

Love, Sex, *and Scandal*



A TOUR TO
INFLAME YOUR
PASSION—
FOR ART



WELCOME! THIS HOUR-LONG TOUR DELVES INTO AFFAIRS OF THE HEART EVIDENT IN ART. ENJOY ON YOUR OWN OR WITH A FRIEND.



India (Chola period)
Sapta Matrika, 10th century, granite, The Christina N. and Swan J. Turnblad Memorial Fund
Gallery 211

Hindu art is robust and sensuous, charged with an appreciation of life and earthly pleasures. This temple sculpture from the Deccan region of southern India represents one of the seven mother goddesses of Hindu theology. Endowed with voluptuous breasts, a tiny waist, and wide hips, she promises fertility and regeneration. Her idealized form celebrates human life and divine beauty, wisdom, and power. Meanwhile, the expression on her face projects inner calm and spiritual serenity.

How to Find these Works

To save time, view the works of art in the order presented. Gallery numbers are listed.



China, Ming dynasty

Wedding Procession, 1368–1644, earthenware, The John R. Van Derlip Fund and gift of funds from Mr. and Mrs. Cargill MacMillan, Jr.; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cleveland Gallery 215

So joyous and auspicious were weddings in China that ceramic reproductions of the nuptials often followed the couple to their graves. Placed in family tombs, these miniatures allow us to glimpse traditional marital customs. In ancient times, couples did not meet before the wedding—engagements were forged through a strict script of etiquette, and love didn't enter the picture until later. As shown here, wedding processions departed from the bride's house after a nine-course banquet eaten behind a "spirit-blocking screen." She was escorted to the groom's home, carried on a large dragon-decorated palanquin (enclosed bed), accompanied by throngs of musicians. The five chests represent her dowry. The ceremony took place at the groom's home, before the family altar and ancestors.



Chokwe

Central Africa region

Mwana Pwo Mask, about 1910, wood, vegetable fiber, glass beads, metal, The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund Gallery 250

Chokwe boys learn how to be responsible men, part of preparing for their initiation into adulthood. But they also learn qualities to seek in a future wife, such as graceful speech and gentle manners. The ideal young Chokwe woman, Mwana Pwo, is represented in this mask. It is worn and danced by the young men at the end of their initiation period to demonstrate their understanding of women. Both genders enjoy the amusing, exaggerated dance. Chokwe women clap and accompany dancers whom they feel are particularly adept, but will “chase away” those who do not respectfully honor women with their performance. You can see a video of a Pwo mask being danced in the nearby Interactive Learning Station; touch “Masquerade” on the Main Menu.



Bertel Thorvaldsen, Danish, 1770–1844
Ganymede and the Eagle, 1817–1829, Carrara marble,
gift of the Morse Foundation
Gallery 307

Greek mythology tells us that the god Zeus assumed many disguises in his busy pursuits of love. To Leda, he appeared as a swan, to Europa as a bull. To Ganymede, the prince of Troy, he came as an eagle. We'll never know what the young man, who became Zeus's cupbearer on Mount Olympus, thought about serving a god whose amorous tastes ranged so widely. In keeping with conservative attitudes of the early 19th century, however, the artist shows no hint of impropriety. The moment is marked with dignity and restraint: the beautiful Ganymede, nude except for his cap, kneels to give the powerful raptor a drink.

Michel Garnier, French, 1753–1819
The Poorly Defended Rose, 1789, and The Letter, 1791, oil on canvas, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Linsky
Gallery 306

This pair is likely the “before” and “after” of a moralizing narrative on romantic love. The first painting shows a young couple in a moment of seduction. She feigns to resist his advances, making a half-hearted attempt to prevent him from picking a rose—a symbol of her virginity. But her eyes say so much more! Lying on the floor is a broken pitcher, an age-old symbol of lost virtue. In the second painting, the same woman, appearing somewhat more worldly and wise, stands beside her old maid—a foreshadowing—and a tray of gnawed-on baguettes. In her hand she holds a miniature portrait sent by her lover, now long gone. Some consolation!



Rembrandt van Rijn, Dutch, 1606–69
Lucretia, 1666, oil on canvas, The William Hood
Dunwoody Fund
Gallery 311

Sometimes attraction becomes obsession, and the story becomes a tragedy. Lucretia, the wife of a Roman nobleman, was known for her high virtue. After failing to seduce her, Sextus Tarquinius, the son of the ruling tyrant, vowed to kill her and place her body in bed with his servant. Although Lucretia managed to avoid this public disgrace, Tarquinius took his revenge by raping her. The next day, Lucretia took matters into her own hands: after reporting the crime to her husband and father, she stabbed herself in front of them. Strong women like Lucretia were favorite subjects for Rembrandt. Larger-than-life heroines, critics believe, embodied the qualities the artist admired most in the real women he loved.





Artist Unknown, Netherlandish
Woman at Her Toilette, c. 1650–80, oil on canvas,
The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund
Gallery 310

This highly staged scene shows a woman recently roused from her slumber, primping before her mirror with the help of a maid. But there's more happening here. To the right of her rumpled bed is a small room, a *closestool*, or toilet. And in the picture's foreground is a chamber pot, painted in gleaming detail. Though common in real life, of course, neither object typically appeared in paintings of the time, much less with such prominence. These references to daily bodily functions are the artist's attempt to undercut feminine vanity—a popular satirical theme of the day.



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Nicolas Mignard, French, 1609–68

Venus and Adonis, c. 1650, oil on canvas, gift of funds from Bruce B. Dayton

Gallery 330

Venus, the goddess of love, was as promiscuous as her male counterparts on Olympus. But she was absolutely obsessed with the handsome mortal Adonis. Here, she follows him to the countryside, where he plans to go hunting. Provocatively undressed, she pleads with the sensually draped Adonis to stay with her. Alas, he resists her and eventually is killed on the hunt by a wild boar (proving once again, it pays to heed the gods). Venus turns his blood into anemones, a sweet-smelling but fragile flower shown behind her, below her son Cupid. Cupid's appearance here isn't incidental: it was a wound from his arrow, which accidentally grazed her breast, that caused Venus to fall in love with a mere mortal.





Roy Lichtenstein, American, 1923–97

Vicki, 1964, enamel on steel, gift of Mr. and Mrs.

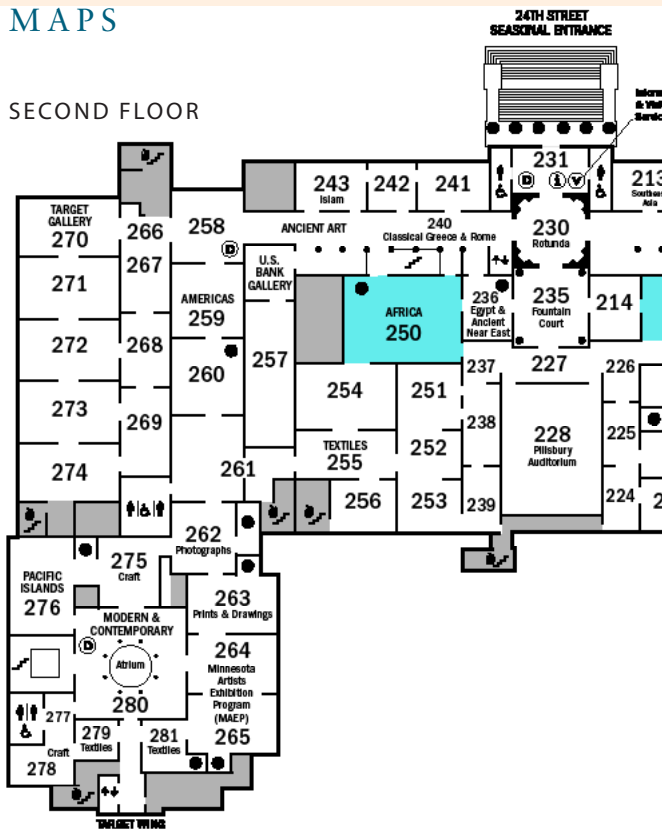
Russell Cowles II

Gallery 370

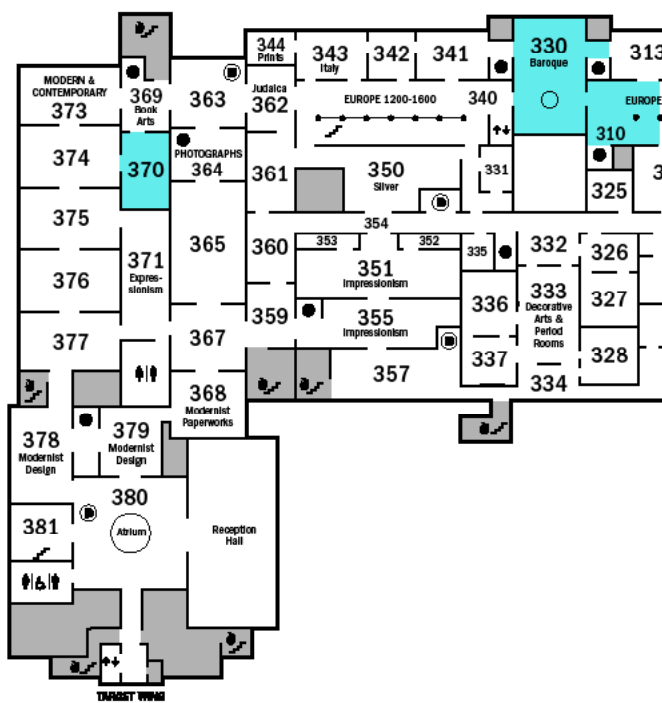
As if entering a comic series mid-story, we see our hero breathlessly stammering the name of the lovely blonde woman framed in the doorway before him. The viewer is left to decide the backstory here: Have we walked in on Vicki and her lover? Has she been whispering sweet nothings to her houseplants? Or is he being duped by some torrid scheme? Her cool, lidded eyes, quizzical brow, and sultry red lips suggest something suspicious, but the artist lets us fill in the blanks. *Vicki* is among the last of Lichtenstein's iconic series inspired by comic books. The red dots suggest the way colored images are reproduced in newsprint.

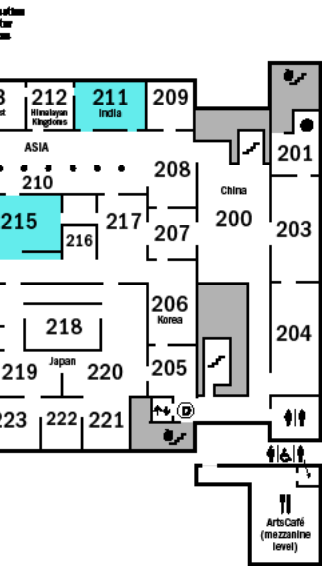
MAPS

SECOND FLOOR

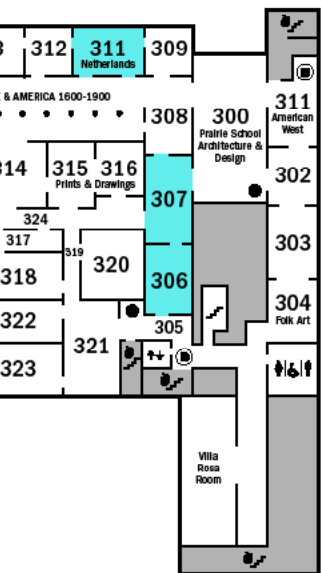


THIRD FLOOR





Ready to take a break and share your discoveries? Coffee, sandwiches, and snacks are available at the ArtsBreak coffee shop on the first floor, and Italian cuisine is served in ArtsCafé on the mezzanine level.



Galleries featured