



DECORATIVE ARTS



Defining the decorative arts is not so easy. Generally, **objects that have a function but are designed to be highly decorative fall into this category.** Vases, Plates, Furniture and Rugs for example, just to name a few.

When we think about decorative art lots of open questions surrounding usability, value, and the purpose of art in general pop up and also issues such as gender expectations. The Decorative Arts are often associated with female work. In the Bauhaus school of art for example, most women were just allowed to do weaving.

There has always been a perceived hierarchy, with Fine Art being seen to have higher value than Decorative Art.

What do you have at home that you would class as Decorative Art?





Sold to the J. Paul
Getty Museum 1971

FRENCH CABINET

1580

unknown artist/maker

Digital image courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program

“A Display Cabinet that displays itself.” That is how the Getty Centre describes this Burgundian cabinet. It serves as an example for the issue of authenticity in collecting.

J. Paul Getty was advised against purchasing it in 1971, because it was believed to be a fake from the 19th century. However, more recent examinations of the wood have revealed that it is in fact from 1540.

How important is it to you how the things you collect are displayed?



This cabinet takes us back to the phenomenon of the Wunderkammer (beginning in Europe in the 15th and 16th century), where we find big passions for collecting and part of the origins of modern museums.



Display cabinet

About 1630

Unknown artist/maker



*Italian tin-glazed earthenware
Basin* 1565-1575
Fontana Workshop
Acquired by the Getty Museum
in 1986.

Would you shy away from using something that was originally designed as a display piece?



Bed (Lit à la polonoise)

1775 - 1780

Unknown artist/maker

Acquired by the Getty Museum in 1994.

Do you ever wonder where and how the objects in museums were displayed before they arrived there?

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