechanical methods enacted by less skilled workers.

Leon Rosenstein referenced the concept of the aura in his discussion of antiques and antique collecting. He writes, “historicality...constitutes more than anything else the ‘aura’ generated by the antique: how we subjectively experience [the antique object] as an object from the past, for knowing its past in part determines how we see it.”¹¹⁷ Antique collecting, as opposed to art collecting, can be associated with middle-class social status due to wider access to antiques by the general consumer. The lower price range of antiques, as opposed to inaccessible fine art markets, also contribute to the understanding of antique collecting. The Strains’ might be classified as collectors of antiques if we consider the reproduction status, lower age, and lower market value of the items they

¹¹⁶ Benjamin, 24-25.

¹¹⁷ Leon Rosenstein, *Antiques: The History of an Idea* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009) 8.

collected. Antique marketplaces are as ubiquitous in the Midwest as corn or wheat fields. Every small town seems to have a flea market or antique mall where you can find tchotchkes of every age, size, material, and condition. Rosenstein defines an antique as “a primarily handcrafted object of rarity and beauty that by means of its associated provenance and its agedness as recognized by means of its style and material endurance, has the capacity to generate and preserve for us the image of a world past.”¹¹⁸

The concept of the object’s aura might address the inclusion of Art Nouveau objects in the Strains’ collection. These objects, though they do not meet the stylistic guidelines of Rococo or Neoclassicism, reflect the aesthetic characteristics of the elegance and opulence of these styles in a sufficient manner as to accomplish the aesthetic goals of the Strains. The Art Nouveau glass objects in the Strain Collection share a period of production with the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century porcelain objects made in the guise of eighteenth-century objects. They also share a high caliber manufacturer with a recognizable name. The Strains probably included these objects because their jewel-toned color, curvaceous shapes, and abstract floral patterning coordinated well with the colors and forms found in their porcelain objects.

Psychological drive to create one’s singular identity inspires the urge to collect, or as Muensterberger states, “objects contribute to their [the collector] sense of identity and function as a source of self-definition.”¹¹⁹ Mr. Strain could create an artistic outlet through the accumulation and display of their collection. By assembling objects into a collection that can be seen and interpreted, the collector creates a new entity using the objects in their collection. The collector performs the work of an artist; according to Jules

¹¹⁸ Rosenstein, 160.

¹¹⁹ Muensterberger, 4.

David Prown, “It is in art...that societies have expressly articulated their beliefs.”¹²⁰ The collector displays their belief in the meaning they assign to their collection.

In the case of the Strains, their collected objects were the material they used to create a physical world that expressed their belief in the ascendancy of eighteenth-century Europe. As Muensterberger says, “the passionate collector combines his own re-created past consoling experiences with the fantasied past of his objects in an almost mystical union.”¹²¹ It is this ‘mystical’ relationship that is exemplified in the way the Strains committed the entire space in their homage to the eighteenth century. They could transport themselves from the Midwestern locale of their daily public lives to a fantasy world of their own making in which their constructed identities gained legitimacy through the auras of their object.

Collected objects may share common characteristics and meanings identified by the collector and evident to other viewers. Commonality is defined as a shared characteristic that relates the objects to each other that has been identified as significant by the collector. In the Strains’ collection, aesthetic characteristics are the easily identifiable common thread.

Some authors and collectors have linked collecting activity with preservation, a desire to save objects from the past for the benefit of future study. Preservation especially prioritized in the collecting missions of public institutions like libraries and museums. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal describe a collection as the “unique bastion against the deluge of time...not just casual keeping but conscious rescuing from extinction” in the

¹²⁰ Jules David Prown, “The Truth of Material Culture: History or Fiction?” in *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000) 15.

¹²¹ Muensterberger, 14.

introduction of their seminal volume, *The Cultures of Collecting*.¹²² The collector removes objects from circulation so that the object no longer serves the function for which it was created and thus is no longer subject to the daily stresses of continual use. Anecdotal evidence supports preservation as a priority for the Strains. According to Roger Jones, the university representative that assisted the Strains in arranging their estate gift, Mr. and Mrs. Strain became emotional when contemplating the collection being outside of their watchful eyes.¹²³ They were willing to undergo this emotional gauntlet to ensure that their collection would be preserved in some form beyond their lifespan.

Michael Schiffer, writing about the archaeological record, described collecting as a “conserving,” or “a shifting of material from technofunction to socio- or ideofunction.” When a collector places an object in their collection, the function of the object changes from its original, technical use to a function related to its aesthetic qualities or its provenance. This new meaning is directly related to the theme of the collection and is determined by the collector. The collection of David Morgan illustrates the concept of collector-determined meaning. Mr. Morgan of Oxfordshire, Great Britain, collects traffic cones, an interest connected to his job at Oxford Plastic Systems which is the world’s largest manufacturer of cones. His collection is based on “a fascination with the finer points of their design.” He states, “It’s really interesting...There are so many different shapes, sizes, and colors. And the models are always changing.” Mr. Morgan demonstrates that collectors may be initially attracted to objects because of their

¹²² John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, “Introduction,” *Cultures of Collecting* (London: Reaktion Books, 1994) 1.

¹²³ Roger Jones (retired University of Nebraska Foundation development professional) in conversation with the author, December 2013.

utilitarian function, but it is the qualities that the object possesses beyond its technical function that hold the collector's attention at an intensity that stimulates their desire to amass a collection.

The objects collected by the Strains contrast with Mr. Morgan's collection in that many of their objects primarily serve as a collectible object rather than a functional one. These objects may resemble an object that functions in a utilitarian manner as in the Strains' collection of cup-and-saucer sets. (fig. 33) However, these objects truly function to provide an aesthetic experience. Aesthetics, a branch of philosophy, examines human perception and experience of beauty and ugliness. Aesthetic theory also addresses the concept of an object's aesthetic qualities, asking whether those qualities are "objectively present" in an object or whether these qualities are identified only in the mind of the viewer. Mr. Morgan can readily identify the aesthetic qualities present in his traffic cones, but another viewer might dismiss the objects as merely functional. Viewers can understand the pleasing aesthetic qualities of the objects in the Strains' collection more readily because the collectible objects were designed to evoke ¹²⁴

Decorative art objects made for display in the form of functional objects, like a commemorative plate or collectible cup and saucer, exist in a liminal space between fine art and the relics of daily, functional human activity. Thus, these objects can be analyzed in an aesthetic manner that addresses the beauty of the object. They can also provide intellectual access to aspects of the creator's culture that are both consciously and unconsciously transferred to the object. Jules Prown suggests that objects provide a

¹²⁴Marcia Muelder Eaton, "Aesthetic Experience," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 2nd ed. (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2006) *Encyclopedia.com*, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/aesthetic-experience>, accessed March 3, 2018.

powerful “entrée into cultural beliefs [that lie] in the universality of human experience.”¹²⁵ For the Strains, collecting the objects that could provide both the aesthetic and cultural experience in which eighteenth-century elite Europeans participated fulfilled their goal of recreating that experience in their private space. The experience of the beauty and function of an object is an element of the universal human experience referenced by Prown that is portable across time and space. The Strains could share in the physical and psychological experience of the eighteenth-century elite by immersing themselves in a recreation of the environment in which those persons lived using objects produced in the same form and by the same companies patronized by those elite members of eighteenth-century society.

To identify the objects that would successfully recreate the eighteenth-century elite environment, the Strains had to educate themselves on that culture and employ their dealer to gain access to the market for those objects. They had to understand the classifications applied to the objects. Elsner and Cardinal associate collecting with the act of classification, or naming objects, presenting the Biblical patriarchs of Adam the classifier and Noah the collector as the ideal team. They write that “collecting is classification lived, experienced in three dimensions.”¹²⁶ In order to be prepared for entry into a collection, an object is placed into a category. People usually collect a category of objects, as opposed to a random group of unrelated items, making categorization or identification of an object’s connection to the theme of the collection as defined by the collector an essential first step in the collecting process. Mr. Strain identified items for

¹²⁵ W. David Kingery, “Introduction.” *Learning From Things: Method and Theory of Material Culture Studies*, ed. W. David Kingery (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996) 4.

¹²⁶ Elsner and Cardinal, 2.

their collector through the object's aesthetic appeal, deprioritizing other characteristics such as age and provenance.

The spaces described in Section V constituted the most public spaces of the Strains' home. In these spaces, guests might have been able to examine the objects that the Strains systematically arranged in display schemes that combined the methods used in eighteenth-century aristocratic homes, such as the symmetrical grouping on the fireplace mantle, and twentieth-century, middle class homes exemplified by the curved front China cabinet in the dining room that held cup and saucer pairs. Ian Woodward noted that objects play a social role in the material world: "inanimate things within the environment act on people, and are acted upon by people, for the purposes of carrying out social functions, regulating social relations and giving symbolic meaning to human activity."¹²⁷ Objects do social work related to the human instinct to classify, exemplified by our ability to recognize a soldier by their uniform and a doctor by their stethoscope. Objects are signs of identity presented to others so they can correctly classify the owner of the object as the owner wishes. The soldier and the doctor don't need to be employed in those professions to be recognized as such, only to be in possession of the objects that classify them as members of said profession.

The Strains put their collection on display in both the public and private spaces of their house. However, they only invited a very select group of people into their home to view their collection. Therefore, the Strains were not reaping the same social benefits from their collection that were garnered by elite, wealthy collectors. Their collection

¹²⁷ Ian Woodward, *Understanding Material Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 2007) 3.

provided them with more personal benefits – allowing them to express their self-identity for the benefit of their own self-gratification.

Their dealer, Jack Drew, might be considered one exception to the idea that their collection was not used to display their social status. Jack Drew was one of the few people the Strains invited into their home to share the experience of their collection. The Strains and Mr. Drew developed a close relationship as evidenced by the historical documents archived by the Strains' estate lawyer. The postcard correspondence kept by Mr. Strain and the inventory appraisal done by Mr. Drew in 1976 confirm the partnership formed between the two men. Mr. Drew presented Mr. Strain with objects to consider for purchase. On the occasion that Mr. Strain chose to cull the collection by selling objects, Mr. Drew shepherded him through the transaction.¹²⁸ Handwritten notes on the 1976 inventory indicate that Mr. Drew gifted at least one item to the Strains. On page eight of the document, a type-written entry, under the heading "Living Room", lists a cranberry cornucopia with ram's head base beside it a hand-written notation reads "gift from Drew."¹²⁹ Gifts and correspondence help define the relationship between the Strains and Jack Drew as a social one as opposed to a strictly commercial arrangement. These actions show that the Strains did use their collection to increase their social capital within the narrow scope of the dealer-collector relationship and make a connection to the metropolitan culture of Omaha.

Mr. Drew, and the cultural space in Omaha, likely served as cultural educator for the Strains in a manner similar to the dealers that served the nineteenth-century wealthy "managerial elite" defined by John Ott in his examination of nineteenth-century art

¹²⁸ Notes on Strain postcard correspondence and handwritten notes on 1976 appraisal by Jack Drew.

¹²⁹ Jack Drew, "Appraisal of Strain household," *Drews' Antiques* (1976) 8.

patrons in newly industrialized California.¹³⁰ Ott recognized the tidal change in the system of acquisition of art in the nineteenth century: "...art dealers became increasingly prominent and influential" in making art more "intellectually accessible" to their clients.¹³¹ Mr. Drew provided the same educational induction service to the Strains, who must have sought out his assistance to facilitate the acquisition of their collection.

Ott wrote that, "patron-centered histories permit, even demand, the analysis of otherwise marginalized topics" not addressed in the artist-centered canon of art history.¹³² My examination of the Strains' collection goes beyond adding collecting to the academic discussion by addressing several topics that have not received due attention in previous examinations of patrons and collectors. Generally, patrons of the arts who have received scholarly attention inhabit the upper socio-economic echelons of their era. Names like Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, and Guggenheim appear in multiple volumes. Museums have been established based on the collection of a single collector or family of collectors.¹³³ Collectors of note tend to live in places with easy access to the international art market. They have the financial means to travel to the far reaches of the world where they can access the objects of their desire in the objects' place of production. By contrast, the Strain Collection allows us to consider art collectors of middle class status and collectors who live in areas outside of the major cultural centers of the world like New York, London, or Paris.

¹³⁰ John Ott, *Manufacturing the Modern Patron in Victorian California*, ser. *The Histories of Material Culture and Collecting, 1700-1950* (New York: Routledge, 2014) 63.

¹³¹ Ott, 63.

¹³² Ott, 6.

¹³³ A few examples of this type of museum include the recently opened Broad Museum in Los Angeles, the Frick Collection in New York City, the Guggenheim, an international group of museums, and the Wallace Collection in London.

People can possess a collection of objects without identifying themselves as a collector. My stepmother collects a series of animal figurines made of stone. The series is created and marketed as a collectible category of objects; the manufacturer intends the objects to be collected by the consumer. Over the years, she has amassed a collection of 40-50 objects usually because they were given to her as a gift by her family because we know she likes them. The objects are displayed in their home, but not in a location that overwhelms the living space like the display scheme in the Strain home. My stepmother is the more common type of collector – an accidental collector who bought a couple of objects that she liked and then the collection grew organically until it was large enough to be called a collection. By contrast, the Strains can be defined as collectors because their intentional actions defined them as collectors. They did not collect objects that were marketed as a series of collectibles in ready-made sets. Their objects, even though as I previously stated were made to be collected, the Strains curated their collection by selecting each item individually and placing it in a set they defined rather than a set defined by the manufacturer.

VII. PORCELAIN IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

When the Strains collected primarily porcelain objects, they participated in a centuries-old tradition of recognizing porcelain as a highly desirable symbol of the collector's sophisticated aesthetic acumen and physical representation of the collector's social status. Porcelain collecting ranged from small, private collections to the mammoth-sized collection of Augustus the Strong of Saxony, who built an entire palace to house his collection of objects imported from Asia and produced in his royal factory at Meissen. Before examining objects in the Strains' collection individually, it will be instructive to understand the nature of porcelain in relation to other ceramic products and to trace the global path porcelain took to from China through Europe to the Strains' Midwestern home.

Porcelain is a specific sub classification of ceramic objects. Derived from the Greek *keramikos* meaning pottery, ceramic ware is a "broad term for all objects made of fired clay."¹³⁴ Ceramic ware can be generally divided into three types based on the clay used in its production and the characteristics of the finished product: earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain. Ceramics are created when inorganic and non-metallic ingredients, usually clays and other types of earthen materials, are moistened to the point of malleability and formed into the shape desired by the creator. The wet form can then either be dried in the sun which can result in a brittle, temporary object when the object is small, or in the case of architectural mud-bricks can last for millennia. To achieve an object of more permanence, the creator can expose the ceramic object to the extreme heat of fire in an oven, called a kiln. The heat creates a chemical reaction between the

¹³⁴ George Savage and Harold Newman, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Ceramics* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985) 68.

ingredients in order to form a rigid structure. After its first firing, ceramic objects can be sculpted in a manner similar to sculpting stone in order to refine the planes of the object. Ceramic objects can be decorated with a paint-like substance called a glaze, then refired in a kiln to harden the glaze to a shiny, strong layer that further protects the clay form from damage and assists in maintaining the object's rigidity. Historically, ceramic wares were used for domestic or artistic functions, but modern industry employs ceramic materials for a wide variety of uses because of ceramic's hardness and resistance to damage from harsh chemicals.¹³⁵

The three types of ceramic wares can be broadly differentiated based on the ingredients of the clay material used to form the body of the object and the characteristics of the finished object. Earthenware, a fairly broad term, refers to any ceramic ware or pottery¹³⁶ that is made from a mixture of clay and other minerals and remains porous after firing unless a glaze is employed to create a water-tight surface.¹³⁷ Earthenware is typically thicker and heavier in appearance than stoneware or porcelain. Earthenware does not require high-temperature firing and is not vitreous. Vitrified ceramics possess a glassy quality created by the melting together of clay and minerals at extremely high temperatures. Porcelain, a very fine vitrified ceramic, can approach the translucence of glass. Stoneware is finer in texture than earthenware and becomes semi-vitreous during firing at temperatures much higher than those at which earthenware is processed. This high temperature firing triggers the vitrification reaction. As a semi-vitreous material,

¹³⁵ For more information on industrial ceramics, see The American Ceramic Society, www.ceramics.org.

¹³⁶ For my purposes, I will use the term pottery to describe primarily earthenware "pots", container vessels used in culinary or feasting functions. See the discussion of Rice.

¹³⁷ Savage and Newman, 103.

stoneware ceramic is nonporous without glazing, although a variety of glazes are often used to decorate stoneware objects.

Porcelain, third type of ceramic, is a white material that vitrifies to the point that it is translucent when held up to a light source and vessels produce a ringing sound when lightly struck.¹³⁸ While earthenware and stoneware can be made from a variety of clays and minerals, the material known as true porcelain or hard-paste porcelain which meets the required standards of translucence and resonance is composed of kaolin, a white clay, and petunste, a feldspathic mineral that contributes to vitrification.¹³⁹ Robert Finlay describes the way in which the ingredients work together, “[petunste] gives translucency and hardness to the porcelain paste but is difficult to work with by itself; kaolin softens the paste, providing plasticity, smoothness, and whiteness.”¹⁴⁰ The hardness of the material’s internal structure allows vessels to possess very thin walls and fine details to be sculpted into mold-made figures after their initial firing. Porcelain requires extremely high-temperature firing to complete the vitrification process, “the two components fuse to form a single mass when heated to above 1,300°C undergoing a process of vitrification that renders the finished product resonant, wholly impermeable, very white, and translucent when thin.”¹⁴¹ If a porcelain object is broken, the edge will be hard, smooth, and sharp whereas cracked edges in other ceramics are rough. The whiteness of porcelain was highly desired by European and Chinese consumers leading to the development of an

¹³⁸ Savage and Newman, 227.

¹³⁹ “Feldspar is the name given to a group of minerals distinguished by the presence of alumina and silica (SiO₂) in their chemistry. Feldspar is used to make dinnerware and bathroom and building tiles. In ceramics and glass production, feldspar is used as a flux. A flux is a material that lowers the melting temperature of another material, in this case, glass.” Minerals Education Coalition Minerals Database, “Feldspar,” <https://mineralseducationcoalition.org/minerals-database/feldspar/> accessed January 3, 2018.

¹⁴⁰ Robert Finlay, “The Pilgrim Art: The Culture of Porcelain in World History,” *Journal of World History*, v. 9, n. 2 (University of Hawai’i Press: Fall, 1998) 145.

¹⁴¹ Finlay (1998) 145.

imitator, soft-paste porcelain, a stoneware material mixed with other ingredients to achieve a clay body approaching white in color.

Archaeologists and anthropologists generally observe pottery manufacture, the human manipulation of clay using fire, to be one of the earliest methods of technological production, wherein human action changed the characteristics of a material to create an object with a specific function. Prudence M. Rice of Southern Illinois University surveyed the roots of pottery making in her article, “On the Origins of Pottery.”¹⁴² Among other theories, Rice presents a “culinary hypotheses” that follows the conventional interpretation that pottery was developed to store and cook food, a theory supported by finds of clay pots formed in the same shape as food containers made from other materials such as skin bags or woven baskets. Another theory this author summarizes, which she titles “resource intensification” relates to discussions of porcelain as a prestige material used to denote social status.¹⁴³ According to Rice, starting from the theories of Brian Hayden of Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada, whose research supports the emergence of feasting practices among semisedentary groups of socioeconomically differentiated “individuals who competed for power, prestige, and status by staging competitive feasts featuring rare and highly desirable foods” with feasts made possible through the advent of sustainable and abundant resources which required advances in pottery for food service, storage and processing.¹⁴⁴ Hayden characterizes these individuals from the Mesolithic era (generally 8,000 BCE to 2,700 BCE) as “aggrandizers” with “accumulative personalities”, a description that could aptly be

¹⁴² Prudence M. Rice, “On the Origins of Pottery,” *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, v. 6, no. 1 (March 1999), 1-54.

¹⁴³ Rice, 10.

¹⁴⁴ Rice, 11.

applied to the porcelain collectors of eighteenth-century Europe.¹⁴⁵ She elaborates that, “Container technology would have played an important role as part of communal display on feasting occasions, primarily as vessels for holding and serving the featured consumables...”¹⁴⁶ Vessels used for service at feasts would likely have been decorated, especially “bearing stylistic information pertaining to the aggrandizer, his/her family, and/or larger social group.”¹⁴⁷ Rice recognizes the symbolic or shamanistic uses of pottery evidenced by findings of embellished unfired clay objects including figures, beads, and miniature vessels that coincide with the “increasing complexity of hunter-gatherer groups...accompanied by exchange of exotics and the emergence of prestige technologies, including the production and use/display of identity- or ritual-specific objects made of clay...”¹⁴⁸ The information presented by Rice leads to the conclusion that pottery developed to fulfill the utilitarian needs of humans, but with the development of a socioeconomic hierarchy, the role of pottery expanded. It was redefined as a luxury item that physically represented the social power of the owner.

The luxury status of pottery is further reinforced as its production technology expanded to create evermore refined forms examples through experimentation with varieties of clay and production methods that could attain much higher fire temperatures. Segments based on the qualities of the resulting ceramic objects created a hierarchy within ceramic production with the finest, most aesthetically pleasing objects being the most prized by consumers. The three types of ceramic discussed above can roughly be

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Rice, 11. See also, Brian Hayden, “The Proof is in the Pudding: Feasting and the Origins of Domestication,” *Current Anthropology*, v. 50, n. 5 (October 2009) 597-601.

¹⁴⁶ Rice, 11.

¹⁴⁷ Rice, 13.

¹⁴⁸ Rice, 13.

placed in order based on this assessment with earthenware at the bottom, the wide varieties of stoneware including soft-paste porcelain filling the middle ranks, and true hard-paste porcelain being at the pinnacle.¹⁴⁹ Scholars generally agree that Chinese artisans produced the first true hard-paste porcelain in mass quantities during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 CE) in the major ceramic production city of Jingdezhen.¹⁵⁰ However, archaeological finds indicate the highly desired blue-and-white porcelain was produced as early as the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE).¹⁵¹ Robert Finlay ascribed the development of the kaolin-petunste mixture that results in “greatly [enhanced] translucency, whiteness, and hardness of the finished product” and the high-firing technique needed to fuse and vitrify the two substances to potters working in Jingdezhen at the end of the Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE).¹⁵² The geology of the Yellow River region allowed potteries in China to advance its ceramic production far more quickly than the ceramic producers in Europe and ceramics developed simultaneously with metallurgy allowing the two industries to inform each other.¹⁵³ The high melting point of the region’s loess soil, which is chiefly composed of quartz, also allowed potters to use ceramic material to form molds for metal forging. The early Chinese kilns for ceramics were constructed of brick “with large fireboxes directly beneath the pots, producing a uniform but modest temperature (of about 1000°C),” similar to metal smelting furnaces.

¹⁴⁹ See also, Finlay (Fall, 1998) 144.

¹⁵⁰ See Anne Gerritsen, “Fragments of a Global Past: Ceramics Manufacture in Song-Yuan-Ming Jengdezhen,” *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, v. 52 (2009) 117-152; Finlay (Fall, 1998) 146; Wu Juan, Pau L. Leung, and Li Jiazhi, “A Study of the Composition of Chinese Blue and White Porcelain,” *Studies in Conservation*, v. 52 (2007) 188-198.

¹⁵¹ Weidong Li, Xiaoke Lu, et al. “A Landmark in the History of Chinese Ceramics: The Invention of Blue-and-White Porcelain in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.)” *STAR: Science & Technology of Archaeological Research*, v. 3, n. 1 (2017) 28-35.

¹⁵² Finlay (1998) 150.

¹⁵³ Finlay (1998) 147.

Potters soon understood that they “produced the best results by separating pots from the source of heat in the kiln.”¹⁵⁴ However, the soft loess soil of China let potters easily create long tunnel-like chambers situated on the side of a naturally formed hill with the sandy soil “provided excellent insulation, and an effective chimney gave a good draft and a strong flame.”¹⁵⁵ Their shape and length earned these kilns the name ‘dragon kilns,’ “narrowly shaped kilns built against the side of a hill with consecutive chambers between the fire at the lower end and a chimney at the higher end.”¹⁵⁶ Temperature in the kilns was controlled with side vents that allowed regulation of the oxygen levels inside. By the thirteenth century, the volume of porcelain production in Jingdezhen could reach 140 meters in length and could produce 50,000 pieces at a time.¹⁵⁷ Finlay summarizes these developmental advances by stating,

“The snow-white brilliance of the porcelain presented new potential for decoration, while its strength meant that larger, more elaborate vessels could now be produced. The potters of Jingdezhen had invented a material with which they would change ceramic traditions around the world.”¹⁵⁸

China wares were introduced to Europe along the Silk Road trade route through Asia and ferried on ocean-going vessels captained by Portuguese traders.¹⁵⁹ European

¹⁵⁴ Finlay (1998) 147.

¹⁵⁵ Finlay (1998) 147.

¹⁵⁶ Anne Gerritsen, “Chinese Porcelain in local and global context: The Imperial Connection,” in *Luxury in Global Perspective: Objects and Practices, 1600-2000*, eds. Karin Hofmeester, Bernd-Stefan Grewe (London: Cambridge University Press, 2016) 122.

¹⁵⁷ Nigel Wood, *Chinese Glazes: Their Origins, Chemistry, and Recreation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) 35. See also Finlay (1998) 148.

¹⁵⁸ Finlay (1998) 150.

¹⁵⁹ UNESCO, “Chinese Porcelain,” *Silk Road: Dialogue, Diversity and Development*, accessed December 15, 2017, <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/chinese-porcelain>; Jeffery Munger and Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, “East and West: Chinese Export Porcelain,” *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City), accessed December 15, 2017, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ewpor/hd_ewpor.htm. See also Robert Finlay, *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

consumers, fascinated by the exotic material from a land to which only the most adventurous people traveled. The first type of porcelain to be widely sought after in Europe was blue-and-white ware which “achieved a high degree of quality in execution and design” during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 CE).¹⁶⁰ The earliest known piece of blue-and-white porcelain with European decoration was a ewer dated in 1520 and commissioned by the king of Portugal.(fig. 34)¹⁶¹ Blue-and-white ware was first produced at Jingdezhen, but demand was such that other porcelain manufacturing sites replicated the style.¹⁶² The initial concept of blue-and-white porcelain wares grew out of earlier trading relationships between China and the Middle East, where local potters had developed a blue glaze for tin-glazed stoneware using cobalt oxide as a pigment. Muslim merchants living in China provided cobalt oxide to porcelain makers at Jingdezhen who “found that the viscosity of their glazes prevented the cobalt from diffusing during firing, thereby allowing the most intricate designs to be executed.”¹⁶³ The precise application of this glaze is seen on a small jar, made during the Yuan Dynasty around 1330-1368, in the collection of the British Museum. (fig. 35) The creator located a blue vine-and-leaf pattern, a motif inspired by Islamic aesthetic tastes, between raised vertical ribs that divide the surface of the white body leaving alternating sections bare to highlight the even white color of the ground.¹⁶⁴ The short neck, one-inch-diameter opening, and rings possibly used to suspend the jar from a string may indicate the 3-1/4 tall bulbous object may have been used to store a substance that people would only possess a small amount

¹⁶⁰ Wu Juan, et al. “A Study of the Composition of Chinese Blue and White Porcelain,” *Studies in Conservation*, v. 52, n. 3 (2007) 188.

¹⁶¹ Finlay (1998) 142.

¹⁶² Wu Juan, 188.

¹⁶³ Finlay (1998) 155.

¹⁶⁴ Finlay (1998) 157.

like spices or oils, an elite container for a precious material. Spices, oils, and porcelain were all highly desirable luxury goods in demand by consumers from Asia to the Middle East and eventually the courts of Europe.

Ceramic manufacture developed in Europe at the same time as it developed in Asia and contacts with the Middle East influenced European potters as it had in China. In the fifteenth century, Middle Eastern merchants commonly imported tin-glazed earthenware to Italy where local potters learned to employ the tin-glazing technique to create brightly colored objects. Tin oxide, a valuable imported commodity, is a white powdery substance that allowed potters to create a white, opaque glaze that provided the pot decorators with a substrate similar to fresco painting, which is created using a base of white plaster. Both fresco painting and tin-glazed ceramics, which came to be known as Majolica, were popular forms of art during the early Italian Renaissance.¹⁶⁵ A Majolica storage jar in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art exemplifies an important difference between ceramics of Europe and ceramics of Asia. The almost thirteen-inch-tall cylindrical jar, painted in bold blue, yellow, and deep brown, features a portrait of a male figure, a common trope in European ceramics, but less common in early Asian ceramics. The acanthus leaves and solid lines echo designs found in Italian and Greek pottery from antiquity. (fig. 36) Italian potters dispersed the skills needed to produce tin-glazed earthenware to the rest of the European continent leading to the establishment of centers of production in France, England, Spain, and especially the Netherlands where the now-famous product, Delft Blue, successfully replicated the blue-on-white aesthetic

¹⁶⁵ McNab, Jessie. "Maiolica in the Renaissance." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (October 2002) http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/maio/hd_maio.htm (October 2002) accessed January 9, 2018.

of Chinese pottery. Robert Finlay recognizes the ubiquity of tin-glazed earthenware as a tableware accessible beyond the wealthiest households. He states, “Tin-glazed earthenware became fashionable among the increasingly prosperous middling rank of people who could not afford expensive pewter and silver plate but who desired something better than terra-cotta and wood.”¹⁶⁶ These middling classes of people grew in population and economic power throughout the early modern period leading to a much larger consumer base for ceramics of all kinds.

By the mid-seventeenth century, porcelain table wares for eating and drinking, as Pierson details, became a staple of the upper-class dining experience as references to porcelain dishes can be found in textual evidence including diaries and cookbooks. Pierson quotes the March 19, 1652, entry in the diary of John Evelyn, a wealthy and influential member of British society: “Invited by Lady Gerrard I went to London, we had a greate supper; all the vessels, which were innumerable, were of Porcelan, she having the most ample and richest collection of that curiositie in England.”¹⁶⁷ Blue-and-white table wares became so popular with European consumers that by the early eighteenth-century they were described as “so common in France that one sometimes hardly holds them in as much esteem as nice faience.”¹⁶⁸ Thus, as Kristal Smentek argues, other porcelains acquired the ability to grant the social distinction desired by their owners; focus transferred to older and rarer Asian objects and fine ceramic objects produced in new manufactories in Europe.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Finlay (1998) 169.

¹⁶⁷ Stacey Pierson, “The Movement of Chinese Ceramics: Appropriation in Global History,” *Journal of World History*, v. 23, n. 1 (University of Hawai’i Press: March 2012) 19, endnote 33.

¹⁶⁸ Savary des Bruslons (1723) Quoted in Kristel Smentek, *Rococo Exotic: French Mounted Porcelains and the Allure of the East* (New York: Frick Collection, 2007) 12.

¹⁶⁹ Smentek, 13.

European consumers often mounted Chinese porcelain objects in precious metals to emphasize the specialness of the object that had survived traveling half-way around the world.¹⁷⁰ Stacy Pierson presents a very early example of this practice, stating that mounting was “a common approach to porcelain consumption...when there was still some confusion about the nature of the material itself.”¹⁷¹ Pierson theorizes that this practice provided European consumers with forms that were more familiar, but also “very expensive and thus associated primarily with royal and aristocratic collections.”¹⁷² By reconfiguring porcelain objects, European consumers intensified the exotic ‘otherness’ of the material.

The practice of mounting porcelains in semi-precious metal ornament continued after European manufacturers began producing porcelain objects locally as exemplified by a set of Meissen figures and Sèvres flowers mounted on a gilt base from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (fig. 37) Mounting European porcelains emphasized the ‘specialness’ of the material while still intimating the connection to Asia but also to “naturalize them to the decoration of French interiors...to modify their exotic character by giving them a quasi-French appearance.”¹⁷³ Through mounting European porcelain in the same manner as Asian wares, manufacturers could equate their products with the highly esteemed imports.

Upon their arrival in Europe, Chinese ceramics, as recognized by Stacy Pierson, also allowed European elites the opportunity for cultural exchange “enabling individuals

¹⁷⁰ Munger and Frelinghuysen, online.

¹⁷¹ Pierson, 17.

¹⁷² Pierson, 17.

¹⁷³ F.J.B. Watson and Gillian Wilson, *Mounted Oriental Porcelain in the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Malibu, CA: Getty Museum, 1982) 1.

to experience another culture and to become aware of it, in the process developing notions of self-identity [as opposed to the] “otherness” of the Chinese.¹⁷⁴ Much like Mr. and Mrs. Strain used their porcelain objects to experience the culture of eighteenth-century Europe in the American Midwest. Pierson underscores the concept of the consumption of porcelain as a form of cultural appropriation when the objects were used for display rather than for their utilitarian function.¹⁷⁵ She notes that the earliest British consumers of Chinese ceramics, likely porcelain but also potentially stoneware, considered the objects to be decorative art works rather than useful household items: “...Chinese porcelain was acquired and presented as an expensive luxury product that was less often used in the context of eating and drinking...but rather displayed in the homes of the elite and aristocracy...”¹⁷⁶ From its introduction to the West, porcelain was the target of the collective impulse amongst consumers.

Collectors prized porcelain as decorative works of art, even if the piece took the form of a utilitarian object such as tableware or jars. A class of objects that had no utilitarian function, porcelain figurines, was introduced to Europe in the seventeenth century as shown by 1688 and 1690 inventories for the Burghley House in Lincolnshire, England.¹⁷⁷ Built in the 1580s, Burghley House is the country estate of the Cecil family, English aristocrats and politicians, which is presently a museum controlled by a family trust.¹⁷⁸ The Burghley House’s porcelain collection holds Japanese figures created in the Kakiemon style, a Japanese porcelain product named for its creator Sakaida Kakiemon

¹⁷⁴ Pierson, 12.

¹⁷⁵ Pierson, 15.

¹⁷⁶ Pierson, 18.

¹⁷⁷ Pierson, 20.

¹⁷⁸ Burghley House Preservation Trust Limited, “Burghley House,” <https://www.burghley.co.uk/> accessed December 28, 2017.

(1596-1666) and the Japanese word *kaki*, meaning persimmon, which describes the red-orange color of enamel used in decorating the porcelain bodies.¹⁷⁹ A particular example, dated to circa 1680, takes the form of a boy seated on a cubic platform with stylized lotus decoration on the sides and a symmetrical grid on the top, likely representing a game board. (fig. 38) The white figure wears a one-piece leotard in Kakiemon's signature red-orange pigment with blue-green floral decoration and is seated in a cross-legged pose utilized in Japanese culture where sitting on the floor is customary.¹⁸⁰ Per the object label, a hole in the top plane of the cubic base may have been employed by scholars to hold a utensil of unknown function. As Stacy Pierson writes, porcelains "were arranged and presented in specially designed displays that transformed the ceramics into an architectural feature...ceramics were experienced as part of the room..."¹⁸¹ No matter what form the object took, the consumer/collector treated the object as a decorative work.

Although Portuguese traders brought the first Asian porcelain to Europe, the Dutch East Indies Company succeeded at importing the most porcelain of the ocean-going traders bringing 43 million pieces to Europe between the beginning of the seventeenth century and the end of the eighteenth.¹⁸² Robert Finlay notes that changes in European dietary practices focusing on individual consumption as opposed to communal dining necessitated a diverse assemblage of table wares suited to the new style of dining and new foods that global trade were making more common to European tables.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ British Museum, "Made in Japan: Kakiemon and 400 Years of Porcelain," http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/past_exhibitions/2016/kakiemon.aspx, accessed December 28, 2017.

¹⁸⁰ Koji Yagi, *A Japanese Touch for Your Home* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992) 66, online <https://goo.gl/AokpHn>, accessed January 12, 2018.

¹⁸¹ Pierson, 20.

¹⁸² Finlay (1998) 168.

¹⁸³ Finlay (1998) 172.

Porcelain figures, which we have seen as architectural decoration alongside table wares and jars, became “Lilliputian models of splendor and privilege” when used as decorations for the dining table.¹⁸⁴

The high demand for porcelain wares lead to a race to discover the secret of making true, hard-paste porcelain in Europe. Porcelain collections provided their owners with social cache among Europe’s aristocracy. Robert Finley writes, “...massed displays of ceramic functioned as assertions of power and magnificence.”¹⁸⁵ Not satisfied to collect Asian wares, sending their wealth to a foreign land and watching trading companies profit from their obsession with porcelain, European monarchs sought the pinnacle of prestige, a personal porcelain manufactory. Johann Friedrich Böttger, alchemist in the court of Augustus II of Saxony, first ascertained the method of replicating true porcelain in the same vein as the objects imported from Asia in January 1708. Böttger worked in consultation with Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus, a mathematician and scientist who had been studied ceramic manufacturing across Europe.

Augustus II, elector in the Holy Roman Empire and King of Poland, was known to have a “legendary *maladie de porcelaine*” and had amassed a collection of over 20,000 pieces of Asian porcelain by 1719 to be used in the decoration of his Japanese Palace (*Japanisches Palais*).¹⁸⁶ Augustus intended the porcelain on display in the Japanese Palace to be “a kind of competitive exhibition, in which the porcelains of

¹⁸⁴ Finlay (1998) 172.

¹⁸⁵ Finlay (1998) 172.

¹⁸⁶ The Frick Collection, “The Japanese Palace of Augustus the Strong: Royal Ambition and Collecting Traditions in Dresden,” *Special Exhibition: The Arnhold Collection of Meissen Porcelain* (2008) https://www.frick.org/sites/default/files/archivedsite/exhibitions/meissen/augustus_the_strong.htm, accessed January 12, 2018.

Meissen would be measured against their Oriental analogues.”¹⁸⁷ Augustus’s comparison of Meissen wares to their ‘Oriental’ counterparts may reflect on the early styles employed by the European manufacturers and the aesthetic, cultural exchange taking place between Europe and China. Robert Finlay suggests that the chinoiserie style the eighteenth century was the result of these cultural encounters, “a way of assimilating and domesticating [China]...Chinoiserie designs, especially those with figural and landscape elements, acted as filters that reduced the complexity of Chinese visual culture to stereotyped constituents, thereby rendering it picturesque and accessible rather than potent and enigmatic.”¹⁸⁸ A wine bottle, found in the collection of the Getty Museum, exemplifies Meissen’s early appropriation of Chinese designs; details include applied botanical ornament and a spout in the shape of a dragon’s head.¹⁸⁹ A teapot from the Qing dynasty shows a similar design dragon-head spout design.¹⁹⁰

The potteries manufacturers reciprocated in the exchange of visual culture between China and Europe by producing objects that met the aesthetic expectations of their European consumers. The Dutch East Indies Company established an office in the port city of Guangzhou (Canton) and provided models to the Chinese potteries, which began creating objects specifically for export to Europe and meant to appeal to the tastes of European consumers.¹⁹¹ Robert Finlay explains, “[Porcelain] was the principal material vehicle for the assimilation and transmission of artistic symbols, themes, and

¹⁸⁷ Carl Christian Dauterman, “Colossal for the Medium: Meissen Porcelain Sculptures,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, v. 22, n. 1 (Summer 1963) 1-9.

¹⁸⁸ Finlay (1998) 183.

¹⁸⁹ Johann Friedrich Böttger, *Wine Bottle*, ca. 1710-1715, 6-1/2 x 4-3/8 x 3-3/4 in., The J. Paul Getty Museum, acc. No 85.DE.231

¹⁹⁰ *Wine-pot/Tea-pot*, Qing Dynasty, ca. 1662-1722, porcelain, brass, 7.1 x 6.1 in., British Museum, no. Franks.184.+.

¹⁹¹ Finlay (1998) 171.

designs across vast distances.”¹⁹² The collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum contains an example of this practice: a figure of a man made in Dehua during the Qing dynasty around 1760.¹⁹³ (fig. 39) The man is primarily nude, but a large cape hangs loosely over one shoulder, tied around him with a cord, across his bare chest, modestly covering his genitals. He stands in a contrapposto pose, one hip jutting out and the opposite arm bent out at a 45-degree angle with his hand behind his back; the contrapposto pose is traced to the ancient Greeks and Roman and is not found in ancient Chinese art. He leans on a tall staff, the top of the staff clasped in his other hand. He wears a long beard and hair with bare feet. His state of undress, beard and bare feet may reveal the figure as a Biblical or mythological character, possibly St. John the Baptist who is often depicted with a cloak and staff as depicted by Anton Raphael Mengs in a painting contemporary to the production of the Victoria & Albert figure. (fig. 40) The base has no applied detail to indicate the setting of the figure’s location. The edges and details of the figure are soft and indistinct, as if no additional modeling or sculpting was performed after the figure was removed from the mold. The Victoria & Albert Museum collection record indicates that the figure was modeled “probably after a Meissen model.” Chinese export objects like this figure reflect the demand for Chinese porcelain in Europe, where consumers recognized the superiority of the material but desired forms that were familiar to their Western aesthetic taste. Conversely, the figure represents the Chinese potters’ understanding of their Western markets.

¹⁹² Finlay (1998) 143.

¹⁹³ The porcelain kilns in Dehua were established in the thirteenth century and operated until the eighteenth century. They were known in Europe for *blanc de chine*, or China white, objects coated with a clear glaze and no color decoration. Metropolitan Museum of Art, “Buddhist Monk Budai,” <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/42545>, accessed December 19, 2017.

As discussed above, porcelain allowed cultural exchange between Asia and Europe. The material also provided a physical expression of European culture for the colonists in North America. Porcelain came to Colonial America with the rise of the gentry class, wealthy landowners who were the first generations born in the British colonies. During the late eighteenth century, the era of the Early Republic, Americans struggled with their relationship to luxury objects like porcelain. The two emerging political parties in the new republic were divided over their ideas about the nation's economy. The Jeffersonians believed the agricultural model of small farms based on rustic simplicity would insulate the country against the "corrupting influence of the luxury to which Britain had succumbed."¹⁹⁴ On the contrary, the Federalists promoted a strong central government and economy based on finance and international trade, encouraged "the modest enjoyment of worldly goods [that] would help build an enlightened society."¹⁹⁵ Paul G.E. Clemens examined consumer culture in the Middle Atlantic region between 1760 and 1820, a period encompassing the last decades of British control and the establishment of the United States. He described English pewter as the most common tableware material with silver and porcelain found in the wealthier households at the beginning of the eighteenth century.¹⁹⁶ By mid-century, earthenware including salt-glazed stoneware and creamware were imported from England and Germany. Clemens notes that in the post-revolutionary period of the 1790s less affluent consumers had a wide range of tableware options including pewter, stoneware, delft,

¹⁹⁴ Keith Stavely and Kathleen Fitzgerald, "What America's First Cookbook Says About Our Country and Its Cuisine," *Smithsonian Magazine* (January 12, 2018) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/what-americas-first-cookbook-says-about-our-country-its-cuisine-180967809/>, accessed January 12, 2018.

¹⁹⁵ Stavely and Fitzgerald, 2018.

¹⁹⁶ Paul G.E. Clemens, "The Consumer Culture of the Middle Atlantic, 1760-1820," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, v. 62, n. 4 (October 2005) 604.

utilitarian earthenware, and wooden vessels available both through imports and local production.¹⁹⁷ Access to porcelain for wealthier American households increased in 1771 when the discovery of kaolin allowed a porcelain factory to open in Philadelphia and in 1784 when direct trade between China and American ports. Asian luxury products no longer needed to be funneled through third party merchants from Europe like the East Indian trading companies.¹⁹⁸

Not only did porcelain create exchange between disparate cultures, but it was also collected across socioeconomic classes. The desire to possess porcelain grew beyond the wealthiest households to the rising middle-class ranks. Finlay notes, “Porcelain became the currency of social emulation among the aristocracy of every nation and spread down the social ladder to prosperous burghers and country gentry.”¹⁹⁹ Consumption of luxury goods increased throughout the nineteenth century as the middle classes became more economically and politically powerful. Several wars in Europe dismantled many of the monarchical governments and porcelain manufactories transitioned from primarily meeting the needs of a single client, the monarch, to mass-producing products for a large audience. Antoinette Faÿ-Hallé and Barbara Mundt noted that the end of the eighteenth century saw a proliferation of porcelain factories in Europe, but factors including marketplace competition, changes in ownership, and changes in purchasing power among the middle classes caused the number of factories to decrease by the end of the nineteenth century.²⁰⁰ The surviving manufactories modernized their business practices, as

¹⁹⁷ Clemens, 610.

¹⁹⁸ Clemens, 613.

¹⁹⁹ Finlay (1998) 172.

²⁰⁰ Antoinette Faÿ-Hallé and Barbara Mundt, *Porcelain in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983) 7.

recognized by Fay-Hallé and Mundt: “Sooner or later they all had to switch to mass-production of domestic wares in order to make a profit. All the expanding industrialized nations found a multitude of new uses for porcelain.”²⁰¹ Mass production made porcelain less expensive and therefore more ubiquitous across socioeconomic divisions in consumer culture.

New non-luxury demand and mass production made porcelain, an acid-resistant material that does not conduct electricity, and can withstand extreme temperatures, available for industrial uses including laboratory containers, equipment for the transmission of electricity, and other necessities of modern production. The spread of porcelain into industrial uses altered the consumer’s attraction to porcelain as an exotic and extraordinary domestic object. Some manufactories retained divisions for producing the artistic sculpture and tableware for which porcelain was renowned in Europe.²⁰² The development of Modern art movements influenced the styles employed by porcelain manufacturers, but they also remained faithful to a historicism that met the demand from a consumer base with more traditional tastes. Revival movements in architecture and interior design of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also contributed to the sustained life of the Rococo and Neo-classical porcelain forms of the eighteenth century.

Ceramics physically represent the history of human development since the Mesolithic era. Containers for food preparation, cooking and storage were necessary when people settled in a single region and developed agriculture methods of food production. Earthenware and stoneware fulfilled utilitarian needs, but also could express social status of the owner through complex ornamentation. For thousands of years,

²⁰¹ Fay-Hallé and Mundt, 7.

²⁰² Fay-Hallé and Mundt, 8-9.

ornamentation and production of ceramics progressed based on innovation and consumer demand. Experimentation with clays, mineral glazes, and kiln designs culminated in the discovery of hard-paste porcelain – a lightweight, translucent, very white material that could be molded and sculpted into delicate objects. Porcelain’s white body proved a flawless base for bright colors applied evenly in large swathes and brilliant gilding applied in graceful designs. Seen as a precious material from its origin in Tang Dynasty China to its use in the middle-class homes of the twentieth-century United States, porcelain demonstrates the technical ingenuity of human creativity. Its entry into the consumer sphere of Europe via East India trading companies in the sixteenth century impelled technical innovation in European ceramic production forward. The discovery of the formula for creating hard-paste porcelain at Meissen brought forth a competition among European rulers to employ the greatest artists who pushed the boundaries of the material creating monumental vases and intricate sculptures. The Strain Collection represents a small chapter in porcelain’s long and fascinating history but understanding the collectors’ place in this narrative provides essential context for the global journey porcelain from China in the Middle Ages to Kearney, Nebraska, in the twentieth-century American Midwest.

VIII. CONCLUSION

There is a great geographic and cultural distance between Kearney, Nebraska, in the Midwestern region of the United States and Dresden, Germany, a Central European city settled in the thirteenth century. Despite the obstacle of distance, Philip and Mildred Strain successfully created a connection to the European past using the objects displayed in their home. Having lived their entire lives in the American Midwest, the European past offered an exotic fantasy of an elite lifestyle comprised of luxury objects made from precious materials. Objects carry a physical reminder of the place and time of their origin, a characteristic related to the theory of the object's aura.²⁰³ The Strains were able to reclaim the atmosphere of the European past by filling their home with objects that carried forward the aura of the eighteenth-century elite European home.

The culture in which the Strains lived reflected quintessentially American characteristics of a pastoral life in nature. The American Midwest, especially the Nebraska landscape, is dotted with farms and ranches. Railroads connected the American farmer to markets in major cities. Railroads also brought metropolitan culture to the Midwest by establishing towns like Kearney, Nebraska, at junctions between railroad lines. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Kearney grew into a bustling urban center with hotels, an opera house, newspapers, and an electrical utility that operated a trolley line. The town was also a center of manufacturing drawing people to come to Kearney in search of employment. Wealthy investors, like George W. Frank, came to the town and built magnificent houses they left behind creating an architectural and cultural

²⁰³ See Benjamin (2008).

legacy that Mr. Strain inherited as a member of the early generations of native-born Kearneyites.

Collectors like the Strains instill in meaning in the objects they choose to include in their collection. They also decipher the meaning infused in the object by the people who created the object and the people who owned the similar objects in the past. The meaning applied by the Strains to the objects in their collection encompassed their desire to create an identity that reflected their interest in eighteenth-century European elite culture. The source of this interest may be related to Mr. Strain's grandmother who emigrated to America from England as a child, from his college courses in French literature and language, or from Mrs. Strain's knowledge of Rococo revival interior design. Wherever this shared interest originated, the Strains were successful in developing an identity of cultured denizens of the arts through their connoisseurship, patronage of the performing arts, and connection to metropolitan communities like Omaha. By examining the Strains' biographies, the objects in their collection, and the ways in which they displayed those objects in their home, we may be able to understand the meaning of the Strains' connection to their collection and a history that was not their own.

This introductory essay made a long examination of the interior arrangement of the Strain's home, the culture of Kearney, and the nature of collecting. These elements conflated to allow the Strains to express their appreciation the artistic legacy of eighteenth-century Europe and adopt that lifestyle as their own as much as was possible two hundred years removed from the apogee of the Rococo style. In the section that follows, I will make a close investigation of a selection of objects from the Strains'

collection. Ceramic materials, especially fine porcelain, constituted a large percentage of the objects found in the Strains' home. Porcelain is especially conflated with eighteenth-century Europe. After hundreds of years of importing porcelain objects from Asia, Europeans developed the method for producing true porcelain around 1710 in the court of Augustus the Strong of Saxony, an elector of the Holy Roman Empire.

CATALOG OF SELECTED OBJECTS FROM THE STRAIN COLLECTION

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE CATALOG

The following section examines a range of objects held in the Strain Collection. The chosen objects provide an overview of the Strains' aesthetic mission. Reviewing the interior design of their home and the types of objects found in their collection, one can determine that their preferred aesthetic focused on the material culture of the last half of the eighteenth century and first quarter of nineteenth century. The Rococo and Neoclassical styles of this seventy-year period share mythological subject matter, but contrast in ornamental motifs, use of color, and intended message to the viewer. Rococo art uses asymmetrical ornament in the shapes inspired by seashells, flowers, and vines. Ornament seen on Neoclassical art follows a more symmetrical pattern and recalls forms found in ancient Greek and Roman architecture and art including arabesques, acanthus leaves, and geometric forms. Color in Rococo art is light and pastel, whereas Neoclassicism employs rich, jewel-tones. The aristocracy served as the audience for Rococo's subversive and playful themes. Neoclassicism developed in the wake of political revolutions that displaced the aristocracy and recalled the democratic ideals of the ancient Greeks. The Strains displayed the products of these opposing art historical movements as one in tribute to the aesthetics of early modern Europe.

The aesthetic of the Strains' collection reflected their interest in early modern Europe, but the media they chose to collect also echoed the tastes of early modern collectors. Porcelain is the most prevalent material in their collection. As discussed earlier, porcelain inspired the collective action almost immediately upon its arrival in

Europe. Private collectors, like the Strains or Augustus the Strong, saw the duality in porcelain. Its origins were utilitarian, the ideal material for consuming hot drinks due to its ability to maintain the temperature of hot drinks, like coffee and hot chocolate newly imported to Europe from conquered lands and have no effect on the taste of the liquid. Collectors saw porcelain beyond its practical function to understand the beauty of the material and its plasticity, elegance, and translucence. Private collections have now been made public through donations to museums allowing a wider audience the ability to appreciate the beauty of porcelain. The catalog entries that follow contextualize a portion of the porcelain objects in the Strain Collection in relation to objects found in museum collections in an effort to understand the collectors' passion of the material.

The objects collected by the Strains were produced during the late nineteenth century or the early twentieth century. The major manufacturers of porcelain revived Rococo and Neoclassical models to appease late Victorian consumers interested in historical revivals in their interior design. Eclecticism, the dominant style of the late nineteenth century, amalgamated revivals of historical styles of architecture and interior design. Production methods developed during the Industrial Revolution allowed the manufacturers to fabricate large quantities of figures and tableware including many objects that directly replicated original models from the eighteenth century. Mass production made porcelain less expensive and available to a wider range of consumers. As a result, the objects from the Strain Collection appear in the context of contemporary collecting literature rather than in the great museum collections. Collectors and auction houses research objects to understand the value of the object in both its historical and commercial context. The information compiled by these resources allowed the objects in

the Strain Collection to be identified providing information such as dates of production, artists' names, and clarification of subject matter.

The catalog entries are divided into three categories based on the object's form and its subject matter. Visual analysis and close reading of the objects uncover details in the artists' work that provide insight into the subject of the porcelain figures and tableware in the Strains' collection. Inventories of the Strain Collection done in 1976 and 2009 provided a baseline for identifying the objects. The experts who completed the inventories valued the objects based on observations of condition and makers' marks. In many cases, I concurred with their assessment. However, the maker of some objects could not be definitively identified as the porcelain marks of large manufacturers were often copied by smaller companies to increase the value of their products. The appraisers were not concerned with dating the objects in the collection. This task proved difficult due to long periods of continuous use of the same mark by porcelain manufacturers. For example, Meissen's primary mark of blue crossed swords remained unchanged from 1815 until 1924.²⁰⁴ Impressed marks and other painted marks identify the painter or modeler of the object and therefore further narrow the possible date range to the artist's tenure with the manufacturer. Information provided by major auction houses assisted in identifying objects in the Strain Collection through their assessment of these secondary marks. Appropriate language has been used when the maker or date could not be verified through additional sources.

²⁰⁴ Meissen, "Textual and Pictorial Meissen Marks," <https://www.meissen.com/en/about-meissen%20AE/identifying-marks/textual-and-pictorial-meissen%20AE-marks>, accessed February 7, 2018.

II. Tableware Forms

Pair of figural pitchers

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Late Nineteenth Century or Early Twentieth Century²⁰⁵

7-3/4 in. h.

Temp. No. 31 (fig. 41)

Porcelain manufacturers often employ figures of humans or animals as components of table ware object. Some objects in this style remained functional and some were intended only as decoration for the dining table. In this example from the Strain Collection, a male and a female human figure hold a pair of jugs decorated with three-dimensional flowers and vines. The striking difference between the scale of the figures and the scale of the containers contradicts the realism typically seen in Meissen figures and suggests that the jugs were not intended as functional objects. Additionally, the lids to the jugs are not hinged and moveable so pouring liquid into or out of the receptacle would be extremely difficult. The jugs' vine decoration extends and forms the handles; the white ground and light touches of gilding add to the light palette and accentuate the pastel palette of the flowers and figures' clothing. The figures are dressed in eighteenth-century costume. The man wears a simple, black hat with no decoration and his female counterpart wears a kerchief and apron. The lack of elaborate detail on their clothing marks them as a servants or peasants. The color scheme of the man's coat and

²⁰⁵ Impressed mark '92' on bottom of female figure pitcher matches the mark on a figure group sold at Christie's in 2007 which was dated late nineteenth century to early twentieth century. See <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/a-meissen-group-of-two-putti-playing-4978697-details.aspx?from=searchresults&intObjectID=4978697&sid=7a8027e5-aaeb-4f8d-a006-ebc3fa2641da>.

the woman's skirt correspond with pink and white floral patterns. The yellow floral stays worn by the woman echo the yellow flowers found on both jugs.

The male and female figures block the user from comfortably reaching the handles of the jugs creating non-functioning pitchers that may be a homage to porcelain's functional purpose. The lack of hinged lids and the attached figures remove the ability to pour liquid into and out of the jugs. They are designed in a manner similar to decorative figure groups with a base painted to resembled earth or stone as opposed to the feet or flat base of a functional container.

The collection of the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts contains a photograph of a similar object dated to 1740.²⁰⁶ (fig. 42) Like the Strain Collection object, this porcelain piece features a male figure with a raised arm that lifts the lid from the pitcher, which is the same size as the male figure. The two men sit on a similar base of simulated rock with uneven ridges while straddling the jug. The ornament applied to the pitcher on the 1740 object features ornament that looks like grapes and the latter object's container is covered with flowering vines. Both male figures wear similar clothing with a coat that would reach to their mid-thigh, breeches that end at the knee, black shoes with buckles, and stockings in the white of the base porcelain. The similarities between the bodies of the two male figures including the location of folds and buttons on their coats, the placement of the end of their breeches, and the style of their shoes indicate that it is highly likely that these two figures were made using the same mold. Small differences between the male bodies allow the work of the modeler to be detected. The knuckles on the raised

²⁰⁶ Bruno Reiffenstein, "Photograph of a Male Porcelain Figurine with Milk Jug of Meissen Porcelain from 1740 (given title)," *Austrian Museum of Applied Arts/Contemporary Art (MAK) Collection Online* (about 1910) https://sammlung.mak.at/en/collection_online?id=collect-135157, accessed January 13, 2018.

hand of the earlier figure are more pronounced and his breeches have a vertical ridged texture that is not present on the latter figure. The face and head display the most distinct difference between the two figures. In the earlier work, the male figure peers through his arm and the handle of the jug showing an unobstructed view of his face. The latter figure also looks through the void created by his arm and the handle of the jug's lid. However, the face of the two figures is made from a different mold. The face of the older figure features a larger, bulbous nose and more distinct cheekbones. His hair seems dark and medium-length; the hair of the latter figure is lighter in color and wavier in texture. The older figure wears a floppy hat whereas the latter figure wears a wide-brimmed, black hat resembling hats made from stiff wool felt. The costume of the older figure appears similar to the coat and hat of a baker boy found in a print by Edme Bouchardon in the collection of the British Museum marking the Meissen figure as a member of the working peasant class. (fig. 43) The latter figure presents finer facial features like a smaller nose and eyes. The existence of the older figure evidences the practice of Meissen reproducing eighteenth-century models during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The popularization of hot drinks like tea, coffee and hot chocolate in eighteenth-century Europe resulted, in part, in the considerable desire for porcelain tableware. Sets for the service of tea or chocolate could be found in most bourgeois households and examples of functional wares are found in the Strain Collection. However, the Strains did not use their functional pieces, but rather treated them as art objects to be admired for their aesthetic qualities. Sets usually included cups and saucers, a teapot or chocolate pot, and containers for milk and sugar service. Ceramic was an ideal material for serving hot beverages because it was not affected by the temperature of the liquid. Porcelain was

especially prized as a ceramic container because of its lightness, translucence, and its ability to be modeled into delicate forms.

Figures designed to accompany table services or figures applied to tableware in the theme of the service are common, but the figures tend not to detract from the function of the object. Some figures are employed in the operation of the object such as the tureen from the Möllendorf service in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in which a female nude serves as the handle for the lid. (fig. 44) The comparative scale between the tureen and the figure at the top of the lid is the more common combination than the scale seen in the Strain Collection figural jugs. The scale of figure on Möllendorf tureen suits the size of a human hand which would employ the figure to remove the lid from the base to access the food inside.

Patch Box

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory²⁰⁷

Possibly ca. 1750

3-1/2 x 2-3/4 in.

Temp. No. 79 (fig. 45)

Several types of small containers designed for use on a dressing table were common in the output of porcelain manufacturers in from eighteenth-century Europe. Uses for these boxes and jars included cosmetic storage, snuff boxes, and jewelry storage. This box is composed of a porcelain body with an ormolu base which contains a hinged lid that allows the user access to the interior storage space. The porcelain top of the box

²⁰⁷ Identification of maker and date of production based on exemplar in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed 24 June 2015. <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/203168?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=box&when=A.D.%2B1600-1800&who=Meissen%2BManufactory%24Meissen%2BManufactory&pos=10&imgno=0&tabname=object-information>.

is modeled in the shape of the face and powdered wig of a woman wearing a black masquerade-style mask. Her eyes are marked with tiny jewels of an indeterminate material. A small loop of brass has been attached to the top of the base so that the box might been worn as a pendant. The woman's wig is decorated with painted pink and blue feathers and clasp; the strands of the hair in the wig are individually delineated, showing the painter's attention to detail. An object from the collection of the Victoria and Albert is similar to this patch box, modeled in the face and head of a woman, however this woman is dressed in a more informal style with a simple bonnet and feather. (fig. 46) Other examples of patch boxes feature simpler shapes and painted decorations such as an oval-shaped box decorated with a scene of the Abbey Church at Bath, England, on the lid. (fig. 47) This decoration denotes this box as a trinket likely purchased by tourists visiting the seaside destination.

No maker's marks can be found on the patch box that can definitively identify the maker and date of this object. The collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art includes a very similar object. (fig. 48) This box is also in the shape of the head of a woman wearing a mask and tall, powdered wig. The museum has identified this object as a patch box, used to store black silk patches that were attached to the face with adhesive as a fashion accessory in the eighteenth century. The wearing of patches relates to the desire for white, unblemished skin. Susan J. Vincent, in her book *The Anatomy of Fashion*, notes that patches could be used to cover unsightly blemishes but were also worn as a decorative accessory. She writes, "...these scraps of silk were simply worn as decoration: placed on a dimple, or used as a foil to white skin to give interest and vitality to a

face...”²⁰⁸ White skin was about more than beauty; it was also a sign of health among the upper classes who were not involved in outdoor, manual labor that would expose them to long hours in the sun that would tan and wrinkle the skin.²⁰⁹

Patches would be applied during the daily dressing ritual of the toilette. Several Rococo painters depicted the toilette activities of elite women and men. An example in the print collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art shows the application of the black patches. The print, entitled *Le Matin (Morning)*, was created by Gilles Edme Petit after a painting by François Boucher. (fig. 49) A young woman of elite status, as verified by her exotic pet cockatoo, sits at her dressing table, leaning on one arm. She wears a cloak tied at her throat, delicate flowers in her hair, and a cameo on a ribbon around her wrist. The dressing table is covered with a cloth and accessories of the toilette ritual sit on the tabletop. Because an aristocratic woman's toilette was often a semi-public event, attended by close confidantes, the items displayed on her dressing table would reflect on her social status. The toilette offered porcelain accessories an opportunity to fulfill its role of social signifier. In one hand, she holds a box with a hinged lid, open so that the viewer can see the patches inside. Her other hand is in the process of applying a patch with an extended forefinger. Applying the patches as a part of her toilette indicates that the wearing of face patches was a daily activity for this woman.

The patch box in the Strain Collection is modeled to resemble the face of a female participant in the masquerade, as indicated by the wearing of a black silk mask, which would have appealed to an upper-class consumer in the eighteenth century. Masks were

²⁰⁸ Susan J. Vincent, *The Anatomy of Fashion: Dressing the Body from the Renaissance to Today* (Berg: Oxford, 2009) 150.

²⁰⁹ Vincent, 150.

worn to conceal one's identity and were customarily removed at some point during the event.²¹⁰ Aileen Ribeiro examined the masquerade and its attendees in her book, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England, 1730-1790, and Its Relation to Fancy Dress Portraiture* (1984). According to Ribeiro, masquerades, or masked balls, were imported to England from the European continent in the first decade of the eighteenth century and were public entertainments which were attended by masked participants of all levels of society.²¹¹ Private masquerades were also held with more restricted attendance. She notes that masquerades "achieved great notoriety as places of immorality and vice,"²¹² with much of the criticism of based on the mixing of the classes at public entertainments. Masquerades in continental Europe were closed to all but those members of the aristocracy and haute bourgeois.²¹³ Porcelain and masquerades are both related to the luxury social activities of the upper classes.

Miniature tea set

In the style of Imperial Vienna Porcelain Manufactory

Date unknown

Temp. No. 240 (fig. 50)

The pieces of this set include a platter, covered sugar bowl, creamer pitcher, cup and matching saucer, and teapot. The miniature stature of the objects suggest that this set was not meant as a functional object for adult use, but it may be intended as a souvenir for collectors or a toy tea set used by children. Most of the decoration features panels of

²¹⁰ Aileen Ribeiro, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England, 1730-1790, and Its Relation to Fancy Dress Portraiture* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), 28.

²¹¹ Ribeiro, 3-19.

²¹² Ribeiro, 3.

²¹³ Ribeiro, 26.

gilded arabesques on grounds of blue, red, or pink, separated by painted moldings. The handles for the lidded pot and bowl are shaped like the buds of flowers. This Neo-classical scheme recalls the style of Robert Adam, Scottish architect active in the second half of the eighteenth century, or Josiah Wedgwood, a British porcelain manufacturer. Both artists used neo-classical designs on grounds of flat, medium-toned color. (fig. 51)

Each object in the set, not including the saucer, is decorated with a mythological scene. The painted scene on the platter depicts the abduction of Persephone by Hades from a stream where the goddess was playing with river nymphs. Hades can be identified by his two-pronged staff, an attribute also found on the base of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's *The Rape of Proserpina* in the Galleria Borghese, which uses the Italian version of Persephone's name. (fig. 52)

The scene on the teapot may also allude to the story of Persephone, but not in a direct manner. In the myth of Persephone's abduction, she bends down to pick a narcissus flower from the bank of the river. The scene on the pot depicts a blonde woman holding a garland of flowers while sitting next to a dark-haired young man. A mirror in a gilded frame lies on the ground next to the couple. The young man may represent Narcissus, a Greek youth, who falls in love with his reflection. The mirror on the ground may allude to Narcissus's fatal flaw. Narcissism, a psychological term defined in the modern era, refers to a condition in which a person loves themselves to an obsessive level. Two soldiers are spying on the couple from the bushes in the background.

The other painted scenes do not seem to relate to the tale of Persephone's kidnapping by Hades. The creamer pitcher depicts a sleeping blonde woman in a white

gown with bared breasts who may be Venus; she is accompanied by Cupid, whose quiver of arrows lies on the ground at his feet. The scene on the sugar bowl may also depict Venus and Cupid, as the figures are the same as those on the creamer pitcher. Here, the pair seem to be mourning the departure of a ship seen in the distance; she raises her hands in despair and he is knelt at her feet holding his head in his hands. Both figures' gestures represent emotional suffering.

The scene on the cup is another unrelated, singular narrative. Two nymphs and a satyr are erecting a monument to a bearded figure that likely represents Pan, the god of the wild. This miniature relates to a painting by Nicolas Poussin in the collection of the National Gallery in London. (fig. 53) Poussin depicts a bacchanal of dancing youths and putti before a sculpture of Pan who is associated with fertility and drunkenness. The scene on the cup may be the revelers preparing for a celebration. The general theme of the miniatures decorating this tea set reflects the popular interest in mythology as a part of the Neoclassical revival, but the seeming randomness of the stories chosen show the lack of academic study by the manufacturers. They chose scenes that were aesthetically pleasing but lack the moral edification of Neo-classical fine arts.

A breakfast set in the collection of the Indianapolis Museum of Art resembles the set in the Strain Collection. (fig. 54) Gottfried Schmidt decorated the set in a similar Neoclassical scheme with wide decorative borders around a central panel featuring a mythological narrative of an offering to Cupid being made by women in classical dress. The registers ringing the edge of the tray and on the facing panels of other components of the set feature toile-like images of putti in a burnt sienna tone. In contrast to the jewel-tones of the ornamental decoration, the decorator used a grisaille method to color the

narrative scenes reminiscent of engravings or red-chalk drawings. The decorator of the scenes of the Strain Collection set used wide-ranging polychromy in both the narrative scenes and the ornamental decoration. The two sets share a common use of gilding which divides the panels of ornament from the narrative scenes and covers the edges of the objects.

The miniature tea set was displayed in a cabinet with the Strain's collection of matching cups and saucers. The cabinet was placed in the dining room, which relates to the original purpose of the objects. However, beginning in the nineteenth century, Meissen and other manufacturers began producing ornamental cup and saucer sets that were meant to be displayed rather than used.²¹⁴ Their display practices show that the Strains were familiar with the way in which the objects they collected were received by European consumers.

Platter with the Portrait of Marie de Medici

In the style of Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Date Unknown

18 in. dia.

Temp. No. 238 (fig. 55)

Portraits are commonly found as applied decorations on porcelain or modeled in porcelain. One of the earliest objects produced at Meissen was a life-like sculpture of their patron, Augustus the Strong of Saxony. (fig. 56) The Strain Collection included other objects decorated with portraits: a tea cup with an image of Napoleon Bonaparte, a porcelain plaque that replicates a famous image of Charles II of England, and plaque of

²¹⁴ Antje Borrmann, ed., *Kunst or Kommerz: Meissen Porzellan im 19. Jahrhundert* (Dresden: Sandstein, 2010) 20.

Henri I of Lorraine. The Meissen manufactory immortalized Johann Friedrich Böttger, their first arcanist, on a porcelain medallion around the hundredth anniversary of his discovery of the process for replicating hard-paste porcelain. (fig. 57)

This decorative platter features an elaborate reproduction of a portrait of Marie de' Medici (1575-1642), queen of France through her marriage to Henry IV and mother of Louis XIII. The marriage of Marie to Henry IV cemented a political relationship between the French crown and the Medici family, an extremely powerful Italian family which counted rulers and popes among its members. The artistic patronage of Marie de' Medici included a biographical cycle of paintings by Peter Paul Rubens, her court painter, and several official portraits. The image applied to this Sèvres plate replicates the figure from the portrait painted by Frans Pourbus the Younger (1569-1622). (fig. 58) The decorations on the Sèvres plate do not contain the background of the painting only a partial image of the figure, which is shown in full-length in the original portrait. A porcelain portrait of Marie de' Medici reflects her interest in the material as she is known to have owned several hundred pieces of Asian porcelain which were inherited by her grandson, Louis XIV of France.²¹⁵

The makers' mark on the verso of the platter is a generic example of Sèvres' Crossed-L mark. This mark was developed during the eighteenth century as a derivation on the initials of Louis XV, King of France, during the period in which the manufactory at Sèvres was under the control of the crown. Most marks found on Sèvres' output include the painters' or modelers' initials as an additional designation of the object's production. The generic quality of the mark on the verso of the Strain platter leads me to

²¹⁵ Robert Finlay, "The Pilgrim Art: The Culture of Porcelain in World History," *Journal of World History*, v. 9, n. 2 (University of Hawai'i Press: Fall, 1998) 173.

believe that this object is possibly a copy of Sèvres' style of production, rather than an object created in the actual imperial factory. Copying of porcelain marks by smaller companies was commonly done since the method of hard-paste porcelain production became widely known in Europe in the last decades of the eighteenth century.

Transfer printing was likely the method of production used to decorate this object. This process allows images and decorations to be applied to undecorated porcelain in an efficient manner with minimal staff training rather than through cost-prohibitive hand painting which requires a large time commitment by a single skilled artist. Two types of printing were employed to decorate porcelain objects at Sèvres: line etching on copper plates and chromolithography.²¹⁶ British manufacturers developed the use of printing techniques to decorate porcelain in less time and with a less highly-skilled workforce in the mid-eighteenth century in order to produce larger quantities of products to take to market. This is evidence of the more democratic commercial concerns of British makers in a highly industrialized environment versus the luxury producers of continental Europe who focused on hand-production methods. Tamara Préaud, senior archivist of the Archives of the National Manufactory of Sèvres, indicates that the administrators of Sèvres experimented with printing processes as decoration techniques for very short periods in the 1760-70's and early decades of the nineteenth century. However, Préaud concludes that line etching printing was preferred by Sèvres as it was a more artful technique based on the hand-craftsmanship of the artist and thus worthy of the aura of luxury surrounding porcelain objects. Innovations in industrial methods and materials of the late nineteenth century made lithography a preferred method of decorating porcelain

²¹⁶ Tamara Préaud, "Transfer Printing Processes used at Sèvres in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," *Bard Graduate Center Studies in the Decorative Arts*, v. 4, n. 2 (Spring-Summer, 1997) 85-96.

directed at the mass market because manufacturers could achieve intricate and colorful designs on large quantities of porcelain in a cost-effective manner. Préaud's conclusion that transfer-printing was rarely used at Sèvres, at least prior to the twentieth century, supports my supposition that this platter was not manufactured at Sèvres but rather by an unknown manufacturer imitating both their style and mark.

Schneeballen (Snowball) Vase with Cover

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Late Nineteenth Century

27" h., 15" w

Temp. No. 365 (fig. 59)

Small white blossoms that replicate the tiny blossoms of the snowball plant, or viburnum flower, decorate this large, baluster-form vase and its cover. The placement of the blossoms are symmetrical and large balls covered with the porcelain blossoms resemble the clusters of blossoms on the actual plants. Green vines and leaves wind in and out of the blanket of white blossoms. The modelers placed four, colorful birds and a snail at intervals on the vase's sides and cover. The largest bird resembles a parrot, a common entry in Meissen's avian models. The red, black and gray bird opposite the multicolored parrot can be identified as a Eurasian bullfinch; similar models with a comparable white stripe on their wing were sold at Christie's in 2011.²¹⁷ The lid of the vase features two yellow-green birds, which may be a type of finch. According to sales made at Christie's, Meissen produced *schneeballen* vases of similar form and dimensions

²¹⁷ Christie's, "Four Meissen Models of Birds and a German Model of a Bird," *Christie's Interiors* (London: April 12, 2011) <https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/four-meissen-models-of-birds-and-a-5423252-details.aspx>, accessed February 26, 2018.

around 1880.²¹⁸ The Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD) holds a large vase dated to around 1900 in an almost identical composition to the vase in the Strain Collection. (fig. 60) This *schneeballen* vase with cover is based on Johann Joachim Kändler's designs of the 1740s. Vases of this size were not typically commercially available in the eighteenth century, but instead often used a gift exchanges between royal courts.²¹⁹

There are two possible inspirations for the white flowers employed as surface decoration by Kändler. The snowball plant, or *Hydrangea macrophylla*, is native to Japan, China and Southeast Asia and was popular in Victorian gardens.²²⁰ A plate in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art demonstrates that Asian ceramic wares were decorated with images of hydrangeas during the Edo period which coincides with the development of hard porcelain production in Europe. (fig. 61) A flower study held by the British Museum attests to the awareness of hydrangea at the time that Kändler created his *schneeballen* motif. (fig. 62) The vase in the SKD collection identifies the second suggested source as the viburnum, a flowering shrub with a "wide distribution range that includes both Asia and North America."²²¹ Japanese artist, Genga, depicted a magpie seated on viburnum branch in a scroll painting dated to the early sixteenth century. (fig.

²¹⁸ Similar vases were sold at Christie's and dated to circa 1880. Christie's, "A Pair of Schneeballen Vases and Covers," (London: March 17, 1994) <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/a-pair-of-dresden-schneeball-vases-and-3058160-details.aspx?from=searchresults&intObjectID=3058160&sid=502052d8-c5a3-4ef4-8af5-522abd04a8a6>, accessed January 30, 2018.

²¹⁹ "Treasure of the Month," Wallace Collection (November 2009), <http://www.wallacecollection.org/whatson/treasure/88>, accessed March 4, 2018.

²²⁰ Leonard Perry, "Hydrangea macrophylla," *Perry's Perennial Pages* (University of Vermont), <http://pss.uvm.edu/pss123/fphydra.html>, accessed January 30, 2018.

²²¹ "Viburnums," *Missouri Botanical Garden*, <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/gardens-gardening/our-garden/notable-plant-collections/viburnums.aspx>, accessed January 30, 2018.

63) These examples show that both plants that could have inspired the artists of Meissen were well known in the visual arts during Kändler's active period.

The collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum contains a tea set with similar decoration scheme dated to circa 1744. (fig. 64) Both versions of the snowball motif feature small white flowers applied symmetrically to the surface of the object with green leaves embedded in between the rows of flowers. The tea set confirms that Meissen used the snowball motif in useful, utilitarian objects in the same manner as monumental objects meant for monarchical gift exchanges. However, the tea set does not feature ornamental birds or any other colorful ornament.

Kändler was particularly renowned for his models of life-size birds. His techniques were developed in pursuit of the creation of a porcelain menagerie for Augustus the Strong, electorate of Saxony and the manufactory's original patron. The modeler was known to use live models, taxidermied specimens, and scientific prints as his source material. He likely would have used similar sources for the recreation of the white blossoms.

Pair of sweetmeat dishes
 Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
 Ca. 1870-1900²²²
 12 in. w. x 7 in. h.
 Temp. No. 32 (fig. 65)

Porcelain tableware and figurines were commonly used on dessert tables in aristocratic and upper-class homes of early modern Europe and continue to be employed

²²² Based on dating of similar pair in National Trust Collections. "Sweetmeat Dish," National Trust Collections, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/118818.2>, accessed March 4, 2018.

for this purpose today. This pair of figural dishes were meant to display sweetmeats, a luxury food, at banquet events rather than common daily meals. Sweetmeat is a generic term that refers to several kinds of small treats such as candies, nuts, dried fruits and edible flowers usually covered in sugar or spices.²²³

Two human figures, one male and one female, offer the sweets to the viewer by holding the decorated bowls. They recline next to the oversized bowls in an awkward manner, looking as if they will fall over without the stability of the bowl. The bowls are decorated with painted flowers and insects on the interior and three-dimensional flowers of modeled porcelain on the exterior. The bowls and figures sit on scrolled bases with painted accents of gold. The simplicity of the design of the bowl and base may indicate that these objects were in a lower price category among Meissen's output, a category marketed to customers who wanted luxury items but may have had less funds available for such expenditures. In comparison, more elaborate versions of these serving dishes in the collection of the National Trust, United Kingdom, would have required more effort on the part of modelers and painters, therefore commanding a higher price. (fig. 66)

The two figures are dressed in eighteenth-century costume which is usually an indicator of class or identity. However, their specific identity is obscured by elements of their costume. Each figure appears to be in a state of undress that would have been unacceptable in proper social situations. The male figure's shirt and coat are opened to his mid-chest and he is not wearing stockings or shoes. The female figure is also missing stockings and her dress and shawl fall open, revealing one bare breast. Another set of dishes from the National Trust Collections feature figures that are fully dressed, which

²²³ Laura Mason, *Sugar-plums and Sherbet: The Prehistory of Sweets*, (Devon, UK: Prospect Books, 2004) 22.

indicates that the state of undress of the Strain Collection dishes are an aesthetic choice made by the artist. (fig. 67) The undress of the figures may be read as a suggestion of sexuality. As luxury items, sweetmeats could have been linked to intimate social interactions between lovers.

Another problematic detail in identifying the female figure is the cloth wrapped around her hair. This attribute might mark this figure as a peasant woman rather than an upper-class socialite. Peasants were a common subject matter in both fine and decorative arts of the Rococo style. Other objects produced by Meissen during their late nineteenth century revival of their Rococo and Neoclassical originals feature classical figures in a semi-clothed state, but those figures representing eighteenth-century individuals tend to be fully clothed in elaborate costume. Peasants, either adults or children, are sometimes depicted with bare feet, but no examples of peasants in the same state of undress as these two figures can be located.

A wide variety of porcelain and glass sweetmeat dishes can be found in museum collections, which indicates their popularity as a luxury object in both Europe and America. An example in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum of Art demonstrates the influence of European porcelain aesthetics on early American porcelain makers. (fig. 68) The shell-shaped dishes attached to a center post with a cup on top for additional serving space is decorated in blue and white that imitates the extremely popular color combination of Delftware, a staple of European ceramic production. However, the materials needed to create white hard-paste porcelain were not available to American manufacturers during a trade embargo with England. The soft-paste version of porcelain

that the American manufacturers could produce results in a creamy, off-white material.²²⁴

Another pair of sweetmeat dishes of the same model as the Meissen set discussed here exists within the Strain Collection itself. (fig. 69) The second set of sweetmeat dishes are decorated in the blue-and-white pattern so common to early porcelain from China and often imitated by early European ceramic makers who produced a tin-glazed earthenware in the same color scheme.

Vase with Pastoral Scene
Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
Late Nineteenth Century
20 in. h.
Temp. No. 55 (fig. 70)

Multiple examples of vases in differing sizes, shapes and materials decorated the Strain's home. This object, which was displayed in the Strains' bedroom, recalls an amphora, a vase shape common in ancient pottery. Amphorae have a tall, cylindrical shape with long handles on both sides and a flat foot that allows the vase to sit on a table or floor. The British Museum holds an example of a covered amphora donated by the artist and theoretician, John Ruskin, in 1872. (fig. 71) Found in southern Italy and created by the Etruscan culture, this vase shares characteristics with the Strains' vase including dual handles, a lid with a finial, and a figurative decoration around the widest curve of the body. Differences show the Meissen artists' willingness to deviate from the antique forms to adhere to their aesthetic ideal. The Meissen vase features a shorter neck and longer, thinner connection between the base and body. The handles of the ancient vase are slim

²²⁴ Brooklyn Museum of Art, "Sweetmeat Dish," https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/932/Sweetmeat_Dish, accessed 8 August 2015.

and likely meant to be used, whereas the figurative ormolu handles would be less suited to handling.

Like this vase, many early modern examples of amphorae include covers with a decorative finial. The handles of the vase are composed of ormolu, a type of gilded bronze used as accents on furnishings, porcelain figures and other decorative objects in the eighteenth century. The handles feature the busts of two female figures in style popular during the English Regency period of the early nineteenth century, accompanied by Rococo floral ornament. Feathered wings attached near the female figures recall the classical sculpture of Winged Victory (fig. 72). As a whole, the vase's design, with both Rococo and Neoclassical influences, reflects eclecticism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century decorative arts and domestic interior design.

The painted surface of the vase shows the mastery of the Meissen painters in several methods. The intricate gilded ornamental borders around the painted scenes echo the filigree of the metal mounts. The dark blue ground displays the advanced ability of the painters to achieve a large segment of evenly colored painted surface without flaws or brushstrokes present. The painted pastoral scene on the front of the vase and the landscape on the rear indicate the painters' familiarity with appropriate artistic styles. The *beau bleu* ground, a dark blue, evenly coats porcelain body behind the colorful and gilded ornament.²²⁵ The collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art holds a pair of vases similar in form and decoration to this object with a *beau blue* ground and ormolu figure handles. (fig. 73) The Royal Collection of the United Kingdom also holds a vase with a *beau blue* ground and figure handles. (fig. 74) The similarities between the three objects

²²⁵ "Ground Colours," The French Porcelain Society, <http://www.thefrenchporcelainsociety.com/about-us/ground-colours/>, accessed March 4, 2018.

exemplifies the commonality of the trope of blue vase with gilded decorative handles in the output of the large porcelain manufactories.

The scene on the front of the vase reflects the style of François Boucher. The vase painting shows a male and female figure seated in a familiar manner in a rustic setting surrounded by foliage and a stone building behind them to the left. The couple are young people dressed in voluminous clothing; her dress resembles a simplified version of eighteenth-century women's garments. The male figure's clothing is more problematic because the mass of pink fabric comprising his pants is anachronistic with the tightly fitting men's breeches of the eighteenth century. (fig. 75) He is not wearing a jacket which reinforces the casual, intimate setting of the scene. The male figure feeds grapes to the woman, a composition directly related to *The Grape Eaters*, a Sèvres biscuit figure group by Étienne-Maurice Falconet (fig. 76), which is in turn based on François Boucher's *An Autumn Pastoral*. (fig. 77)

Large vases were a common decorative element in Rococo and Neoclassical interiors. Manufacturers competed in producing very large vases as proof of their technological prowess. This vase strongly resembles the style of vases produced by Sèvres, the French royal manufactory and main competitor to the Dresden-based porcelain maker, with its deep blue ground, ormolu accents, and a painted scene on the front and back as seen in the examples provided above. Ormolu mounts and handles were popular with French *marchand-merciers* who applied the metal enhancements to both Asian and European vases in order to appeal to the taste of their aristocratic and haute-

bourgeois clients.²²⁶ A vase in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art exemplifies this collaboration with a porcelain vase body made by Meissen and ormolu connecting segments. (fig. 78)

Vase with Clock
Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
ca. 1834-1845²²⁷
23 in. h.
Temp. No. 89 (fig. 79)

This covered vase features a dark blue ground with gold decorative painting and ormolu fittings. On the front of the vase, a clock face is surrounded by a pastoral scene featuring three figures and a landscape background. A landscape scene also decorates the rear face of the vase but does not include any figures and a fence is the only minimal reference to the man-made world. The ormolu handles on either side of the vase feature human faces which can be read as female due to their Regency hairstyles with a tiara-style ornament. The presence of a female nymph figure on the front of the vase might also indicate a feminine identity for the handle faces. The faces are framed by Rococo scrolls and ornate floral and vegetal ornamentation. An ormolu putto seated upon symmetrical aligned leaves serves as the knob on the vase's lid. Rococo scrolls, flowers and flourishes, in gold paint and gilding on a field of rich navy blue, compose the body of the vase. A small drum and two horns surrounded by scrolls and flowers sits under the putto, who raises his arms and holds a baton like the conductor of an orchestra. Raised

²²⁶ Ormolu is a gilded bronze material commonly used in decorative arts of the early modern European era. See Kristel Smentek, *Rococo Exotic: French Mounted Porcelains and the Allure of the East* (New York: Frick Collection, 2007).

²²⁷ J.P. Cushion, *Handbook of Pottery and Porcelain Marks*, 5th ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1996) 47.

dots provide texture to the gilded ornamentation. More leaf designs are found on the edges where the lid meets the body of the vase and around bottom neck.

Clocks were extremely popular interior accessories in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century middle and upper-class home. A painting, *Morning Coffee*, by Boucher from 1739 shows a wall clock placed near a fireplace mantle with mirror in an intimate domestic scene. (fig. 80) Charissa Bremer-David examined the role of time and time-keeping in her essay, “About Time: The Hours of the Day in Eighteenth-Century Paris.”²²⁸ She writes, “Clocks and watches gradually grew more affordable during the 1700s as production methods improved. While the prevalence of the devices helped to order civic and domestic life, their presence also raised moralizing concerns about using time well, productively or virtuously, and accounting for one’s time.”²²⁹ As clocks became a required piece of domestic equipment, so too did they become a statement of the owner’s social status and moral virtue.

This vase may have not been originally produced to contain a clock in its front panel. Two contemporary examples from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum are composed of clockworks installed in vases decorated with a plain ground, rather than a pastoral scene like the one found on the Strain vase. We can theorize that the clockworks were added after the original production of the vase because cutting and manipulating porcelain bodies was a common practice as recognized by Kristel Smentek in her catalog *Rococo Exotic: French Mounted Porcelains and the Allure of the East*, an exhibition at the Frick Collection held in 2007. Visible evidence for this theory is the characteristics of

²²⁸ Charissa Bremer-David, “About Time: The Hours of the Day in Eighteenth-Century Paris,” in *Paris: Life & Luxury in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. C. Bremer-David (Los Angeles: Getty Museum, 2011) 11-32.

²²⁹ Bremer-David, 14.

the figures on the decorative painting around the clock face. Rather than interacting with the void in the scene created by the clock, the three figures are squeezed into the space between the gilded boundary and the edge of the clock face. Two putti figures are placed on the sides while a nymph figure is in the center under the bottom of the clock face. Another detail supporting this modification is the face of the putto on the right which disappears under the edge of the clock face. The most obvious sign that the vase was not originally designed as a vessel for a clock is the screw and washer found in the center of the rear face's painted landscape.

The clock face features the mark of H. Luppens & Cie, a Belgian foundry active in the last half of the nineteenth century. The company was known for bronze sculptures and furniture mounts and submitted “clocks, vases and a bronze model of a monument” to the industrial section of the 1862 World Exhibition held in London.²³⁰ The red mark inside the lid of the vase is a “destination mark added to special pieces ordered by the King.”²³¹ This mark may indicate that the vase was originally commissioned by the court of Louis-Phillippe I during the July Monarchy of 1830-1848. The Sèvres mark also includes an entwined L and P, the initials of the king. These marks supported the dating of the original vase to this period. The destruction by fire of the Tuileries palace during the Paris Commune supports a production date of prior to 1871.

Wall Sconce

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
Late Nineteenth Century, After 1934?
23 ½ in.

²³⁰ Her Majesty's Commissioners, *Catalog of the Industrial Department, International Exhibition, 1862* (London: Truscott, Son & Simmons, 1862) 163. Google e-book, accessed 29 October 2015.

²³¹ Cushion, 47.

Temp. No. 54 (fig. 81)

This wall sconce with six arms features a scene of two men and a woman in gallant dress seated in a garden setting painted on the center of the plaque. The painted scene reflects the style of Antoine Watteau (French, 1684-1721), an early Rococo painter, who developed the *fête galante* genre in the first decades of the eighteenth century. This genre features aristocratic or theatrical figures in outdoor settings imbued with a melancholy, romantic mood. The Dresden State Art Collection contains two paintings by Watteau in the *fête galante* style that may have been added to the collection by Elector Augustus the Strong and his advisors who were known to purchase French paintings and drawings. A teakettle in the Porzellansammlung collection demonstrates Meissen's eighteenth-century painters' use of Watteau's work as a template for their decorative imagery. (fig. 82)²³²

The scene on the Strain Collection wall sconce shows a trio of gallants having an animated conversation. The men gesture toward one another and the woman holds her hand out toward the standing man as if she has been confronted by him and must defend herself. It is possible that the viewer could deduce that the standing man has caught his female companion in a secluded garden with another man. The figures are dressed in eighteenth-century costume similar to the outfitting of figures typically found in Watteau's work. The mood and content of many of Watteau's paintings reflect romantic entanglements of his subjects, exemplified by *The Festival of Love* from the collection of the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in the Dresden State Art Collection. This painting

²³²Ulrich Pietsch, "Commentary," 2010, <https://skd-online-collection.skd.museum/Details/Index/122750>, accessed March 4, 2018.

features several couples, paired and seated in intimate poses in a sublime garden, surrounding a tall, white sculpture of Venus and Cupid. (fig. 83)

The center scene on the wall sconce is surrounded by Rococo decoration including rocaille shell-shapes, S and C shaped scrolls accented with gilding, modeled porcelain flowers and vines, a small painted scene of two birds, all presented by two winged putti clothed with classical drapery. The candle holders are molded with natural shapes of leaves and plant stems but accented with light blue-green glaze. The circumference of leaves around the holders are designed to direct melting wax away from the connecting arms and bordering decorative flowers and scrollwork. The unglazed back of the sconce contains hardware for hanging the object on the wall. The six arms protrude from the plaque-style body in pairs.

A sconce made of porcelain recognizes the reflective qualities of glazed porcelain. Other porcelain candle sconces have incorporated mirrors into the plaque surfaces in order to increase the amount of light reflected back into the room. Mimi Hellman examined the effects of candlelight on Rococo luxury objects in her essay, “Enchanted Night: Decoration, Sociability, and Visuality after Dark.”²³³ Hellman states, “...the enchantment of candlelit interiors turned on a knowing engagement with the visible, the invisible, and the barely seen glints in between.”²³⁴ This in-betweenness relates to the ambiguity sometimes prescribed to the mood of Watteau’s *fête galante* paintings. His light, airy painterly style suggests a hazy light filtered through leaves and tree branches,

²³³ Mimi Hellman, “Enchanted Night: Decoration, Sociability, and Visuality after Dark” in *Paris: Life and Luxury*, Charissa Bremer-David, ed. (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2011) 94.

²³⁴ Hellman, 94.

or “the atmosphere of dream which mingles hints of despair with sensual delights.”²³⁵

The educated, noble viewer of Watteau’s work and Meissen’s candle sconce would make the connection between Watteau’s style and the effect of candlelight on an eighteenth-century interior decorated with reflective surfaces.

III. Mythological Groups

Ceres with Three Cupids (Ceres mit drei Amoretten)

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Late Nineteenth Century

7-1/2 in. h.

Temp. No. 30 (fig. 84)

Ceres with Three Cupids [Ceres mit drei Amoretten] depicts the Roman goddess of the harvest being attended by three winged putti. Other Meissen objects also use the Roman nomenclature for mythological figures rather than the previous Greek names. There are differences between Ceres of the Romans and the Greek goddess, Demeter, but their visual attributes are similar. An ancient Roman example, the *Mattei Ceres*, depicts the goddess as a matron in the classicizing Hellenistic style and has been dated to the third century BCE.²³⁶ (fig. 85) The original has been on display at the Vatican, almost continually since it was sold to the pope by the Mattei family in 1770.²³⁷ A seventeenth-century copy is in the collection of Versailles. Nineteenth-century copies of the *Mattei Ceres* have sold at recent auctions, a bronze version in 1996 and a marble copy in 2013,

²³⁵ Hallam Walker, “Visual and Spatial Imagery in Verlaine’s *Fêtes galantes*,” *PMLA*, vol. 87, no. 5 (Oct. 1972) 1007.

²³⁶ Francis Haskell, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981) 182.

²³⁷ Haskell, 181.

showing the nineteenth-century artist's interest in the classical subject. Meissen produced a version of this sculpture in hard-paste biscuit porcelain, modelled between 1783 and 1787, demonstrating that this goddess was known to the manufactory since its Neo-classical period of the later eighteenth century if not earlier.²³⁸

Early modern painters employed Ceres as an allegorical figure for summer and Earth in groups representing the four seasons and the four elements. Ceres, Flora, Bacchus and Pan were grouped to represent the four seasons by Daniel Seiter, a Viennese painter active at the end of the seventeenth century. *Ceres with Three Cupids in a Landscape* was painted in 1732 by Mattheus Terwesten, interior decorative painter and a court painter to Frederick William I of Prussia. (fig. 86) In 1717, Antoine Watteau, an early practitioner of Rococo Art, followed the same trope enlisting Ceres as an analogy of summer in an oval-shaped painting for the home of Pierre Crozat, patron and collector. (fig. 87) Watteau surrounds the goddess with symbols of the summer zodiac signs. The blond youths represent Gemini, the lion for Leo and the crab for Cancer. She is seated on a tuft of clouds and dressed in a white flowing gown tinted pink by the light in the same manner as the clouds in the background. The stalks of grain and the sickle identify her as Ceres, Roman goddess of grain. This painting is the surviving piece of a set of decorative paintings depicting mythological subjects as allegories of the four seasons.²³⁹

Ceres is an apt personification of summer as she is the Italic divinity “that produced living things and caused them to grow.”²⁴⁰ She was worshipped as the goddess

²³⁸ Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, *The 'Mathei Ceres'* (ca. 1790-1800), Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge acc. no. C.3169-1928, Reproduced in Haskell, 182.

²³⁹ Philip Conisbee, “Catalog Entry,” January 1, 2009, <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.46149.html>, accessed March 4, 2018.

²⁴⁰ Barbette Stanley-Spaeth, *The Roman Goddess Ceres*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996) 2.

of both human and agricultural fertility and her equation with summer is apropos as summer is the time of year during which crops, planted in the spring, grow in preparation for the fall harvest. A festival dedicated to her was held on April 19, according to the calendar of the Roman Republic, to appeal to the goddess for a fertile growing season.²⁴¹ Ceres's visual attributes connect to her role in agricultural fertility as she is often shown with a sheaf of grain and a sickle. In her association with the Greek goddess of agriculture, Demeter, Ceres was assigned the role of mother to Persephone, who is given the name Proserpina, in Roman adaptation of the Greek myth of her abduction. Persephone/Proserpina was abducted by Hades and taken to live in the underworld. A deal was struck with the lord of the Underworld and she was able to return to Earth for six months to live with her mother. Her return ushered in spring and thus the association of Proserpina and Ceres with the seasons provided artists with beautiful female figures with which to personify the allegorical concepts of spring and summer.

The Meissen figure group in the Strain Collection depicts Ceres in a more matronly manner following the example of Seiter and the *Mattei Ceres*. This motherly tendency may reflect Ceres's connection to the Roman earth mother-goddess, Tellus. Barrette Stanley-Spaeth notes in her extensive monograph on the goddess that Ceres was often worshipped in conjunction with Tellus beginning in the ancient Italic cults that are the goddess's origin in Roman religion. The motherly affect may also be an acknowledgement of her role as mother of Proserpina, which is highlighted in a work by Rococo artist, Joseph-Marie Vien, in *Proserpina Decorating a Statue of Ceres* of 1757.

²⁴¹ Stanley-Spaeth, 4-5. This author cites other dates during the growing season on which offerings were given to Ceres. A feast day for Ceres and Tellus, the earth goddess, was held on December 13 to mark the end of the sowing season.

(fig. 88) Even though one breast and shoulder are exposed, the Meissen Ceres is dressed modestly in a flowered dress, striped sash and blue drapery apron. Her nudity is blocked from obvious view by the armful of grain stalks and the hand holding her sickle.

Presumably, the modelers felt that for her to be a proper classical figure she must follow the precedent of the bared flesh. This is contrary to the why this matronly goddess is shown in both the original *Mattei Ceres* and the eighteenth-century Meissen *Mattei Ceres* in which the modelers have added extra drapery covering her hair thus increasing her modesty over the antique example.

The Meissen Ceres also performs that motherly action of holding the hand of the putto balancing a basket of fruit atop his head. She looks down with fondness at the putto pushing the hand plow. This affectionate gaze represents her role as the goddess of agricultural fertility. She blesses those individuals whose hard work of pushing the plow prepares the ground for planting. Her head she wears a crown of wheat and her hair has a grey tint, another indication of her matronly age. The third putto rests on the ground behind the goddess's legs. The modeler has taken care to cover the genitals of each putti, pink drapery covers the body of the sleeping putto, the fruit basket-toting putto and the plowing putto are both covered by strategically placed sheaves of grain stalks. Like the Meissen *Leda and the Swan* of the Strain Collection, the nineteenth-century modelers have downplayed the human sexuality in their works to the point of hiding the genitals of childish mythological figures. Also, like Leda, the Ceres figure has an exposed breast that has not been demarcated with a nipple. Some darker pink tones are added to the end of the breast, but no nipple has been modeled. The details of the faces, individual fingers and toes, and the details modeled into the sheaves of grain support the purposeful

omission of these body parts. This subdued anatomy must be an acknowledgment of late nineteenth-century mores about sexuality. An eighteenth-century Meissen biscuit porcelain figure group depicting the Three Graces support this theory. (fig. 89) The three mythological young women, whose breasts are anatomically correct, are exposed except for seductively placed bunches of drapery. A Demeter figure, created in the early twentieth century by Meissen, also underscores the level of sexuality in a figure as the modeler's choice. (fig. 90) Like Ceres, Demeter holds a sheaf of wheat and a harvesting knife. She is not accompanied by putti to place her in the motherly role, rather she is posed in a seductive contrapposto with drapery riding up on her thigh and her head angled in a flirtatious manner. Without the motherly demeanor, Demeter fulfills her role as fertility goddess to humankind, rather than the Meissen Ceres who is focused on her role as the provider of agricultural fertility, the mother of grain.

Leda and the Swan

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Late Nineteenth Century²⁴²

7 in. h.

Temp. No. 26 (fig. 91)

In Greek mythology, Leda is the Queen of Sparta who drew the romantic attention of Zeus. He appeared to her in the guise of a swan and seduced her. According to most versions of the story, their union triggered the birth of four children through eggs laid by Leda: male twins, Castor and Pollux, and female sisters, Clytemnestra and Helen.

²⁴² The Strain Collection *Leda and the Swan* carries the same incised number "433" as a version of this figure group sold at Christie's in 2009, which was dated to the late nineteenth century. Christie's, "A Meissen Group of Leda and the Swan," <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/a-meissen-group-of-leda-and-the-5178968-details.aspx>, accessed January 22, 2018.

Multiple ancient textual sources allude to the story of Leda's seduction and the tale is often connected to the narratives of her children's lives. Ancient visual artists also recounted the tale in a variety of media: ceramic, marble, and painted wall murals. James David Draper, a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, noted that the story of Leda is "the most frequently illustrated of Jupiter's (Zeus's) loves, perhaps because of the perfect simplicity demanded of the composition, two forms intertwined in a closed shape."²⁴³ The pairing of a beautiful woman and a graceful swan could express a stable, triangular composition as well as a scene of sensuality.

The story of Leda and the swan provides artists with a credible instance in which to explore the theme of eroticism. Beginning with antique examples, such as this Roman lamp from 40-70 CE in the collection of the British Museum, objects depicting Leda's story contained explicit images of the eroticism imbued in the narrative of a beautiful woman seduced by a sinuous swan. (fig. 92) The decoration on the lamp shows the naked Leda as the aggressor pushing the swan down onto an altar, her hands hidden in between the legs of the great bird suggesting her attention to Zeus's maleness. The round object at her feet is the egg that results from their union.²⁴⁴ Perhaps, it is the phallic shape of the swan's body that inspired artists to imbue their imagery with salacious details. Other artists of antiquity chose to depict the Zeus-swan and the matron in a subtler manner such as in the monumental sculpture by the Greek sculptor, Timotheos. The original is lost, but Roman copies are extant in the collections of the Getty Museum and the Prado. (fig. 93)

²⁴³ James David Draper, "For the Love of Leda," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, v. 30. n. 2 (October 1971) 50.

²⁴⁴ "Lamp, 1865, 1118.250.a," British Museum Online Collection, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=440120&partId=1&searchText=leda+lamp&page=1, accessed March 4, 2018.

The life-sized sculpture shows the matron shielding the swan with her drapery, possibly concealing their tryst or protecting the swan from an attacking eagle. Some versions of the myth allude to the attacking eagle as the ruse used by Zeus to get close to Leda as she would protect the swan from the predator bird.²⁴⁵ The explicit scenes depicting the swan and Leda in sexual congress return during the Renaissance's renewed interest in mythology and can be found in art through to the modern era. Leda's story is also found in literary sources including a well-known poem by William Butler Yeats first published in 1924.

François Boucher painted an example of the scene in 1741. (fig. 94) A figure group in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum represents the more erotic translation of Leda's story in porcelain that may have been influenced by Boucher's painting as the two figure groups share several compositional characteristics. Étienne-Maurice Falconet (1716-1791) created the figure group in unglazed, white biscuit porcelain in 1764. (fig. 95) Falconet and Boucher commonly collaborated on work produced at the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory in the mid-eighteenth century, under the commission of the French king. Boucher did not receive an attribution for the Leda group, but the visual similarities and the working relationship between the two men supports Boucher's painting as the source of Falconet's sculpture. William Ryland also produced an engraving of Boucher's painting in 1758, showing the willingness of Boucher to license his work to be reproduced in media that attracted a consumer base beyond the wealthiest patrons. Falconet made a significant change in composition due to

²⁴⁵ "Leda and the Swan," Prado Museum Online catalog. <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/leda/2b45e725-8a41-45dc-a03e-9f1ec16128a2?searchid=1d8b7eb5-4401-6dec-bc43-c6a8c484e0f1>, accessed March 4, 2018.

the characteristics of the porcelain's structure; he reconfigured Leda's arms, which are outstretched in the two-dimensional works, and down at her side in the biscuit porcelain sculpture. A thin, outstretched arm would have been too susceptible to breakage during the firing process to chance remaining resolutely steadfast to the original composition. Falconet retains the seductive allure of the figure while working within the parameters of the medium.

Boucher's painting and Falconet's sculpture demonstrate the availability of erotic examples. However, the scene as depicted by Meissen's modelers in the late nineteenth century model from the Strain Collection lacks the overt sexuality of other depictions. The composition of this object includes Leda, demurely covered with a blue drapery, seated at the center on a stabilizing branch. She is nude, but her position does not convey an awareness of her bodily display. The blue cloth carefully conceals her genital area, but her nipple-less breasts are uncovered. Her classicized hairstyle provides a clue to her identity as a mythological figure. The swan, endowed with realism seen in the animals modeled by Kändler, spreads its wings in a gesture that seems more related to displaying its feathers than any emotional resonance that might indicate its true identity as the god, Zeus. The longing gaze shared by the woman and the great bird, indicated by strong eye contact, conveys the emotional content of the narrative, a sentimental and romantic attachment mirrored in the woman's gesture as she drapes a garland of flowers around the head and neck of the innocent animal who will soon transform into the amorous god. The third figure in the group, a small winged putto, rests his childish hand on Leda's thigh. The discarded quiver hidden between the legs of Leda and the kneeling putto identifies this figure as Cupid, the toddler god of love, although his characteristic bow is not

included. The inclusion of Cupid is noncanonical as Leda's narrative does not include this mythological character. Presumably, Cupid's presence lends romantic credibility to the pairing of the human woman and the predatory god in his deceptive form.

An extant eighteenth-century model of this subject created by Meissen is found in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History's Hans Syz Collection.²⁴⁶ (fig. 96) Dating to the 1750s, the group includes Leda, the swan, and a putto kneeling at Leda's side. A discarded quiver of arrows hangs on the branch of the tree stump which serves both as an indication of the setting of the forest scene and a support structure for the figural group. The coloring of the Syz group differs significantly from the Strain Collection group which can be explained by the difference in the dates of creation. Meissen figures originating during the Kändler period tend to display a skin tone closer to the pale manner that was fashionable in the eighteenth century. The painter of the late nineteenth century figure group from the Strain Collection employed peach and pink hues that reflected that era's emphasis on a rosy cheek as a reflection of a woman's health. Commercial advertising displays the late nineteenth century standard of beauty exemplified by an object from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (fig. 97) One of a set of 25 printed in 1889, the card shows a blonde woman of younger age with blue eyes, rosy pink cheeks and a coral, rosebud mouth, tinted in a manner similar to Meissen's Leda from the Strain Collection. The Meissen painters attempt to create human figures that met the beauty standards of the contemporary consumers.

²⁴⁶ Dr. Hans Syz amassed a collection of Meissen Porcelain beginning in the early twentieth century while living in New York City. His collection was transferred to the Smithsonian in 1963. *New York Times*, "Dr. Hans Syz, Collector of Porcelain, Dies at 96," May 31, 1991. Online, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/31/obituaries/dr-hans-syz-collector-of-porcelain-dies-at-96.html>, accessed March 4, 2018.

The Strain Collection group, modeled in the late nineteenth century as indicated by the manufacturer's marking, is similar in composition to the Syz Collection example. Leda remains in the center position with the swan to her right and the kneeling putto at her other side. Drapery hides the genitals of both Leda figures, but their breasts remain exposed. A garland of flowers rings the neck of the swan. Many small differences exist in the two groups including the placement of Cupid's quiver, the facial features of all three figures, and the size of the tree stump used for stability and decoration. The floral garland around the neck of the swan in the Strain Collection example holds many more flowers than the eighteenth-century Syz Collection example in which the garland is depicted as a green vine with a few flowers attached. As so many details of the two groups differ, we can be assured that the Strain Collection example was not produced using the same molds as Syz Collection example.

The diluted erotic content of the Strain Collection group, as compared to older depictions of this myth, may have been a concession to Victorian concepts of sexuality. The allusions to bestiality in the mythological narrative would have offended the more conservative Victorian viewer had the modeler made the relationship between the partially clothed Leda and the non-human swan more explicit. Unlike the story of Europa wherein the god changes back into a human form before the rape occurs, the story of Zeus's conquest over Leda does not include this redeeming moment. In fact, the bestial relationship is confirmed because the children born of this union are hatched from eggs rather than birthed from Leda's body. The possible controversy of the theme of

human-animal sexual relations depicted is evidenced by a recent censoring of a modern depiction of Leda in London in 2012.²⁴⁷

Bacchante and Infant Bacchus

Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin (KPM)

Ca. 1910²⁴⁸

8 in. h.

Temp. No. 27 (fig. 98)

The female figure of this group can be identified by the grape leaves she wears in her hair and around her neck as a bacchante, a female worshipper or servant of Bacchus, the Roman god of wine. Wine, as the general subject matter of this figure, is also indicated by the presence of grapes on the base. Bacchantes have been used as generic classical figures by artists interested in depicting the female body in an erotic or playful manner. The classically nude woman, her lap covered with pink drapery, offers a drink to the child at her knee from a bladder with a gold spout. The male child does not have wings on his back and therefore is not identified as a putto. She is seated on a generic tree stump that has lost some of its painted decoration but retains the modelled texture of bark. The base of the object is decorated with the gilded Rococo swirls found on many figures from both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and from multiple porcelain manufacturers. The mythological subject matter and the Rococo detailing allow figure groups of this style to appeal to consumers interested in both styles.

²⁴⁷ Hannah Furness, “‘Mythical’ swan photo taken down after ‘bestiality’ fears,” *The Telegraph* (April 28, 2012) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-news/9232512/Mythical-swan-photo-taken-down-after-bestiality-fears.html>, accessed January 22, 2018.

²⁴⁸ Based on the dating of a similar object sold at Christie’s in 2004. “A Berlin KPM porcelain Bacchante group,” *Christie’s* (2004) http://www.christies.com/lotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=4371626 accessed March 26, 2015. Both Christie’s and the 2009 inventory of the Strain Collection identify the male child as a putto.

The male child drinks from the wine bladder offered by the female figure, which may indicate that the child is the Infant Bacchus being educated on the glories of wine. Precedents for the depiction of the wine god as a child are not plentiful but exist in several artistic media and time periods. Two Roman examples from antiquity identify the male child as Dionysus, the Roman equivalent to the Greek Bacchus. A nymph holding an infant Dionysus is seen in a mural scene from Cubiculum B in the Villa Farnesina, a Roman villa discovered in 1879 that may have been built in 21 BCE by Agrippa, a counselor to Emperor Augustus and minister for art and public works.²⁴⁹ The infant Dionysus wears a crown of grape leaves, the nymph wears the voluminous robes with bared shoulders and her hair pulled back and secured with a band in the common dress of upper-class Roman women. (fig. 99) A Roman copy of a sculpture in marble after Lysippos, a Greek sculptor from the fourth century BCE, depicts the infant Dionysus at approximately the same age as the male child in the Strain Collection KPM figure group. (fig. 100) Older depictions of Dionysus show the god as a mature, bearded man, but later artists of antiquity transitioned to images of the god as a “handsome youth bearing grapes or a wine cup.”²⁵⁰ Overall, artists of antiquity used Dionysus (Bacchus) to suggest the hedonism of his Bacchanal, religious rituals performed by young men and women in natural settings, which developed into a sense of eroticism in the depictions of the god and his followers in the art of the early modern era and later.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Megan Michele Farlow, *The House of Augustus and the Villa Farnesina: The New Values of the Imperial Decorative Program, Honors Thesis* (University of Iowa, Fall 2016) 28. See also, Fred S. Kleiner, *A History of Roman Art*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2016) 102.

²⁵⁰ Helene E. Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconology: Themes Depicted in Works of Art* (New York: Routledge, 2013) 98, Online ed.
https://books.google.com/books?id=rMeJDwmr_hcC&lpg=PA101&ots=-wz7LlsYwc&dq=bacchante%20art&pg=PA98#v=onepage&q=bacchante%20art&f=false accessed January 21, 2018.

²⁵¹ Roberts (2013) 98-99.

A mythological scene that suggested eroticism provided early modern artists with a subject that met their need to express amatory themes with playful subtexts while engaging with the popularity of classicizing historicism. Depictions of the bacchanal, like an eighteenth-century watercolor and chalk drawing by Charles-Joseph Natoire in the collection of the Fogg Art Museum, allowed a voyeuristic viewer to enjoy the stimulation of an erotic scene while maintaining a sense of social propriety through the historical subject matter. (fig. 101) Young followers of Bacchus, spent from the orgiastic activity, lay on the ceremonial clearing around a plinth piled with grapes and other fruits while two old men leer at the women lasciviously. Three trees in the mid-ground and a rural landscape in the background connote the agricultural origins of wine and Bacchus's importance to the harvest. Bacchanalian scenes expressed eroticism, historicism, and pastoralism for their early modern viewers.

The pastoral, idyllic setting of uninhibited celebrants in nature added an innocent component to the Bacchanalian theme which was later expressed in a popular trope of portraiture of bourgeois and aristocratic women. Shown in classical dress in the guise of a bacchante, Angelica Kauffman, the Swiss Neoclassical artist, painted a portrait in the popular oval-shaped style around 1786, which has been suspected to be a self-portrait based on comparison to other confirmed self-portraits. (fig. 102) The subject looks directly at the viewer from under her crown of grape leaves. The gold curls in her hair echo the curled vines in her halo. Considered quite the celebrity, Kauffmann was known for her self-portraits, which were in demand for public display and private collections, in which she often portrayed herself "as an idealized character based on a classical source or

in an allegorical role.”²⁵² Depicting herself as a bacchante emphasized the “obvious natural innocence, which was attributed to her rural origins” that was part of the characteristics, beyond her artistic talent, that she used to develop her public persona.²⁵³ Like the portraits of contemporary women in the guise of a bacchante, scenes of the infant Bacchus could also suggest the innocence of youth and idyllic rural settings.

“[Bacchanalian] images have changed in response to contemporary ideas, but the basic human aspects of joy, ecstasy, delight in wine, and sensuality that the bacchanal so vividly expresses are still with us.”²⁵⁴ The contemporary social mores effected the popular portraiture convention of women depicted as followers of Bacchus. Images created during the rejection of decadence in the Victorian era of the late nineteenth century can be contrasted with earlier images created during the more permissive era of the Rococo style exemplified by Natoire’s drawing. Kauffman’s portrait transitions to a more conservative depiction of bacchantes through its lack of exposed flesh, but her slight smile and direct eye contact with the viewer suggests a flirtatious subtext. Over one hundred years later, William-Adolphe Bouguereau painted depictions of bacchantes similar to Kauffman’s portrait showing women in classical robes with sly smiles, grape-leave crowns, and rural idyllic settings. Bouguereau’s subjects hold the thyrsus, a phallic wand composed of a stalk of giant fennel covered in ivy vines topped and with a pine cone, an attribute of Bacchus that symbolized prosperity, fertility, and pleasure. (fig. 103)

Dated to 1910, fifteen years after the creation of Bouguereau’s bacchantes, the KPM bacchante reflects the revival of the Rococo style in the late nineteenth century

²⁵² Angela Rosenthal, “Self-portraits of Angelica Kauffmann,” in *Angelica Kauffmann: A Woman of Immense Talent*, ed. Tobias G. Natter (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007) 13.

²⁵³ Rosenthal, 16.

²⁵⁴ Roberts (2013) 100.

which lasted into the twentieth century for European porcelain manufactories. The scene of a bacchante offering wine to an infant Bacchus connects to the myth of the god's birth. According to Homer's *Illiad* and Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, Dionysus (Bacchus) was conceived by Semele, princess of Thebes, and Zeus. Hera forced Zeus to reveal his true self to the pregnant Semele who was consumed by his power. Zeus placed the unborn child into his thigh until the infant matured and was born from Zeus's thigh. The care of the newborn was entrusted to the nymphs of Nysa, the first bacchantes who educated the child on his relationship to wine. In 1769, François Boucher depicted Dionysus's delivery to the nymphs by Hermes (Mercury). (fig. 104) In this canvas painted in Boucher's typical luxuriant style, the nymphs of Nysa cradle the infant Bacchus as flying putti bring grapes and his thyrsus. A return to the work of Angelica Kauffman shows Bacchus with the nymphs who dangle a grapevine over the outstretched hands of the infant god in a work entitled *The Nursing of Bacchus*.²⁵⁵ The theme of these eighteenth-century works continues in the nineteenth-century work of Niccolò Amastini, a carved onyx gem depicting an infant Bacchus astride a dog, surrounded by a nymph and a male figure. Amastini's nymph dangles grapes out of reach of the upraised hands of the child. (fig. 105) The comparison of these examples to the KPM figure group in the Strain Collection supports the identification of the KPM group as another scene in the education of Bacchus.

This object demonstrates the shared Rococo aesthetic of porcelain figures found in the Strain Collection and common among other figures from European porcelain

²⁵⁵ After Angelica Kauffman, *The Nursing of Bacchus* (20 February 1791), Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-nursing-of-bacchus>, accessed January 21, 2018.

makers. Modelers and painters often transferred between factories and applied their personal artistic skills to the products of their new employer. As an example of the interconnectedness of porcelain production, F.E. Meyer, who had worked under Kändler at Meissen, transferred to Berlin in the 1760s and brought Meissen-style modeling practices to the Prussian factory's figurine production. In 1763, Frederick II of Prussia established the Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur (KPM) when he took over the management of a privately-owned porcelain factory, following the example of Louis XV of France. Prussia had occupied Meissen during the Seven Years War from the mid-1750 to 1763 and returning control of the Dresden factory to Saxony may have provided Frederick's motivation to seek his own source of "white gold".

Europa and the Bull
 Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
 Ca. 1880²⁵⁶
 9 in. h.
 Temp. No. 28 (fig.106)

This figure group represents a scene from the mythological tale of Europa, daughter of the king of Tyre. The tale, recounted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, relates that Zeus lusted after the beautiful maiden and, in an effort to seduce her, appeared to her in the guise of a white bull. When Europa, who had been gathering flowers with her maidens, saw the bull she was entranced by his timid nature and began to pet the animal. Eventually, she climbed onto his back and the bull abducted the princess, exploding

²⁵⁶ Incised number "2697" is the same as an example of Meissen's *Europa and the Bull* sold by Christie's in 2011. They dated the figure group to circa 1880. "A Meissen Group of Europa and the Bull," *Christie's* (2011) <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/a-meissen-group-of-europa-and-the-5466292-details.aspx>, accessed March 4, 2018.

across the sea to the island of Crete. There, Zeus revealed his true form and ravaged the young woman. After impregnating her, the god abandoned the girl on the island and she became queen of Crete and gave birth to Zeus's son, King Minos. The artists of antiquity depicted the story in mosaic, small sculpture and one extant example of a large marble, reassembled from fragments, is found in the collection of the British Museum (fig. 107). After falling from favor in the highly Christian Medieval period, the subject regains popularity as early as the fifteenth century and many examples from the Renaissance and Early Modern period are extant.

This object is a nineteenth-century example of a model designed by Friedrich Elias (F.E.) Meyer I (1723-1785) during the Kändler period of the mid-eighteenth century. (fig. 108) The influence of Kändler's aesthetic is evident in this grouping through the pyramidal composition, the floral details, and the gilded Rococo elements on the base. The gilding on the base might be meant to complement bronze mounts upon which figure groups and other porcelain vessels were often mounted. Meyer was active at Meissen from 1748 to 1761.²⁵⁷

The Dresden Print room, began around 1720, held a wide-ranging collection of works on paper, "encompassing practically all types and techniques, from precious master drawings and rare engravings" collected based on an "encyclopedic principle" and contained 130,000 sheets by 1756.²⁵⁸ Two well-known examples of the tale of Europa would have been available, likely through prints, to the modelers of Meissen in the

²⁵⁷ Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Jack and Belle Linsky Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Met Publications, 1984) 250, online, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications/the_jack_and_belle_linsky_collection_in_the_metropolitan_museum_of_art, accessed March 4, 2018.

²⁵⁸ The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the State Art Collections of Dresden, *The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1978).

eighteenth century. The most widely known example was painted by Titian about 1560-62 and is currently in the collection of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Massachusetts. The Baroque master chose to represent the moment of the story at which the narrative is at a fever pitch when the young princess is facing an unknown fate on the back of a rampaging bull that has plunged into the sea. The bull's action creates a moment of terror for Europa and her companions. Although, the sweetness of the bull's expression as he looks out directly at the viewer from under his crown of flowers contradicts the frenzied actions of the mortals in the scene. The fright and alarm of the mortals is not an element often included in visual depictions of the myth during the eighteenth century.

During the Rococo period, Europa's story was depicted by François Boucher, who like Meyer, chose to focus on the seduction before the violence which plays into Rococo aesthetic of playfulness and subtle action. (fig. 109) Translation of the scene into static porcelain has softened the sexual tension because the color applied to the white surface does not allow artists the same luscious variety of color available in oil paint. Differing texture also deters the sensuality of the figures as the slick, reflective surface of the porcelain does not offer the same creamy quality as the oil paint construction of Boucher's work. Boucher created multiple versions of this narrative. Colin Bailey hypothesizes that Boucher's source material was a second-century BCE poem by Moschus, which features a more detailed description of the setting, rather than Ovid's text.²⁵⁹ Boucher's motives for using this literary version allowed for a better visual adaptation into tapestry, according to Bailey, because it emphasizes the viscosity of the

²⁵⁹ Colin B. Bailey, ed., *The Loves of the Gods: Mythological Painting from Watteau to David* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992) 405.

floral details of the forest setting of the seduction scene.²⁶⁰ Following Boucher's emphasis on the floral details also allowed the Meissen modelers to display their talent in creating their miniaturized version of reality.

The difference between the two depictions, the Baroque and the Rococo, is the way in which they each depict impending drama, a seduction versus a moment of intense anxiety. The application of gender conventions is also an intriguing component in the way scholars have approached Boucher's mythological output and can be applied by extension to Meyer's grouping. Issues of gender though become more complicated in the porcelain group because of the medium's connection to female collectors in the eighteenth century.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art holds another porcelain example of the Europa group modeled by Meissen. Rather than glazed and painted, this group is composed of unglazed biscuit porcelain which gives the object a creamy white surface with a dull finish and subtle texture. (fig. 110) Meissen's choice to recreate the *Europa* of the Rococo period is likely based on the demands of their consumers whose interest in historicism was an economic boon for the company. An ancillary Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur example created in the Jugendstil style, the German and Austrian equivalent to France's Art Nouveau movement, emphasizes that Meissen's *Europa* is catering to the consumer's taste for historicism. The competing company in Berlin chose to produce this work in the modern style to meet the demands of a different, but contemporaneous, consumer base. (fig. 111)

²⁶⁰ Bailey, 405.

In the Strain home, this piece was displayed in a glass-fronted cabinet in their bedroom with a large group of similarly themed figure groups. The number of mythological groups in the collection indicate that the theme may have been a favorite of the collectors. The display location in the most private part of their sanctum also supports this hypothesis.

Venus in Chariot

Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin (KPM)

Ca. 1906-07²⁶¹

Temp. No. 35 (fig. 112)

The female figure in this group can be identified as Venus because she is seated in a chariot, which may have been pulled by doves at one time and accompanied by Cupid who is holding an arrow in his left hand. Jack Drew, the antique dealer from Omaha that worked with the Strains to build their collection, identified this figure as Venus in his 1976 inventory. Textually examples from antiquity to Shakespeare mark the golden chariot as an attribute of Venus. She holds a piece of fruit in one hand and casually drapes the other arm over the edge of the chariot. The fruit might be read as a golden apple which alludes to the tale of Venus (Aphrodite) and the judgement of Paris in which she was awarded a golden apple as the “fairest” goddess. A yellow cape with floral decoration is draped over her shoulder and lap and held with a jeweled clasp at her breast. A gold belt at her waist and gold bracelets on her wrists accentuates her status and beauty. Cupid’s gesture mimics the hand gesture of Falconet’s 1757 *Menacing Cupid*

²⁶¹ Based on index of markings from Margarete Jarchow, *Berlin Porcelain in the 20th Century* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1988) 315.

(fig. 113), which was widely produced in porcelain by the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory. Holes on the front of the KPM chariot may indicate that small birds, perhaps the doves may have been present at one time as seen in the similar Meissen example sold at Skinner Auction House in 2008. (fig. 114) The subject of Venus in her chariot lends itself well to porcelain design because the chariot serves as a subject-appropriate base for the figures without necessitating the modeler add an artificial support like a tree. The porcelain wheels have the ability to rotate on the axle adding a level of verisimilitude that enhances the fantasy of the object.

Meissen created two versions of this subject. KPM has modeled their example on a version of the *Venus and Chariot* group in the collection of the Harvard Art Museums. (fig. 115) Created in the twentieth century, but based on an eighteenth century original, Meissen's *Venus* is extremely similar to the KPM version in the Strain Collection. However, minor details mark the differences between the objects. This Meissen *Venus* wears a white drape with painted gold stars, a design scheme that occurs frequently in Meissen figures of the late nineteenth century. Within the Strain Collection, this scheme can be seen in the figures in *Europa and the Bull* and the large figure group featuring two women and a putto with colorful wings. The gesture employed by Cupid is another KPM variation on the Meissen model. Kändler modeled another more elaborate example of the subject that features pairs of both swans and doves harnessed to Venus's chariot; a late nineteenth century example of Kändler's model was sold at Sotheby's in 2008. (fig. 116) Kändler's *Venus* wears more elaborate jewelry and drapery than the smaller model. The animated forms of the birds reflect Kändler's expertise in modeling animals.

Few examples of Venus in her chariot are found in Rococo Art. Reasons for this may be the popularity of Venus in a toilet setting over other depictions of the goddess. I also hypothesize that male patrons may not have been comfortable with goddesses in the guise of a women of power. Athena, a goddess represented as a very powerful entity in Classical literature, is also a rarity in Rococo art. Athena, the goddess of wisdom and fair combat, is typically shown in the full armor of a warrior and was known to be a virgin. This description of Athena does not lend itself to the sexuality inherent in Rococo representations of mythological women. An ancient silver coin, dated to 82 BCE, in the collection of the British Museum shows Venus in control of her horse drawn chariot. (fig. 117) Apuleius provided a lengthy description of Venus's golden chariot pulled by doves in *The Golden Ass* and Ovid mentions her chariot twice in *Metamorphoses*.²⁶² The trope of Venus driving her chariot, pulled by doves, appears in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. In each of these textual examples, the authors depict Venus as a woman of power who drives her own chariot. Early modern examples have a common element in which Venus is shown as a submissive feminine passenger in a chariot with no visible means of propulsion or with the mythological avian team, but she is not seen holding the reins of the team or controlling the birds in any fashion. A mid-seventeenth century drawing by Alessandro Algardi in the collection of the Getty Museum depicts Venus's chariot being drawn along the water by fish and muscular male attendants. A putto assists the goddess from losing her wind-blown drapery, while she holds a nursing Cupid at her breast. (fig. 118) A Rococo drawing by Jean-Honoré Fragonard shows Venus reclining in her chariot which is pulled by doves with flowing ribbons and pushed from behind by a pair of putti.

²⁶² Aaron J. Atsma, "Aphrodite: Dove-drawn Chariot of Aphrodite, *The Theoi Project* (2000-2017) <http://www.theoi.com/Olympios/AphroditeTreasures.html#Chariot>, accessed March 4, 2018.

Her acolytes perform the labor to propel the chariot across the clouds while Venus puts herself on display for the viewer. (fig. 119) As a contrast, Pietro da Cortona painted burlier, dark-haired Venus, who actively holds the reins of a classically decorated, golden chariot pulled by a pair of harnessed doves, which conforms to the ideals of Baroque painting. (fig. 120)

The skin tone of the Strain Venus is mottled and yellowed; this can be explained by the quality of the glazing materials, the age of the object, or any poor conservation environments in which the object was stored or displayed. We can determine that KPM's technique for emphasizing a female figure's breasts differed from Meissen's policy on the same issue because the nipples of this Venus figure are highlighted with flesh-tone paint whereas the breasts and skin of the figure in the analogous Meissen example are covered in an even, white glaze.

Captivation of Cupid/Cupid in Bondage (Amors Fesselung)

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Ca. 1860-70

13 in. w. x 13 in. h.

Temp. No. 72 (fig. 121)

The group comprises two female figures and a winged putto figure. The larger female figure represents Venus, the goddess of love, and her handmaiden, smaller in stature sits by her side. Venus's deity status is designated by her size; she is much larger than the handmaiden even though the women appear to be around the same age. The modeler follows the long-used artistic trope of making the most important figure in the composition the largest. Both women are dressed in classical drapery and hairstyles, but details of their dress and accessories reveal their identities. Venus is depicted in a rather

matronly style with her dress buttoned to cover both shoulders, her neckline is mid-way between the base of her neck and her chest with no décolletage present. She wears gold sandals and props one foot on a smaller stool which allows the viewer to see the lower portion of her dress. This pose adds to the reality of the scene of a mother holding a squirming child. The artists may have chosen to dress Venus in this manner in order to cast her as Cupid's disapproving mother rather than the seductive goddess of physical and spiritual love. From the back, we see that the dress does cover most of her body and the encompassing green drapery aids in hiding her physical shape. The folds of the dress and drapery allow the modeler to demonstrate their talent in realistically recreating fabric with porcelain clay. Viewing the group from the back also allows the viewer to see that Venus is seated on a Neo-classical stool decorated with gold details. Reflecting her subordinate status, the handmaiden is seated on a stone slab.

The handmaiden's clothing seems to reflect her status as a follower of Venus in that her drapery seductively falls from her shoulder exposing her breast. Marking the handmaiden as a follower of Venus helps the viewer to identify the goddess in her uncommon matronly dress. The doves being fed from a golden dish by the handmaiden are also attributes of the goddess. This may be the artist's way of casting the handmaiden as the subordinate figure as she is caring for her mistress's pets, a task that might be assigned to a servant. The drapery across the lap of the handmaiden features gold stars on a solid field of color which is a scheme common to Meissen figures of this era and can be seen on several objects in the Strain Collection. The purple cloak over her shoulder balances the green of Venus's drapery and color of the cloaks is echoed in the green leaves and purple flowers ornamenting the base.

The putto figure can be identified as Cupid by his colorful wings and discarded quiver of arrows. He seems to rail against his mother as she attempts to tie his wings with blue ribbon, which would inhibit his movement and possibly the mischief he might cause. He stretches one hand up to her face imploring her not to restrain him and kicks his feet in an effort to free himself from her grasp. The red and purple tones in his wings add an aesthetically pleasing contrast to the boy's pale skin. The playful nature of the interaction between mother and son adds an animated sense of narrative to the scene.

An important detail added to Meissen's style is exemplified in this object. During their Neo-classical period of the later eighteenth century, modelers transitioned from unobtrusive bases like the one seen in the Strain Collection's *Leda and the Swan* or bases decorated with generic Rocaille ornamentation as seen in the Strain Collection's *Europa and the Bull* to a more formalized base featuring ornamentation that echoed architectural designs from ancient Greek and Roman architecture. In the *Captivation of Cupid*, the modeler recalls the molding designs applied to ancient temples with double or single rings separated by pairs of mirrored palmettes. This is not a specific design found in ancient architecture, but rather a design that suits the molding techniques of porcelain modeling while aesthetically echoing ancient marble ornamentation.

This group is atypical within the Strain Collection because it is the only figure group of this scale. Possibly owing to its size, the makers' mark is painted on the top of the base on the back of the sculpture group. A similar grouping entitled *Amor in Nöten* (*Cupid in Distress*) was produced by Meissen in the same period. (fig. 122) The related group features the same two female figures, but Cupid is struggling against Venus' attempt to clip his wings with scissors and reaches for the handmaiden, hoping she will

come to his aid. These sculptures were copied from models created by Christian Gottfried Jüchtzer (1752-1812), who was employed by Meissen as an apprentice in 1769, becoming a master modeler in 1781.²⁶³ Jüchtzer was known primarily for sculptures of classical figures produced in biscuit porcelain, exemplified by his sculpture of *The Three Graces* (1785) in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. (see fig. 88) A glazed and painted version of *The Three Graces* was sold at Christie's in 2016, which demonstrates the company's willingness to produce variations from the same models to meet the demands of the luxury market. (fig. 123)

Allegory of Music (Putti Musicians)
 Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
 Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth Century
 7-1/4 in. h.
 Temp. No. 34 (fig. 124)

Meissen modelers designed several sets of allegorical figure groups using putti in the late eighteenth century. Series included the Four Seasons, the Arts and Sciences, and a set representing the senses with female figures accompanied by putti. The Harvard Art Museums holds an example of Meissen's allegorical groups attributed to Johann Joachim Kändler and dated to before 1774. (fig. 125) In art and literature, an allegory uses symbolic figures to illustrate an abstract concept. Meissen's *Allegory of Music* from the Strain Collection depicts two putti figures acting as musicians to represent the concept of music which can only be understood when heard or performed. The blonde-haired putto directs his companion, an open book of music scores lying in his lap and a discarded

²⁶³ "Figure, Special sign Limited Masterpieces," *Meissen*, <http://www.meissen.com/en/products/figure-special-sign-limited-masterpieces-h-255-cm>, accessed March 4, 2019.

tambourine at his side. The dark-haired putto plays a golden pipe flute. Adding to the musical theme of the allegory, a lyre stands between the two figures. Each figure wears classical drapery and bare feet. The blue cloak of the blonde-haired putto flying out behind him and his upraised hand, clenching a scroll, adds motion to the composition. The scroll decoration on the base gives the group a Rococo aesthetic.

An eighteenth-century group similar to this object, sold at Bonham's in 2013, was paired with a second group representing an allegory of painting. (fig. 126) The companion piece shows two putti sitting under an easel surrounded by two busts and a discarded artist's palette. One putto seems to be giving the other figure a drawing lesson. The two groups display similarities that mark them as components of a set of allegorical figure groups. They share a similar pyramidal composition in that the two figures are set equidistant apart with a taller object in between. In the allegory of music, the modeler includes a lyre and in the allegory of painting, an easel is placed between the two figures. Both groups include two figures surrounded by the attributes of their allegorical focus. The musicians are accompanied by musical instruments and sheet music, while the painters possess a palette for paint, a sketch pad on which one figure draws, and two sculpted busts presumably used as the subjects of their work. The bases of each group are molded in a similar oval shape with decorative rococo swirls for added dimension. The two figures seated to the left in each object feature an upraised right hand creating a similar sloped shoulder pose. By contrast, their companions are displayed in an active pose as they participate in the creation of the object of their allegory. The painter putto draws on a sketch pad and the musician putto plays a flute.

Subtle, but important, differences in the details of the eighteenth-century groups as compared to the allegorical group in the Strain Collection illustrate Otto Walcha's point that molds were "beautified" for the nineteenth-century market.²⁶⁴ While the general composition of the original model and the nineteenth-century replica are the same, the faces of the figures from the latter group possess a more cherubic and sweet attractiveness reminiscent children seen on contemporary valentine cards seen in an object from the Museum of London. (fig. 127) The hairstyles of the blonde-haired putti also show a marked difference with the nineteenth-century figure displaying much softer locks than the severe, brushed-back hairstyle of the eighteenth-century figure. The painter of the nineteenth-century group also added text to the castoff scroll under the leg of the blonde putto and a third line of music to the open book in his lap.

These figure groups would have been appropriate decorations for the music room of aristocratic and haute bourgeois homes. At the haute bourgeois or aristocratic level, music rooms were used as reception spaces for guests, so their decoration could serve as an emblem of the home owner's social status. Performances could be given by musically talented members of the family or by paid professional musicians hired for the event.²⁶⁵ One such performance was recorded by painter, Michel-Barthélémy Ollivier, in 1766. (fig. 128) The painting, commissioned by Prince de Conti, shows a young Mozart playing the harpsicord in the Salon des Quatre-Glaces at the Palais du Temple. Several guests have gathered for a late afternoon tea and stand or are seated around tables laid with porcelain service pieces. An image of the music room of the Hôtel de Beauharnais,

²⁶⁴ Otto Walcha, *Meissen Porcelain* (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1981) 194.

²⁶⁵ Deborah Howard, "Introduction: Music-making in Domestic Space," in *The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy: Sound, Space, and Object*, Proceedings of the British Academy, no. 176 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 1-2.

originally designed in 1713 by Germain Boffrand and restored in 1901, shows urns and figurines decorating the mantle and tabletops. (fig. 129) Porcelain on display, like a music room, evidenced the social status of the residents to their guests.

IV. Single figures

Die Kugelspielerin (The Ball Player)

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, after Walter Schott (German, 1861-1938)

After 1897²⁶⁶

14 in. h.

Temp. No. 271 (fig. 130)

This large-scale porcelain figure is based on a public bronze sculpture installed in the Graf-Adolf-Platz, a park near a train station, in Düsseldorf, Germany. The bronze original was created by Walter Schott, an academic sculptor active in the court of Wilhelm II, in the 1890s.²⁶⁷ The figure of a young female athlete does not hold an obvious connection to the location of the original bronze sculpture. It is likely that the figure suited the classicist taste of contemporary German viewers. Archaeological discoveries of the late nineteenth century reanimated interest in Greek antiquity in Germany. Teams of archaeologists led excavations at Olympia in 1875, Mycenae in 1876, and the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi in the 1890s.²⁶⁸ Archaeological excavations of the site of the ancient Olympic Games by the Imperial German Archaeological

²⁶⁶ “Walter Schott, German, 1861-1938, *Die Kugelspielerin* (Woman Playing with a Ball),” *Sotheby’s* (2003), <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2003/european-sculpture-and-works-of-art-900-1900-103232/lot.101.html>, accessed March 4, 2018.

²⁶⁷ Sotheby’s (2003).

²⁶⁸ Panos Valavanēs, *Great Moments in Greek Archaeology* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2007) 23-28.

Institute began in 1875 and the first modern Olympic Games were held in 1896, one year before the creation of Schott's sculpture of a female athlete in Classical dress.²⁶⁹

A female figure dressed in a Classical style gown leans over to roll the ball in her hand toward an unseen target. The drapery of her gown clings to her legs, outlining her thighs, and intimating an unfelt breeze that makes the fabric flow behind her as well. She crooks her arm behind her back to keep her dress from interfering with the action of her throwing arm. Leaves decorate the supporting structure near her feet and blend into the green of her dress. She stands with bent knees and bent at the waist. The only flesh tone paint is found on her face, feet and hands, which matches other examples of this figure and leads to the conclusion that the whiteness of the figure's skin was an intentional choice. The whiteness of the figure reminds the viewer of its composition from porcelain, a mixture of specific clays, and the medium's relationship to marble, a stone excavated from earth to be carved into smooth, white sculpture. The decorative base of the object is ringed with a circular wave design reminiscent of C-scroll and stylized wave designs found on both architectural moldings and vase paintings from Greek antiquity. An example of similar designs is found on a Hellenistic terracotta bowl in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (fig. 131) The original bronze sculpture also features this circular design on its base. This detail may indicate Schott's knowledge of the arts of antiquity.

Images and sculptures of athletes can also be found the arts of antiquity; however, most examples depict male figures such as on this object from the collection of the

²⁶⁹ Learning and Information Department, "The Olympic Games in Ancient Greece: Information for Teachers," The British Museum (2006)
https://www.britishmuseum.org/PDF/british_museum_olympic_games.pdf, accessed March 4, 2018.

Metropolitan Museum of Art. (fig. 132) Five male figures fill a red field on a black-figure amphora run in a footrace. An image of Athena on the obverse which marks the vase as related to the Panathenaic games, a festival honoring the patron goddess of the city of Athens. The festival included sporting events, music and poetic recitals, and a procession across the city.²⁷⁰ Female athletes did compete at festivals in other locations including Olympia.²⁷¹ Pausanias, ancient travel writer, described the dress and actions of female athletes in *Hellados Periegesis*.²⁷² The author describes the women's clothes as a short, one-shouldered chiton hanging almost to their knee and exposing breast. A mosaic found in the Villa Romana del Casale, a Roman villa dated to the fourth century CE contains an image of female athletes dubbed 'the Bikini Girls.'²⁷³ (Fig. 133) Excavations by Gino Vinicio Gentili in the 1950s uncovered a floor mosaic in a room named the Chamber of the Ten Maidens which shows female athletes dressed in two-piece 'bikini-style' apparel with a band of cloth covering their breasts and another band serving as very short pants in the style of modern undergarments. Hugh M. Lee of the University of Maryland interpreted the mosaic's imagery as a depiction of the female version of the pentathlon featuring javelin-throwing, footraces, and ball-playing. The sequence also illustrates the crowning of victors with wreaths of greenery.²⁷⁴ The figure reaching out to offer the

²⁷⁰ Gary Zabel, "Religious Life: Panathenaic Festival," *Brooklyn College Classics Department Home Page*, http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Courses/Morals%20and%20Law/M+L/Plato/rreligious.htm, accessed January 10, 2018.

²⁷¹ Colette Hemingway and Seán Hemingway, "Athletics in Ancient Greece," *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/athl/hd_athl.htm (October 2002), accessed January 10, 2018.

²⁷² Penn Museum, "The Women: Were the Ancient Olympics just for Men?" *The Real Story of the Ancient Olympic Games*, <http://www.penn.museum/sites/olympics/olympicsexism.shtml>, accessed March 4, 2018.

²⁷³ UNESCO, "Villa Romana del Casale," <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/832/#links>, accessed January 10, 2018.

²⁷⁴ Hugh M. Lee, "The Pentathlon and the Bikini Mosaic in Piazza Armerina," in *Eighty-Second General Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America*, *American Journal of Archaeology*, v. 85, n. 2 (April 1981) 203.

crown of greenery wears a short chiton like the garment described by Pausanias in the first century CE.

However, Schott and his Meissen collaborators have interpreted their female athlete through the lens of late nineteenth-century sensibility. Women's athletic wear of the period consisted of long skirts and high-collared shirts as seen in an image of a tennis player on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* from August 3, 1907. (fig. 134) The costume of Schott's athlete creates a fantasy of antiquity that can be reconciled with contemporary attitudes toward the female body.

As a contrast, Schott modelled another female figure for Meissen titled *Nude Flora* in 1897.²⁷⁵ At over fifteen inches tall, this figure is similar in size to the version of Schott's *The Ball Player* in the Strain Collection. As detailed above, *The Ball Player* is dressed in Classical costume interpreted through the lens of Edwardian social conventions. Contrastingly, this figure is fully nude and postured in a casual stance leaning on a generic support covered in white cloth and pink roses. Her blonde, wavy hair is worn pulled back from her face. With her eyes downcast, she grasps her breast in a very seductive manner suggesting that the intended viewer of this object is a male collector. This distinct difference between the provocative *Nude Flora* and the demure *Ball Player* is likely based on the intended audience as *The Ball Player* was commissioned for a public plaza and *Nude Flora* was likely meant for a private space. The nude woman, aware of her sexuality, likely represents the New Woman, an early expression of feminism by women in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century that was

²⁷⁵ Case Antiques. "Important Meissen female nude porcelain by Walter Schott," <https://caseantiques.com/item/important-meissen-female-nude-porcelain-by-walter-schott/> accessed January 10, 2018.

seen as a threat to social stability and accepted gender roles.²⁷⁶ *The Ball Player*, dressed in modest clothing, engages in a healthy physical activity thus promoting more socially appropriate behavior for women who might view this public display of art.

Girl with Fruit

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth Century
5-1/2 in. h.
Temp. No. 104 (fig. 135)

The small figure of a girl stands approximately five inches tall. The original model was included in the Gardener Children series of figures created during middle years of Johann Joachim Kändler's tenure as master modeler around 1750.²⁷⁷ Otto Walcha, Meissen historian, attributed the creation of the Gardener Children to Friedrich Elias Meyer around 1755 and noted the "expressive gestures...not found in many of the other child figures."²⁷⁸ Each child figure in the series is paired with a companion of the opposite sex.²⁷⁹ The Strain Collection figure of a girl with fruit in her apron features the blue-sword mark used from 1815 to 1924, so an exact dating is difficult to achieve. Walcha states that during the apogee of the Rococo style at Meissen, the "so-called dot period (1764-74)," the modelers and painters developed characteristics that defined an

²⁷⁶ For more on the New Woman, see Greg Buzwell, "Daughters of Decadence: The New Woman in the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle," British Library, online (May, 2017) <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/daughters-of-decadence-the-new-woman-in-the-victorian-fin-de-siecle>, accessed January 11, 2018, and Deborah Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology and Style* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

²⁷⁷ "Gardener Girl w. Flowers & Fruits," *Meissen*, <http://www.meissen.com/en/products/gardener-childr-girl-w-flowers-coloured-gold-h-15-cm-0>, accessed March 4, 2018.

²⁷⁸ Walcha, 484.

²⁷⁹ "Gardener Children," *Meissen*, <https://www.meissen.com/en/art-works-figurines/figure-collectibles/gardener-children>, accessed January 27, 2018.

object as Rococo including “a conventional and formulated sweetness of interpretation.”²⁸⁰

At the time of the development of the Gardener Children, the Meissen manufactory was under control of Frederick I of Prussia. According to Otto Walcha, pastoral and peasant themed objects grew in popularity after the horrors of the mid-eighteenth-century wars.²⁸¹ He wrote about the themes of objects created in the 1740s: “The craze for the simple life, the pastoral, the quaint, is noticeable in the small porcelain statuettes. Very popular were the craftsmen, the gardener, and the vintager [traditional peasants] statuettes...nymphs, fauns, satyrs, and Bacchantes were commissioned by customers who had spent half of their lives on the numerous battlefields of Europe...”²⁸² The revival of these quaint figures in the late nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century coincide with other wars that would have inflicted horrors upon the middle class collectors who are the traditional target audience for small Meissen products like the Gardener Children. As opposed to the large service sets and elaborate figure groups commissioned as royal gifts, the single figures ranging in size from three to six inches tall would have been the type of product sold at open fairs and in the official dealers’ shops in major cities.²⁸³

The Strains’ collecting activities seem to reach their peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The consumer/viewer of this period might equate this little fruit-gathering girl with the kitsch of a Hummel figurine. The selection of Meissen figurines, and other

²⁸⁰ Walcha, 484.

²⁸¹ Walcha, 131.

²⁸² Walcha, 131.

²⁸³ The first public forum for the sale of Meissen porcelain occurred at the Leipzig Trade Fair in 1710. Afterward, the manufactory employed traveling salesman to service places where wealthy consumers congregated. See Otto Walcha, *Meissen Porcelain* (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1981) 51.

objects that adhere to the Rococo style, over the more popular Hummel objects reveal the selectivity with which the Strains chose objects for their collection. Their selections indicate their interest was specifically in object with a specific stylistic aesthetic rather than a visual design of any particular regional associations. Their collecting budget did not allow the purchase of objects originally produced in the eighteenth century, but the practice of reproducing eighteenth-century models and creating new objects in an eighteenth-century style by Meissen and other manufactories allow them to fulfill their collecting mission within their limited access to the authentic objects.

Girl with Lamb

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Nineteenth Century (1818-1924)

4 in. h.

Temp. No. 101 (fig. 136)

This figure belongs to the group of Gardener Children developed by Michel Victor Acier in the 1770s.²⁸⁴ This series of figures relates to a theme employed by François Boucher and Étienne-Maurice Falconet in their work at Sèvres, as well as Boucher's work with the Gobelins and Beauvais tapestry manufacturers. Acier's series features children, in their later childhood years, dressed in eighteenth-century styles and engaged in activities related to the popular pastoral themes of fashionable art. Acier's Gardener Children may have been Meissen's answer to Sèvres' *Enfants de Boucher*, a series of figures based on the work of François Boucher.

²⁸⁴ "Meissen Model: G10x," *Meissen Collector*, http://www.meissencollector.com/garden_children_g/2gfigk10girl.htm, accessed March 4, 2018.

Boucher's work heavily influenced the work of decorative art manufacturers as he was one of the most celebrated and prolific artists of the Rococo style. Antoinette Faÿ-Hallé examined this relationship in the catalog raisonné dedicated to Boucher and published in 1986. She writes, "the relationship between the primary arts as the source of inspiration, and the minor arts that...often create fashion and sometimes direct the evolution of taste."²⁸⁵ The mass manufacturing of prints and porcelain figures created using Boucher's work as source material increased knowledge of his work among the rising bourgeois class who might not be able to commission directly from the master, but could afford to collect small porcelain figures or engravings.

An example of Boucher's images of children can be found in tapestries produced at Gobelins in the eighteenth century for the interiors of elite homes. The tapestries take children in pastoral settings as their subject.²⁸⁶ An example of the series is held in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (fig. 137) Measuring 28-3/4 by 21-1/4 inches, the scene features a frame of floral design around a pastoral scene of a girl feeding chickens. Based on its composition and dimensions, this tapestry was likely made for a chair back or fire screen. This tapestry, like many objects in Rococo interiors, would have been part of a coordinated set.²⁸⁷

Childhood, as a social construction, was reexamined in the eighteenth century. From antiquity to the eighteenth century, many philosophers considered children to be

²⁸⁵ Antoinette Faÿ-Hallé, *François Boucher 1703-1770* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986) 345.

²⁸⁶ *Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins* was the royal tapestry factory established in 1662.

²⁸⁷ See Mimi Hellman, "The Joy of Sets: The Uses of Seriality in the French Interior," in *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century: What Furniture can tell Us About the European and American Past*, ed. Dena Goldman and Kathryn Norberg (New York: Routledge, 2006) 129-53.

“imperfect adults.”²⁸⁸ Historian Colin Heywood notes that childhood is “to a considerable degree a function of adult expectations.”²⁸⁹ As adults were Meissen’s primary consumer base, it is reasonable to assume that the sentimentalized child figures were designed to elicit an emotional reaction in the adult viewer.

Children’s dress of the eighteenth century mimicked the dress of adults. This figure shows a girl wearing a dress with a stomacher and purple apron. The skirt of her dress is decorated with a painted floral design and her shoes feature delicate, tiny flower ornaments. She wears a cloth in her hair, which is styled into a bouffant with a purple hair band. Her dress recalls peasant styles seen in Meissen figures of young adults including the pastoral group in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. (fig. 138) The lamb she holds also resembles animals seen in pastoral figures designed by Kändler in the eighteenth century. An interesting detail of the decoration on this figure is the use of porcelain lace, a technique developed during Acier’s time with the manufactory. “The lace was easy to produce. Workers dipped real lace into liquid porcelain, then cut and applied it to the figure in the desired position. During the firing process, the real lace threads burned away, leaving a replica of the mesh in the porcelain.”²⁹⁰ The replicated lace adds to the delicacy of the object because the miniscule elements of the lace must be handled with extreme care. The lace also enhances the realism of the figures.

Boy in Tricorne Hat

²⁸⁸ Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2001) 2.

²⁸⁹ Heywood, 9.

²⁹⁰ “Dresden Figurines,” Collectors Weekly, <https://www.collectorsweekly.com/figurines/dresden>, accessed March 4, 2018.

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
 Nineteenth Century (1818-1924)
 4 in. h.
 Temp. No. 102 (fig. 139)

This figure belongs to the group of children subjects, the Gardener Children, developed by Michel Victor Acier in the 1770's. Based on comparison to other similar figures, the boy may have originally held a larger flute in his raised hand and a bunch of grapes in his lower hand. The boy's cravat, breeches, and overcoat are based on eighteenth-century styles of men's clothing but fitted to his child-size frame. The employment of breeches by the modeler places the boy's age at between seven and ten years old.²⁹¹ He is not a boy playing in adult clothes, but a properly clothed boy of middle to upper class. His sash is striped in red, white and blue, colors associated with both the French and American Revolutions. Presumably, this figure would have been available in other color schemes, as seen with duplicate examples of other figures, indicating that the Republican color scheme is likely not politically motivated on the part of the manufactory but rather a choice made to appeal to consumer tastes. He is wearing a black, stiff-brimmed hat called a tricorne. This style of hat was the most popular style for men in the eighteenth century and could be personalized to the wearer's taste and social station.²⁹²

The Gardener Children series denotes Meissen's response to images of children produced by François Boucher which were often used as the basis for decorative arts produced by French manufacturers. A figure group in the collection of the Dresden State

²⁹¹ Edith A. Standen, "Country Children: Some *Enfants de Boucher* in Gobelins Tapestry," *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, v. 29 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) 112.

²⁹² Colin McDowell, *Hats: Status, Style, and Glamour* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) 12.

Art Collections represents a direct link between the work of Boucher and Kändler. (fig. 140) The porcelain group features four children, identified as putti even though the figures lack the wings ascribed to the mythological characters, as an allegory of summer. Ulrich Pietsch identified a print by Claude Augustin Duflos after a painting by Boucher as the source material for Kändler's group.²⁹³ The print depicts putti, wings visible on the figures whose backs can be seen by the viewer, working in a field harvesting tall stalks of grain.²⁹⁴ Kändler's group includes a standing boy with black hair who carries a sheath of grain stalks over his shoulder in the same manner as the central figure in Duflos's print. The comparison of these two works of art show the influence of French tastes on the objects being produced by Meissen in the eighteenth century.

A more directly relevant object may be a figure of a boy by the Fulda Pottery and Porcelain Manufactory from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (fig. 141) Founded by the local monarch in 1741, Fulda operated until 1789 and was principally known for its tableware decorated with landscapes and black portrait silhouettes with floral borders.²⁹⁵ The Fulda figure wears a suit in the style of the eighteenth century including a long coat and breeches with a matching waistcoat. The details painted on the waistcoat and breeches resemble the dashed line pattern on the clothing of the Meissen figure. The purple scheme use on the breeches of the two figures appears identical. The artists' application of breeches to the two boys assists in identifying their age. Breeching,

²⁹³ Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden Online Collection, "Group: The Summer," <https://skd-online-collection.skd.museum/Details/Index/124929>, accessed January 23, 2018.

²⁹⁴ Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Summer," <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/394335>, accessed January 23, 2018.

²⁹⁵ Gordon Campbell, ed. "Fulda" in *The Grove Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts: Aalto to Kyoto Pottery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 402, <https://books.google.com/books?id=i3Od9bcGus0C&lpg=PA402&ots=wIrgYqMg2N&dq=Fulda%20Pottery&pg=PA402#v=onepage&q=Fulda%20Pottery&f=false>, accessed January 23, 2018.

a custom seen in Western civilization until the early twentieth century, represented the transition from a young boy wearing gowns or tunics to wearing the short pants of their adult counterparts. A boy's breeching typically occurred between ages two and eight years of age.²⁹⁶ The Victoria and Albert Museum collection contains a formal boy's suit in blue velveteen with a white waistcoat that dates to between 1880 and 1890 and is approximately contemporary with the Meissen figure from the Strain Collection. (fig. 142) However, the suit features much less ornament and pattern than the clothes of the porcelain figure. This difference suggests the porcelain artists may have embellished his clothing to communicate the identity of the figure.

The Strains displayed this figure as a companion to the *Girl with Lamb* likely because the figures are same height and both subjects are children in the later years of childhood, but not yet adolescents. Pairing these figures also follows Meissen's convention of creating the Gardener Children in loosely associated pairs.

Putto as Postman
 Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
 ca. 1890²⁹⁷
 6 in. h.
 Temp. No. 103 (fig. 143)

This object depicts a putto with grey and white wings holding out his arm to deliver a letter to the viewer. The figure carries a brown satchel with more letters sticking out from beneath its flap, indicating its contents. A forgotten letter has fallen to the

²⁹⁶ V&A Museum of the Child, "Boy's Dress," <http://www.vam.ac.uk/moc/collections/boys-dress/>, accessed January 27, 2018.

²⁹⁷ "A Meissen porcelain figure of a putto as a messenger," Lempertz Auction 1056 (2015), <https://www.lempertz.com/en/catalogues/lot/1056-2/1041-a-meissen-porcelain-figure-of-a-putto-as-a-messenger.html>, accessed March 4, 2018.

ground between his feet. He stands in a contrapposto pose with his weight on his front leg, his hips and torso are slightly askew and lean against a stump. This pose and the addition of the stump decoration give the figure added stability, which would supplement the small base and counterbalance the weight of the figure's wings and outstretched arm. The base on which the figure stands is painted to resemble grass and the stump is modeled and painted in a realistic manner, these details place the figure in a natural landscape. Auction records from Lempertz, a German auction house founded in 1845, accredits an identical putto figure to August Ringler and dates the model to ca. 1880. (fig. 144) Two examples from museum collections demonstrate the trope of putti, a generic mythological figure, masquerading as human characters. The Victoria and Albert Museum hold a biscuit porcelain figure of Cupid as a hunter with his dog and rifle, a game bag hanging from a strap across his chest. (fig. 145) A Meissen example, modeled by Kändler around 1750, uses a similar base structure as the Strain Collection putto to support a figure disguised as a lady with a powder box and puff. The putto's wings jut out from a purple cape tied around the neck and shoulders of the figure. The putto wears a matching lace-edged cap on its head; however, abiding by mythological tradition, the putto wears no other clothes. (fig. 146)

The Strain Collection putto postman may demonstrate Meissen's understanding of American and British markets and popular culture. Generic putti figures, which came to be called Cupid no matter their connection to the Roman god, developed as a highly visible part of the material culture of Valentine's Day in the mid-nineteenth century after commercial printers began selling mass-produced greeting cards, converting the religious holiday to a more secular, social celebration. Leigh Eric Schmidt details the first decades

of the commercialization of Valentine's Day in his article, "The Fashioning of a Modern Holiday: St. Valentine's Day, 1840-1870."²⁹⁸ He writes that, "...reconfiguration of St. Valentine's Day suggests the reshaping of popular ritual in terms of vast markets, private exchanges, and standardized commodities."²⁹⁹ Meissen seems to have produced a wide variety of small putti figures in the late nineteenth century. One possible explanation for this theme in the manufactory's output is the sentimentalizing of the Cupid figure in Victorian popular culture. By deemphasizing the connection to its origins in antique mythology, Cupid became a symbol of contemporary secular love rather than a pagan figure born of ancient religious practices. *Cupid Awake* and *Cupid Asleep*, mass-produced decorative prints, exemplify this shift and the marketing of art objects to the middle-class consumer. (fig. 147) The photographs created by Morris Burke Parkinson in 1897 and the copyright was sold to the Taber-Prang Art Company of Springfield, Massachusetts.³⁰⁰ Depicting a young child holding a bow and arrow, light surrounds her head and shoulders casting a glow around her cherubic face. Her frizzy, golden hair creates a crown of curls, adding to the softness of the image. The delicate image of a child speaks to the sentimentality found in Victorian popular art. The successful mass production and marketing of the *Cupid* photographs mirror the intentions of Meissen's retail intentions for the Cupid postman.

²⁹⁸ Leigh Eric Schmidt, "The Fashioning of a Modern Holiday: St. Valentine's Day, 1840-1870," *Winterthur Portfolio*, v. 28, n. 4 (Winter, 1993) 209-245. See also, Barry Shank, *A Token of My Affection: Greeting Cards and American Business Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) 16-64.

²⁹⁹ Schmidt, 209.

³⁰⁰ Mike Wilcox, "Unloved Antiques: Mass-produced Decorator Prints," *WorthPoint Corporation* (April 25, 2011), <https://www.worthpoint.com/articles/blog-entry/unloved-antiques-mass-produced-decorator-prints>, accessed March 4, 2019. See also Smithsonian American Art Museum Archives and Special Collections and Boston Public Library Special Collections, Louis Prang Company Collection.

*Woman in Ball Gown*Unknown German manufactory (Possibly Meissen)³⁰¹

Late Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century

15 in. h.

Temp. No. 60 (fig. 148)

Meissen's primary sales tactic at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century was capitalizing on their eighteenth-century artistic output and reputation as a manufacturer of luxury goods. Many small German porcelain manufactories copied Meissen's most famous aesthetic during the eighteenth century and for centuries after. This object demonstrates that manufactories also produced items based on more contemporary tastes. The young woman depicted is dressed in a style of gown that places the era of the figure in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The color scheme of the object matches the pastel palette with gilded accents common to Meissen's Rococo output. The woman wears a fancy-dress ensemble with details that mark it as a gown appropriate for an evening event. The light blue outer layer flows down her back from her shoulders and puddles near her feet. The edge of the layer lifts slightly to reveal a pink ruffle probably meant to represent her crinoline underskirt, even though a woman would take pains to make sure that her undergarments were not visible. The front of skirt is decorated with a floral pattern in a curtained style with the outer layer open to show the decorated panel underneath and the division between the two layers accentuated by pink, gold and blue trim. This curtained style dress was common in women's clothing throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The lack of a bustle, a stiff undergarment that extended the skirt at a perpendicular angle to

³⁰¹ Dr. Jason Combs identified this object as a Meissen piece in his 2009 appraisal. This object is not listed in Jack Drew's 1976 inventory. The mark on the bottom may be a Meissen crossed-swords mark, but further research is necessary to confirm.

the women's posterior, dates this style of dress to a short period from the late 1870s to the early 1880s when bustles fell out of favor only to be revived by the end of the decade.³⁰² The silhouette of the figure's dress resembles a dress made between 1878 and 1880 in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. (Fig. 149) A striking difference between the porcelain frock of the figure and extant examples of authentic garments is the lack of decoration on the back of the dress. This detail might lead to the conclusion that this object was not made during the years in which this style of dress was popular, but decades later by modelers who were unfamiliar with the true ornamentation of these garments. The lack of decorative elements on the rear of the skirt could also be a function of the porcelain manufactory's efficiency processes. The figure seems to have been designed with a frontal view, thus all the detail would have been applied only to the side which the modeler intended to be seen by the viewer. Excluding any significant decoration from the rear of the figure would decrease the production time and cost of the object, allowing the manufactory to produce more, less expensive figures which would appeal to a wider audience of consumers.

The hairstyle, featuring tight ringlets high on the head, is also common to the later nineteenth century. The gilded bodice of the dress reflects the shape of the corset, a stiff undergarment worn to shape a woman's waist. The blouse worn under the dress is white and beaded, showing the ability of the porcelain modeler to realistically reproduce delicate fabrics. The décolletage of the figure is emphasized by a flower and ribbon placed strategically. The figure attaches the clasp on her bracelet worn over long gloves, matching the gold bands on her opposite forearm.

³⁰² "History of Fashion, 1840-1900," *Victoria and Albert Museum*, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-fashion-1840-1900/>, accessed March 4, 2018.

The glazing on this figure has a matte finish that contrasts the shiny, reflective finish usually seen on Meissen wares. The lightly decorated base, with only a slim gold band, is also uncommon. However, the skin tone and demure facial expression of the figure does resemble the rosy complexion and visage of other Meissen figures. The Strains displayed this object on a marble-topped table next to their bed, between the bed and the door to the room. It was not listed in the 1976 inventory completed by Jack Drew, so it was likely purchased after this date.

The Good Housekeeper, or Leserins am Spinnrocken (Reader at the Spinning Wheel)

Meissen, After a model by J.J. Kändler

Mid- to Late- Nineteenth Century

7 in. h.

Temp. No. 29 (fig. 150)

A woman is sleeping in a chair, next to a table holding a small spinning wheel loaded with fiber to be turned into yarn. She is dressed in the clothing of a middle-class or upper-class woman, a colorful open robe dress over a hooped petticoat and elaborate laced bodice, rather than the simpler costume of a peasant. Aileen Ribeiro notes that the silhouette of the fashionable woman was “a tight torso and a large framed skirt, at least for full [formal] dress” throughout the majority of the eighteenth century, a description matching this female figure.³⁰³ Her dress features large ruffled cuffs, several layers of fabric decorated in multiple floral designs and a linen under-blouse which covers her from neck to chest. Her head is covered with a white kerchief tied under her chin and decorated with blue trim. The covered chest and head likely provides a clue to the

³⁰³ Aileen Ribeiro, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England, 1730-1790, and Its Relation to Fancy Dress Portraiture* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984) 133.

woman's advanced age. The Louis XV-style chair and table have Rococo scroll decorations and cabriole legs which also reflect on the higher social status of the woman. The figure holds a book in her hand and, in some models, this book is marked with a painted cross indicating that it is a Bible. The grouping sets on a base decorated with Rococo scrolls and painted in mottled greens and brown, probably meant to resemble stone.

This object closely resembles the composition of a print by Louis Surugue (French, ca. 1686-1762) after a 1746 painting by Jean Baptiste Siméon Chardin (French, 1699-1779). *Les Amusements De La Vie Privé* shows a woman reclining in a chair next to a table holding a spinning wheel. (fig. 151) The chair and table are extremely similar to the furnishings of the Meissen figure. Both the table and chair feature the curved, cabriole legs of the Louis XV style popular in France in the mid-eighteenth century. The two women are dressed in a similar manner including the style of their dresses and the kerchief tied around their heads. Both women have a book in their lap and their slippered feet peeking from under their skirts. Their seated positions are also similar with their heads leaning to one side. Johann Joachim Kändler, Meissen master modeler, was known to use French prints as source material for his figure groups and other wares. It is possible that this Meissen figure is a derivation made in porcelain of the print.

Sewing and related needlecrafts were considered an appropriate activity for women of all social statuses in the eighteenth century. A well-known portrait of Madame de Pompadour, in her later years, shows her sitting at her embroidery frame. (fig. 152) A portrait of Marie Christina, duchess of Teschen and daughter of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, shows her using a small spinning wheel, a very similar model to the one seen

in this Meissen figure. (fig. 153) Until the 1820s, much of the manufacture of fabric, spinning and weaving, took place in the home and was under the purview of the women of the household.³⁰⁴ These images of aristocratic women engaging in domestic pursuits aligned with the “cult of domesticity [that] identified [a] woman’s highest calling as thoughtful wife and mother.”³⁰⁵ While the cult of domesticity is most closely associated with nineteenth-century definitions of gender roles, the eighteenth-century writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau contribute to its origins through the author’s emphasis on the family and domestic realm as the foundation of a stable society. The Meissen figure of a woman reading her Bible, seated next to her spinning wheel, aligns well with the social ideal of a pious and productive woman advanced by the cult of domesticity.

This figure would have held special personal significance for the Strains because Mrs. Strain was a seamstress, employed for many years by a small clothing store on Kearney’s main street. The base is cracked and has been professionally repaired, an uncommon feature in the Strain’s collection which might mean that the collectors prized this object enough to possibly purchase it with damage or have it repaired.

Sleeping Woman
 Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
 Nineteenth Century
 8-1/4 in. h.
 Temp. No. 33 (fig. 154)

³⁰⁴ Megan J. Elias, *Stir it Up: Home Economics in American Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) 4, <https://books.google.com/books?id=Y9dZ2M-TzqwC&lpg=PP1&pg=PA4#v=onepage&q&f=false>, accessed January 27, 2018.

³⁰⁵ Elias (2008) 4.

Michel-Victor Acier designed the original version of this figure around 1774.

Acier was a French sculptor imported to Meissen in 1765 to support the manufactory's capitalist intentions to increase its success in the Parisian market.³⁰⁶ Acier became known for designing more intimate domestic scenes exemplified by *The Happy Parents*, a biscuit porcelain figure modelled in 1775. (fig. 155) Acier was trained at the Académie Royale in Paris when Étienne-Maurice Falconet was employed as an instructor.³⁰⁷ In its subject matter and decoration, Acier's style shows the influence of Rococo art's emphasis on the domestic more directly than J.J. Kändler's more realistic style.

A painting that might have inspired the subject of a sleeping woman was housed in the Dresden state collections at the time of Acier's tenure at Meissen.³⁰⁸ Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus*, painted in 1508-1510, features a dark-haired female nude in an Italian landscape that has been interpreted as the goddess of love and a symbol of marital fidelity and fertility. (fig. 156) In his survey of the sleeping woman in art, Udo Kultermann notes that, "It is significant that sexual desire is alien to the painting; rather, a religious attitude in the sleeping figure is to be considered."³⁰⁹ However, Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, which draws heavily on the precedent of Giorgione's canvas, is seen as an "erotic allegory" in its "representation of a sensual and delectable woman staring at the viewer who could not

³⁰⁶ Walcha, 154. After the deaths of Augustus the Strong and Count von Brühl in 1763, more enlightened leaders were able to initiate industrial reforms inspired by the western economies of Britain and France. At Meissen, these reforms meant business practices shifted from producing objects suited to aristocratic tastes, such as massive dinner services, to production of smaller objects that would appeal to a broad bourgeois customer base. Representatives from Meissen were sent out to the other porcelain centers of Europe, including Paris, to gather information about current styles and pricing as well as scout new talent like Acier. See Walcha, 149-155.

³⁰⁷ Lucinde Braun, "Michel-Victor Acier," http://wiki.tchaikovsky-research.net/wiki/Michel_Victor_Acier, accessed March 22, 2015. And "Étienne-Maurice Falconet (1716–1791)", Rijksmuseum. <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/explore-the-collection/overview/tienne-maurice-falconet>, accessed March 23, 2015.

³⁰⁸ *Guide to the Royal Collections of Dresden*, trans. C.S. Fox (Dresden, Albanus Printing Works, 1897) 11. Google Play Books, accessed March 26, 2015.

³⁰⁹ Udo Kultermann, "Woman Asleep and the Artist," *Artibus et Historiae*, v. 11, n. 22 (1990) 10.

ignore her beauty.”³¹⁰ (fig. 157) The difference between these two female nudes is their connection to the viewer; Giorgione’s Venus, with her closed eyes, exists in an internal world of solitude whereas Titian’s figure entices and teases the viewer with her expression. However, the two figures share a gesture that can be read as sexual by the viewer. Their curved fingers hover over their genitals in an undeniable allusion to their sexuality. Meissen’s sleeping woman shares the curved-finger gesture with the Renaissance examples, but Acier follows Meissen’s standard of downplaying the figure’s sexuality by turning her hand around with the palm facing up. The educated viewer would have recognized the combination of the reclining woman and the curved-finger gesture and thus the allusion to sexuality.

In Rococo art, the trope of the sleeping woman is also found in a painting by François Boucher. (fig. 158) The vulnerability of a woman at rest viewed by the male protagonist, and by extension male artist/viewer, is a central theme of Boucher’s work and can also be said of the Meissen sleeping woman. The three-dimensionality of the porcelain figure enhances the exposure of the woman to the male gaze. The fragility of the porcelain medium and the preciousness of the size of the figure in relation to the size of the viewer enhances the vulnerability of the sleeping woman.

A letter with a red wax seal can be seen tucked into the neckline of the woman’s dress. This detail connects the woman to the epistolary tradition of the eighteenth century. Letters, open and discarded, can be seen in several Rococo images of women including Boucher’s *Portrait of Madame de Pompadour* in which a letter, quill and red stick of wax sealant appear on her writing table. (fig. 156) Exchanging letters was a

³¹⁰ Uffizi Gallery, “Venus of Urbino”, <http://www.uffizi.org/artworks/venus-of-urbino-by-titian/>, accessed March 22, 2015.

primary method of communication for women in early modern Europe. In the case of Madame de Pompadour, the practice allowed her to participate in affairs of state in a socially acceptable manner. Fragonard depicts another element of letter writing, one related to Acier's sleeping porcelain woman, in his painting *The Love Letter*. (fig. 157) In the act of letter writing, a woman is an active agent, but as the vulnerable object of the male gaze, she is a passive receiver of attention. Fragonard's woman holds a letter received in a bouquet of flowers, but she sits at a writing desk with blank paper. These details give her both agency and passivity in the act of communication. The look shared by Fragonard's subject and the viewer manifests the viewer's position as interrupting voyeur and indicates the letter as a private communication to which the viewer is not privy. The combination of the letter, tucked into a private and hidden place, and her vulnerable state of unconsciousness cast the Meissen figure as a passive subject, rather than active participant in the shared act of private communication, leaving the viewer to imagine that she is dreaming of the presumably male letter-writer.

The lady's stocking-covered feet and tossed-aside shoes characterize this scene as a private moment upon which the viewer is intruding. Similarly, the lady in Fragonard's painting is seated in a space enclosed by drapery with only her dog as a silent companion. Peter H. Pawlowicz notes that, "Fragonard's interior is a metaphor for the essential interiority of all writing. Whether written or read, the printed page designates a private experience..."³¹¹ This reading of the sleeping woman as an object of male desire contradicts the characterization of porcelain as an object of female desire. Rather, Acier has employed the plastic material to create a three-dimensional embodiment of a trope

³¹¹ Peter H. Pawlowicz, "Fragonard and the Image of Women," in *Eighteenth-Century Women and the Arts*, eds. F. Keener and S. Lorsch (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988) 196.

found in French Rococo painting in order to capitalize on the separate popularity of porcelain as a material and the male-preferred female subject. However, as no extant eighteenth-century examples of this figure can be readily located, the calculated commercial risk taken with this amalgamated object may not have paid off for the manufactory.

V. Checklist of Strain Collection

Pair of urns

Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin (KPM)

Date Unknown

Porcelain

9-1/2 in. h.

Temp. No. 1

Mirror frame

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Date Unknown

Beveled mirror, porcelain, velvet, wood

18 in. w. x 27 in. h.

Temp. No. 3

Side table with porcelain inserts

In the style of Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Late Nineteenth Century

Wood, ormolu, painted porcelain

19 in. l. x 26 in. w. x 31 in. h.

Temp. No. 4

Landscape with Lily Pond

Henri Biva (French, 1848-1929)

Ca. 1900-1910

Oil on canvas

31 in. w. x 28 in. h.

Temp. No. 8

Compote

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1900-1920

Favrile glass
 7 in. dia. x 6-1/2 in. h.
 Temp. No. 11

Leda and the Swan
 Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
 Late Nineteenth Century
 Porcelain
 7 in. h.
 Temp. No. 26

Bacchante and Infant Bacchus
 Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin (KPM)
 Ca. 1910
 Porcelain
 8 in. h.
 Temp. No. 27

Europa and the Bull
 Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
 Circa 1880
 Porcelain
 9 in. h.
 Temp. No. 28

The Good Housekeeper, or Leserins am Spinnrocken (Reader at the Spinning Wheel)
 Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, After a model by J.J. Kändler
 Mid- to Late- Nineteenth Century
 Porcelain
 7 in. h.
 Temp. No. 29

Ceres with Three Cupids (Ceres mit drei Amoretten)
 Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
 Late Nineteenth Century
 Porcelain
 7-1/2 in. h.
 Temp. No. 30

Pair of figural pitchers
 Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
 Late Nineteenth Century or Early Twentieth Century
 Porcelain
 7-3/4 in. h.
 Temp. No. 31

Pair of sweetmeat dishes

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Ca. 1870-1900

Porcelain

12 in. w. x 7 in. h.

Temp. No. 32

Sleeping Woman

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Nineteenth Century

Porcelain

8-1/4 in. h.

Temp. No. 33

Allegory of Music (Putti Musicians)

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth Century

Porcelain

7-1/4 in. h.

Temp. No. 34

Venus in Chariot

Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin (KPM)

Ca. 1906-7

Porcelain

Approx. 7 in. h.

Temp. No. 35

Lampshade Vase

Frederick Carder (British, 1863-1963)

Steuben Glass, Inc.

Ca. 1920-1930

Aurene glass

5-3/4 in. h.

Temp. No. 36

Plate

Imperial Vienna Porcelain Factory

Early Nineteenth Century

Porcelain

9-3/4 in. d.

Temp. No. 37

Candlestick

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1902-1932

Favrile glass
14 in. h.
Temp. No. 39

Box with cover
Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
Date unknown
Porcelain
4-3/4 in. w.
Temp. No. 43

Untitled (fête galante scene)
Frederick Ballard Williams (American, 1871-1956)
Ca. 1900-1910
Oil on canvas
33 in. h. x 25 in. w.
Temp. No. 47

Commode with porcelain plaques and marble top
In the style of Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
Late Nineteenth Century
Wood, porcelain, ormolu
58 in. h. x 29 in. w. x 17 in. d.
Temp. No. 49

Wall Sconce
Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
Late Nineteenth Century, After 1934?
Porcelain
23 1/2 in.
Temp. No. 54

Vase with Pastoral Scene
Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
Late Nineteenth Century
Porcelain, ormolu
20 in. h.
Temp. No. 55

Bowl
Tiffany Studios
Ca. 1896-1933
Favrile glass
11-3/4 in. dia.
Temp. No. 57

Dresser jar

Cristallerie d'Émile Gallé

Ca. 1894-1933

Cameo glass

6-1/4 in. dia.

Temp. No. 59

Woman in Ball Gown

Unknown German manufactory (Possibly Meissen)

Late Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century

Ceramic, possibly porcelain

15 in. h.

Temp. No. 60

Jeweled Clock

In the style of Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Date unknown

Porcelain, ormolu

11 in. h.

Temp. No. 69

Finger bowl

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1900-1930

Favrile Glass

5 in. dia.

Temp. No. 70

Cabinet with porcelain plaques and marble top

In the style of Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Date unknown

Wood, porcelain, marble

29 in. w. x 16-1/2 in. d.

Temp. No. 71

Captivation of Cupid/Amors Fesselung (Cupid in Bondage)

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Ca. 1860-70

Porcelain

13 in. w. x 13 in. h.

Temp. No. 72

Perfume bottle

In the style of Limoges

Date Unknown

Enameled metal, glass

3-14 in. l.
Temp. No. 75

Perfume bottle with smelling salt container

In the style of Limoges
Date Unknown
Enameled metal, glass
4 in. l.
Temp. No. 76

Patch Box

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
Possibly Ca. 1750
Porcelain, metal
3-1/2 x 2-3/4 in.
Temp. No. 79

Vase

Frederick Carder (British, 1863-1963)
Steuben Glass, Inc.
Ca. 1920-1930
Aurene glass
9 in. h.
Temp. No. 83

Vase with landscape

Cristallerie d'Émile Gallé
Ca. 1894-1933
Cameo glass
5 in. h.
Temp. No. 87

Plate with Beauty Directed by Prudence

After Angelica Kauffman (Swiss, 1741-1807)
Imperial Vienna Porcelain Factory
Early Nineteenth Century
9-1/2 in. dia.
Temp. No. 88

Vase clock

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
c. 1834-1845
Porcelain, ormolu
23 in. h.
Temp. No. 89

Box with cover

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Nineteenth Century

Porcelain

5 in. w. x 5 in. h.

Temp. No. 92

Vase

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1900-1930

Favrile glass

11-1/2 in. h.

Temp. No. 98

Girl with Lamb

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Nineteenth Century (1818-1924)

Porcelain

4 in. h.

Temp. No. 101

Boy in Tricorne Hat

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Nineteenth Century (1818-1924)

Porcelain

4 in. h.

Temp. No. 102

Putto as Postman

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Late Nineteenth Century, ca. 1890-1900

Porcelain

6 in. h.

Temp. No. 103

Girl with Fruit

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth Century

Porcelain

5-1/2 in. h.

Temp. No. 104

Tray with Meleager presenting the Caledonian Boar's Head to Atalanta

In the style of Imperial Vienna Porcelain Factory

Nineteenth Century

Porcelain

6 in. h. x 9-1/2 in. w.

Temp. No. 108

Vase

In the style of Imperial Vienna Porcelain Factory

Nineteenth Century

Porcelain, ormolu

16 in. h.

Temp. No. 109

Swan

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Mid-Nineteenth Century

Porcelain

4-1/2 in. h.

Pair of Vases

Steuben Glass, Inc.

Twentieth Century

Aurene glass

12 in. h.

Temp. No. 116

"Ten-Light Lily" Table Lamp

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1910

Favrile glass, patinated bronze

21-1/2 in. h.

Temp. No. 128

"Atlas & the World" Clock

In the style of Limoges

Nineteenth or Twentieth Century

Enamel, ormolu

11 in. h.

Temp. No. 129

Secretary Desk with porcelain plaques

In the style of Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Late Nineteenth Century

Wood, ormolu, porcelain

66 in. h. x 34 in. w.

Temp. No. 131

Miniature Ewer

In the style of Limoges
 Nineteenth or Twentieth Century
 Enamel, bronze
 8 in. h.
 Temp. No. 133

Miniature Urn

In the style of Limoges
 Nineteenth or Twentieth Century
 Enamel, silver
 2 in. h. x 3-1/4 in. w.
 Temp. No. 134

Miniature Sofa

In the style of Limoges
 Nineteenth or Twentieth Century
 Enamel, metal
 3 in. h. x 3 in. w.
 Temp. No. 136

Miniature Sleigh

In the style of Limoges
 Nineteenth or Twentieth Century
 Enamel, metal
 2 in. h. x 2 in. w.
 Temp. No. 137

Miniature picture in frame

In the style of Limoges
 Nineteenth or Twentieth Century
 Enamel, metal, mother-of-pearl
 3-3/4 in. h. x 4 in. w.
 Temp. No. 138

Miniature piano

In the style of Limoges
 Nineteenth or Twentieth Century
 Enamel, gilt bronze
 Temp. No. 141

Miniature sedan chair

In the style of Limoges
 Nineteenth Century
 Enamel, metal
 1-3/4 in. h.
 Temp. No. 142

Pair of Miniature Chariots

In the style of Limoges
 Nineteenth or Twentieth Century
 Enamel, silver
 4-1/2 in. l.
 Temp. No. 143

Miniature Urn with Ram's Head Handles

In the style of Limoges
 Nineteenth or Twentieth Century
 Enamel, metal
 3-1/4 in. h.
 Temp. No. 144

Miniature Urn on Plateau

In the style of Limoges
 Nineteenth or Twentieth Century
 Enamel, metal
 6 in. h. x 6-1/2 in. w.
 Temp. No. 145

Bowl

Tiffany Studios
 Ca. 1900-1930
 Favrite Glass
 6-1/4 in. dia.
 Temp. No. 154

Pair of openwork urns with covers

In the style of Imperial Vienna Porcelain Manufactory
 Date unknown
 Porcelain
 5 in. h.
 Temp. No. 165

Inkstand

In the style of Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory
 Date Unknown
 Porcelain, ormolu
 10 in. dia.
 Temp. No. 168

Tray on Stand

Imperial Vienna Porcelain Manufactory

Early Nineteenth Century

Porcelain, ormolu

12 in. h. x 18 in. w.

Temp. No. 171

Pair of urns with covers

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Nineteenth Century

Porcelain, ormolu

12 in. h.

Temp. No. 172

Box with cover

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Date unknown

Porcelain

4 in. l. x 3-1/4 in. w.

Temp. No. 176

Oval Box with cover

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Date unknown

Porcelain, gold

Temp. No. 178

Vase with Leaf decoration

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1900-1930

Favrile Glass

7 in. h.

Temp. No. 180

Pair of Urns with Cover

In the Style of Imperial Vienna Porcelain Manufactory

Date Unknown

Porcelain

9 in. h.

Temp. No. 181

Vase

In the style of Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Date Unknown

Porcelain, ormolu

36 in. h.

Temp. No. 182

Miniature potpourri vase

In the Style of Imperial Vienna Porcelain Manufactory

Date Unknown

Porcelain

4 in. h.

Temp. No. 186

Vase

Cristallerie d'Émile Gallé

Ca. 1894-1933

Cameo glass

14 in. h.

Temp. No. 188

Bud Vase

Cristallerie d'Émile Gallé

Ca. 1894-1933

Cameo glass

7 in. h.

Temp. No. 189

Vase with Leaf decoration

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1900-1930

Favrile Glass

12 in. h.

Temp. No. 191

Compote dish

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1896-1930

Favrile Glass

5 in. h.

Temp. No. 199

Platter with the Portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte

In the style of Imperial Vienna Porcelain Manufactory

Date Unknown

Porcelain

14 in. dia.

Temp. No. 201

Trumpet Vase

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1896-1930

Favrile Glass

12 in. h.
Temp. No. 202

Untitled Fête Galante (Six Ladies by a Pond)

“J. Tonignuk”
Date Unknown
Oil on canvas
39-1/2 in h. x 34-1/2 in. w.
Temp. No. 208

Sideboard

Unknown maker
Nineteenth Century
Wood, ormolu, marble
47-1/2 in w. x 17 in. d.
Temp. No. 213

Openwork Basket

In the style of Königlische Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin (KPM)
Date Unknown
Porcelain
10-1/2 in. l. x 9-1/2 in w.
Temp. No. 219

Pair of sweetmeat dishes

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
Ca. 1870-1900
Porcelain
12 in. w. x 7 in. h.
Temp. No. 220

Cup and Saucer with Swan motif

Königlische Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin (KPM)
Twentieth Century
Porcelain
4.5 in. h x 6.5 in. dia.
Temp. No. 221

Cup and Saucer with Cameo Portrait

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory
Nineteenth Century
Porcelain
Temp. No. 222

Platter with mythological scene

Imperial Vienna Porcelain Manufactory

Early Nineteenth Century

Porcelain

13 in. w. x 17 in. l.

Temp. No. 223

Bowl

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1896-1930

Favrile Glass

10-1/2 in. dia.

Temp. No. 225

Cup and Saucer with Portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte

Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin (KPM)

Early Nineteenth Century

Porcelain

Temp. No. 229

Cup and Saucer with Cameo Portrait

Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin (KPM)

Early Nineteenth Century

Porcelain

Temp. No. 230

Vase

Frederick Carder (British, 1863-1963)

Steuben Glass, Inc.

Ca. 1920-1930

Aurene glass

10-1/2 in. h.

Temp. No. 232

Platter with the Portrait of Marie de Medici

In the style of Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Date Unknown

Porcelain

18 in. dia.

Temp. No. 238

Miniature tea set

In the style of Imperial Vienna Porcelain Manufactory

Date unknown

Porcelain

Temp. No. 240

Vase with Irises

Cristallerie d'Émile Gallé

Ca. 1894-1933

Cameo glass

18 in. h.

Temp. No. 241

A Cottage along a River

Louis Aston Knight (American, 1873-1948)

Early Twentieth Century

Oil on canvas

32 in. w. x 25 in. h.

Temp. No. 247

Tray with Neoclassical Scene

In the style of Imperial Vienna Porcelain Manufactory

Date unknown

Porcelain

Temp. No. 249

Three-tier Dessert Stand

Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory

Mid-Nineteenth Century

Porcelain, ormolu

11 in. dia.

Temp. No. 259

Three-handled Cup

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1896-1930

Favrile Glass

5 in. h.

Temp. No. 266

Pair of footed dishes

Tiffany Studios

Ca. 1896-1930

Favrile Glass

4 in. h. x 4-1/4 in. dia.

Temp. No. 267

Vase

Frederick Carder (British, 1863-1963)

Steuben Glass, Inc.

Ca. 1920-1930

Aurene glass

5 in. h.

Temp. No. 362

Die Kugelspielerin (The Ball Player)

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, after Walter Schott (German, 1861-1938)

After 1897

Porcelain

14 in. h.

Temp. No. 271

Schneeballen (Snowball) Vase with Cover

Meissen Porcelain Manufactory

Late Nineteenth Century

Porcelain

15 in. w., 27 in. h.

Temp. No. 365

Fig. 1: Cope Stadium



Fig. 2: Dresden Cathedral



Fig. 3: View of the Industrial School, Kearney, Nebraska



Fig. 4: Postcard, Strain Estate



Fig. 5: Jack Drew standing among some antiques



Fig. 6: Virgil Yager House, Kearney, Nebraska

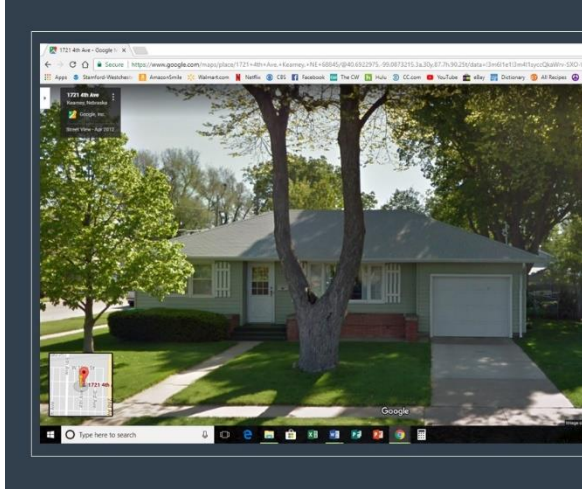


Fig. 7: Lowe Building, Kearney, Nebraska



Fig. 8: Kearney Woman's Club



Fig. 9 P.T. Lambert House, ca. 1911



Fig. 10 Ranch House, Omaha



Fig. 11 Harvey P. Sutton House



Fig. 12 Strain House



Fig. 13 Garden House of Strain House



Fig. 14 North Wall of Strain Living Room



Fig. 15 Wall of Strain Study



Fig. 16 Grouping on top of secretary desk in Strain Living Room

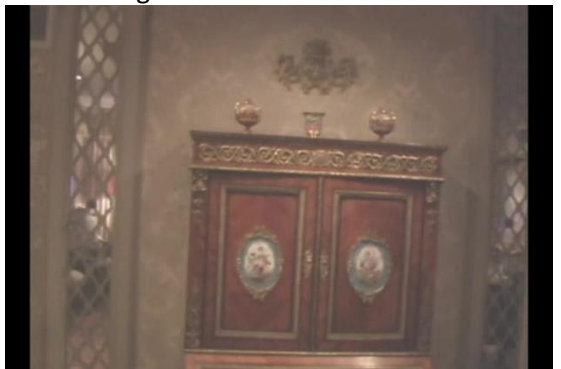


Fig. 17 Entry Hall Fireplace, G.W. Frank Museum



Fig. 18 Ceiling of Strain House Dining Room



Fig. 19 Candelabra, Hillwood Estate

Fig. 20 *The Heroic Dedication of Mademoiselle de Sombreuil*Fig. 21 *Mademoiselle Fleury*

Fig. 22 Salon de Musique, Bibliothèque de L'arsenal



Fig. 23 Boiserie Regence and Border Wallpaper

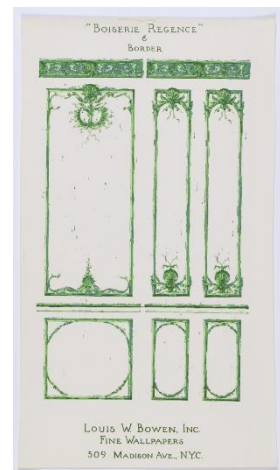


Fig. 24 Clock, Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory



Fig. 25 Clock, Duplessis and Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory



Fig. 26 Curio Cabinet



Fig. 27 Belgian Chest



Fig. 28 Six-drawer Chest



Fig. 29 Panoramic Photograph of Kearney, Nebraska, ca. 1909



Fig. 30 Map of Nebraska 1874

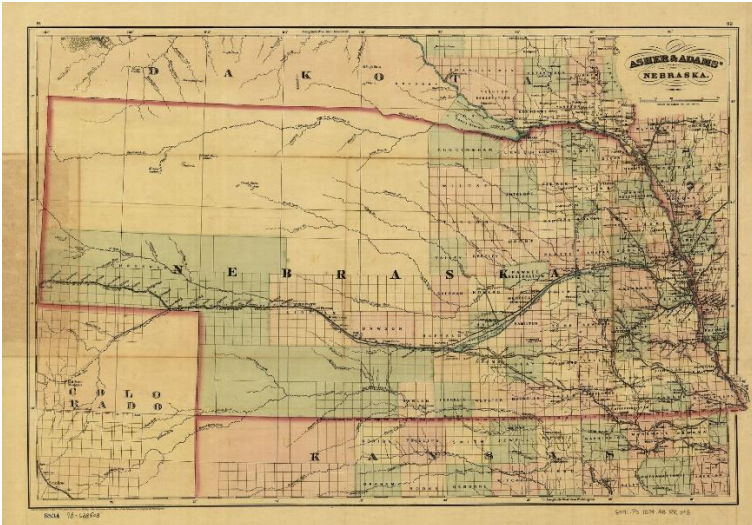


Fig. 32 Dale Nichols, *Morning Chores*, 1972



Fig. 33 Cup-and-Saucer Collection in Cabinet



Fig. 34 Jug with Portuguese Coat-of-Arms



Fig. 35 Jar, Yuan Dynasty



Fig. 36 Storage Jar (Albarelo)



Fig. 37 Chinese Figure with Bird



Fig. 38 Figure of a Boy



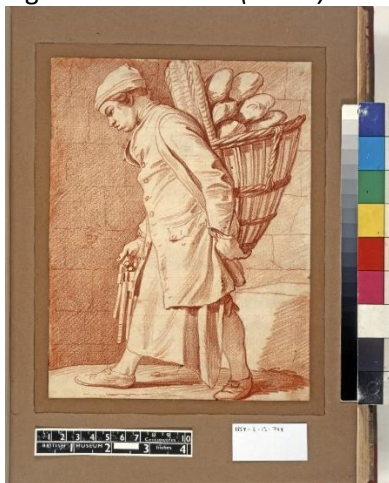
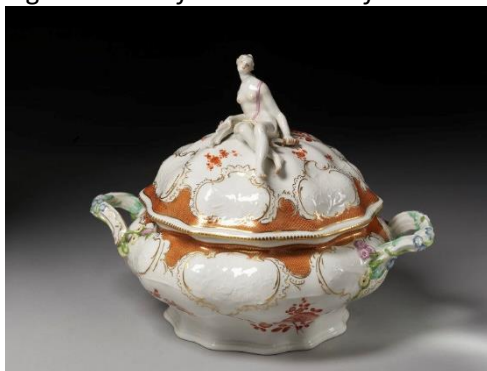
Fig. 39 *European Man*Fig. 40 *St. John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness*Fig. 41 *Figural Pitchers*Fig. 42 *Photograph of Meissen figure*Fig. 43 *Cris de Paris (Baker)*Fig. 44 *Tureen from Möllendorf Service*

Fig. 45 Patch Box



Fig. 46 Patch Box



Fig. 47 Abbey, A Trifle from Bath



Fig. 48 Patch Box

Fig. 49 *Le Matin*, Petit after Boucher

Fig. 50 Miniature Tea Set



Fig. 52 *The Rape of Proserpina*Fig. 53 *A Bacchanalian Revel before a Term*Fig. 54 *Coffee Service*Fig. 55 *Platter*Fig. 56 *Augustus the Strong*Fig. 57 *Medallion*

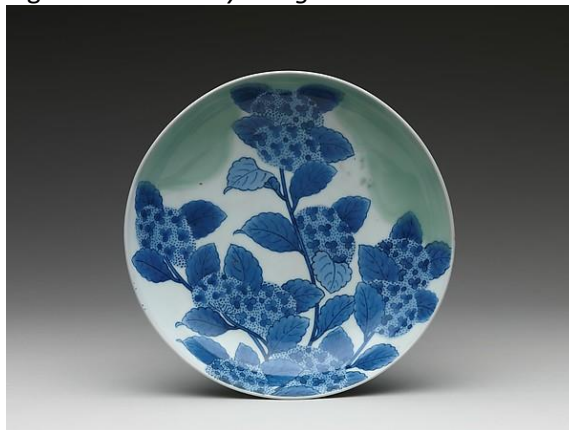
Fig. 58 *Portrait of Marie de' Medici*Fig. 59 *Scheeballen Vase*Fig. 60 *Vase with Viburnum Decoration*Fig. 61 *Dish with Hydrangeas*Fig. 62 *Flower Study*Fig. 63 *Magpie on Viburnum Branch*

Fig. 64 *Tea Service*Fig. 65 *Sweetmeat Dishes*Fig. 66 *Sweetmeat Dish*Fig. 67 *Sweetmeat Dish*

Fig. 68 *Sweetmeat Dish*Fig. 69 *Sweetmeat Dishes, gold and white*Fig. 70 *Vase with Pastoral Scene*Fig. 71 *Amphora*Fig. 72 *Detail of Handles*Fig. 73 *Vase with cover*

Fig. 74 Le petit jour



Fig. 75 Portrait of John Talbot



Fig. 76 The Grape Eaters



Fig. 77 Pastoral with a Couple near a Fountain



Fig. 78 Covered Vases



Fig. 79 Vase with Clock



Fig. 80 *Family Taking Breakfast*Fig. 81 *Wall Sconce*Fig. 82 *Teapot*Fig. 83 *The Festival of Love*Fig. 84 *Ceres with Three Cherubs*Fig. 85 *Mattei Ceres (reduced version)*

Fig. 86 *The Goddess Ceres Surrounded by Three Cupids in a Mountainous Landscape*



Fig. 87 *Ceres (Summer)*



Fig. 88 *Proserpina Adorning a Statue of Ceres*



Fig. 89 *The Three Graces*



Fig. 90 *Demeter (sold at Skinner)*



Fig. 91 *Leda and the Swan*



Fig. 92 Lamp



Fig. 93 Leda and the Swan

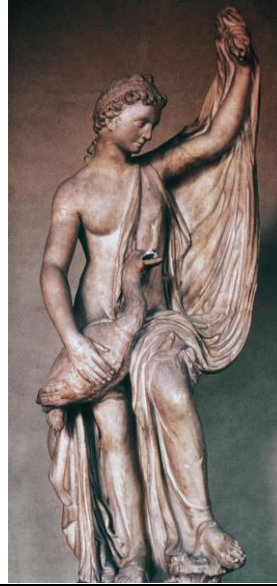


Fig. 94 Leda and the Swan



Fig. 95 Leda and the Swan



Fig. 96 Leda and the Swan



Fig. 97 Hand Mirror with Woman



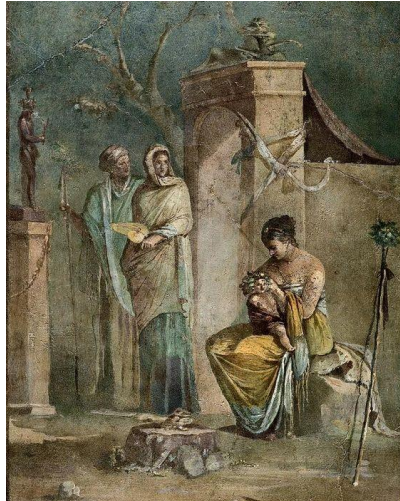
Fig. 98 *Bacchante and Infant Bacchus*Fig. 99 *Infant Dionysus in the lap of a Nymph*Fig. 100 *Silenus with the Infant Dionysus*Fig. 101 *Bacchanal*Fig. 102 *Bacchante*Fig. 103 *Bacchante*

Fig. 104 *Mercury Confiding the Infant Bacchus to the Nymphs of Nysa*



Fig. 105 *Education of the Infant Bacchus*



Fig. 106 *Europa and the Bull*



Fig. 107 *Europa and the Bull*



Fig. 108 *Europa and the Bull*



Fig. 109 *The Rape of Europa*



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Fig. 110 *Europa and the Bull*Fig. 111 *Bride as Europa and the Bull*Fig. 112 *Venus in Chariot*Fig. 113 *Seated Cupid*Fig. 114 *Figure of Venus in a Chariot*Fig. 115 *Venus and Cupid in a Chariot*

Fig. 116 *The Triumph of Venus*

Fig. 117 Coin

Fig. 118 *Venus Seated in her Sea Chariot Suckling Cupid*Fig. 119 *The Birth of Venus*Fig. 120 *Chariot of Venus*Fig. 121 *Captivation of Cupid*

Fig. 122 *Cupid in Distress*Fig. 123 *The Three Graces*Fig. 124 *Allegory of Music*Fig. 125 *Allegory of Music*Fig. 126 *Allegory of Art and Allegory of Music*

Fig. 127 Valentine Card

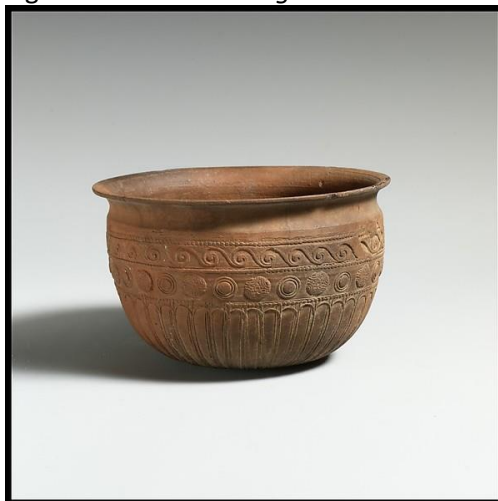
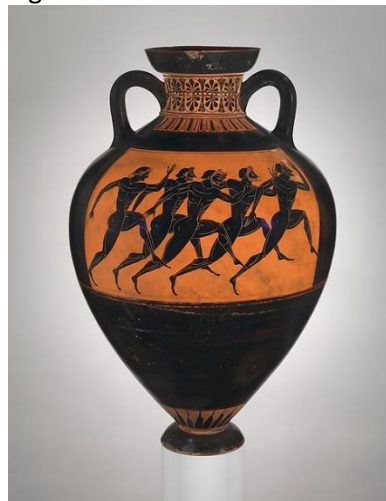
Fig. 128 *Afternoon Tea at the Temple*Fig. 129 *Interior of the Salon de Musique in the Hôtel Beauharnais*Fig. 130 *The Ball Player*Fig. 131 *Terracotta Megarian Bowl*Fig. 132 *Terracotta Panathenaic Prize*

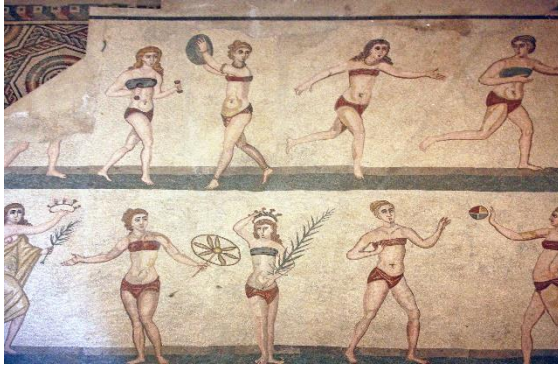
Fig. 133 *The Bikini Girls*Fig. 134 *Woman Playing Tennis*Fig. 135 *Girl with Fruit*Fig. 136 *Girl with Lamb*Fig. 137 *Girl Feeding Chickens*Fig. 138 *Figure*

Fig. 139 *Boy in Tricorne Hat*Fig. 140 *Summer*Fig. 141 *Child (one of a pair)*Fig. 142 *Boy's Suit*Fig. 143 *Putto as Postman*Fig. 144 *Putto as a Messenger*

Fig. 145 *Cupid as a Sportsman*Fig. 146 *Putto as a Lady with Powder Compact*Fig. 147 *Cupid Asleep*Fig. 148 *Woman in Ball Gown*Fig. 149 *Dress*Fig. 150 *The Good Housekeeper*

Fig. 151 *The Amusements of Private Life*Fig. 152 *Madame de Pompadour at her Tambour Frame*Fig. 153 *Self-Portrait*Fig. 154 *Sleeping Woman*

Fig. 155 *The Happy Parents*Fig. 156 *Sleeping Venus*Fig. 157 *Venus of Urbino*Fig. 158 *The Interrupted Sleep*Fig. 159 *Portrait of Madame de Pompadour*Fig. 160 *The Love Letter*

VITA

Sarah S. Jones is a native of rural Missouri, raised the farming community of Clinton. She excelled in the humanities in high school including English and American History. After studying several undergraduate subjects including interior design, she narrowed her focus to art history as it combined her skills in writing and researching with her interests in the material world of the historical past. She received her B.A. in art history from the University of Nebraska Kearney in 2008, the only art history degree recipient out of approximately 800 graduates. During her time in Kearney, Dr. Jones accepted her first museum job as a tour guide at the George W. Frank House Museum. Ms. Jones returned to Missouri and completed an M.A. in art history at the University of Missouri, with a thesis that explored the connection between the consumption practices of bourgeois women and the Art Nouveau movement. Sarah Jones received her Ph.D. degree in Art History from the University of Missouri in 2018.

Dr. Jones is building a career centered on museum curation and education. She served as the interim director of the Frank House Museum during the 2010-2011 academic year. Her graduate positions included both teaching assignments and museum positions. She served one year as a curatorial assistant at the University of Missouri Museum of Art and Archaeology and two years as the Curator of Public Arts at the Missouri Student Unions. Currently, Ms. Jones holds a position as Interpretation Coordinator at the John Jay Homestead State Historic Site, the historic home of the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.