

Gorham Silver: Designing Brilliance 1850–1970, May 3, 2019–December 1, 2019

When Jabez Gorham founded a small workshop a few blocks from here in 1831, handcrafted silver spoons were a principal product of his business. When the RISD Museum acquired a Gorham spoon in 1909, it marked the beginning of a collection of works by the Gorham Manufacturing Company that today comprises nearly 5,000 objects and design drawings. This exhibition—assembled from the museum’s collection with important loans from other institutions and private collections—illuminates the heights of Gorham’s industry, ambition, artistry, technology, and innovation.

The Gorham Manufacturing Company was an inimitable force in the city of Providence and around the globe, boldly growing into the largest silver company in the world. Gorham created some of the most exceptional works ever made in silver, forever changing the landscape of American decorative arts. The company also profoundly changed Rhode Island by training and employing generations of highly skilled workers and, like many local industries, leaving behind a complicated legacy. Visit the Gorham Workbench in this gallery and access the Soundwalk tour (information at right) to learn about the company’s impact on the community, labor practices, and the environment.

Spanning 120 years, the objects on view here testify to the undiminished brilliance of Gorham’s workers as they collaboratively translated ideas into gleaming new realities, the restless innovation of the company’s leaders, and a dazzling array of aesthetic styles.

Elizabeth A. Williams
David and Peggy Rockefeller Curator of Decorative Arts and Design
RISD Museum

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Charles T. Brandreth, American, 1908-ca. 2000
Monumental Coffeepot in the Puritan Pattern, ca. 1950
Silver with ivory
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.43

Gorham created these larger-than-life designs for promotional use. Precisely made to scale, the coffeepot was originally one of a pair. Weighing an impressive 25 pounds, it was produced in Gorham’s *Puritan* pattern, which was first introduced in the 1930s.



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Monumental Spoon in the Melrose Pattern, ca. 1950
Silver
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.44

Gorham created these larger-than-life designs for promotional use. The 15-pound sterling-silver spoon is one of several made, each representing one of the company's most popular flatware patterns. The spoon's pattern, *Melrose*, made its debut in 1948. This example—nearly eight times the size of a typical teaspoon—has a bowl big enough to hold a gallon of liquid.



Gorham Silver and American Industrialism ***To Handle Silver As Though It Were Putty***

Between 1831 and the 1850s, Gorham grew significantly, expanding from a small workshop to several multistory buildings and from 14 to nearly 200 employees. These changes can be credited to John Gorham, who joined his father's business in 1841 and soon initiated seismic shifts in the traditions and scale of New England silver production. He realized the need for machinery and equipment with, in his words, "sufficient size and power for us to handle silver as though it were putty."

John Gorham installed steam power in the manufactory in 1847. He then traveled to England in 1852 to order a steam-powered drop press designed to make silver wares—the first of its kind. In addition to making flatware utensils for eating and serving, the company began creating elaborate hollowware vessels such as tea services, with bodies formed by steam-powered spinning machines.

The company's advancements in modern mechanization were complemented by the employment of experienced silversmiths well versed in a range of techniques and the establishment of a large library of design references that emphasized ancient Greek, Roman, and Egyptian influences and naturalistic studies of plants and animals from around the world.

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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tea and Coffee Service, ca. 1860
Coin silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.215

Composed of five pieces—coffEEPOT, teapot, cream pitcher, sugar bowl, and waste bowl—this tea service is characteristic of the elaborate examples Gorham began making in the 1850s. In 1861, after Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as president, First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln chose an eight-piece service in this pattern for use in the White House.



Tea Services

Silver tea services are more than finished objects designed to serve family, friends, and guests on various occasions. A closer look at their forms reveals different styles, ornaments, and shapes, encouraging consideration as to how Gorham silversmiths made them. Forms from three different services have been aligned here for direct comparison, illustrating the similarities and differences between the vessels.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pattern 850 Tea and Coffee Service, 1871
Silver with gilding and ivory
Gift of Miss Mary Ann Lippitt 2001.74

Works in silver were often commissioned for important events. This service celebrates the 25th wedding anniversary of Henry F. and Mary Ann Lippitt, who were married in 1845. Each piece bears the date and the engraved monogram M.A.L. In 1865 the Lippitts built a Renaissance Revival house—which is still standing on Hope Street in Providence—and this same style is found in the tea service's arched and scrolled borders. From 1875 to 1877, Henry Lippitt served as the governor of Rhode Island.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pattern 500 Tea and Coffee Service, 1871
Silver with ivory
Gift of Elizabeth Mayer Buchanek 2001.86

The consumption of tea and the social practices surrounding it prompted Gorham to produce a plethora of silver vessels, services, and utensils for the formal late-afternoon event known as tea, which was based on British customs. The American predilection for coffee in the morning and after dinner added even more vessels to services.



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pattern 170 Tea Service, ca. 1860
Coin silver with ivory
Museum Acquisition Fund 2001.37

Made from about a dozen parts, this teapot was fabricated using approximately the same number of processes. The body was shaped by blunt tools that pressed a sheet of silver against a wooden chuck as it spun on a lathe. The spout and circular handles were cast as two halves and soldered together. The handles on vessels meant to hold hot liquids required ivory insulators, so these were cut, inserted, and pinned. The butterfly on the lid was cast as a single piece and attached with tiny amounts of solder. The vessel's body was fit together from two parts, then the seam was covered by a border created by passing the metal between small patterned rollers. An engraver applied the garlanded medallion and monogram, and the bands of geometric patterning were achieved by engine-turned engraving



Ancient Influences

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
George Wilkinson, English, 1819-1894
Isis Ice Serving Spoon, ca. 1871
Silver with gilding
Museum purchase: gift of the Friends of the Decorative Arts
Department 1992.009

Conceived in 1870 by lead designer George Wilkinson, Gorham's *Isis* pattern is an example of Egyptian Revival style, popular in America beginning in the late 1860s. The pattern is named after Isis, the Egyptian goddess of magic and ideal womanhood. The gilded bowl of this spoon, designed to serve ice, is formed by intertwined papyrus and lotus plants that rise beneath the vulture wings and cobra—both pairs of symbols representing the goddess's unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, respectively.



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
George Wilkinson, English, 1819-1894
Shreve, Stanwood & Company, American, active 1860 - 1869
Sugar Bowl, ca. 1867
Coin silver
Gift of The Wunsch Americana Foundation 1986.076.2



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
George Wilkinson, English, 1819-1894
Shreve, Stanwood & Company, American, active 1860 - 1869
Creamer, ca. 1867
Coin silver
Gift of the Wunsch Americana Foundation, Inc. 1986.170



After Napoleon's military campaign in Egypt first influenced European design in the early 1800s, Egyptian Revival style resurfaced in America in the late 1860s, as the country looked beyond the Civil War to current events that included the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal in Egypt. Ancient Egypt is referenced in the geometric key and stylized lotus-blossom borders at the top of this sugar and creamer set, which rests on feet formed as small sphinxes with wings.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Shreve & Company, American, 1852 -
Wine Decanter Set, ca. 1865
Coin silver and glass
Gift of Kathy Field Malavasic 2017.69.3

This decanter set features satyrs, ancient Greek mythological forest creatures that are fond of pleasure. Satyrs are associated with Dionysus, the god of wine, and here they may hint at the effects of drinking alcohol. Mounted with characteristic horns, seven satyrs hold oval rings in their mouths as four hairy legs ending in clawed toes descend from the center sphere. The three cut-crystal decanters are held in place by circular silver frames interspersed with smaller rings designed to hold the bottles' stoppers.



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Medallion Pitcher, 1864

Coin silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.200

Gorham's design library, filled with volumes and objects from across cultures and eras, provided references and inspiration for the company's designers. Ornaented with three female portrait medallions, this pitcher reflects stylistic interest in ancient Greek and Roman ornament. An 1862 inventory of Gorham manufactory lists a set of classical plaster portrait medallions in the rooms of George Wilkinson, the company's lead designer, who excelled in creating classical and Renaissance-inspired forms and decorations.



Rococo Revival Repoussé

Gorham & Thurber, American, 1850 - 1852

Tea Service, 1850

Coin silver

The Art Institute of Chicago, Mary Swissler Oldberg Fund, 2015.606.1-5; The Art Institute of Chicago, Bequest of Mrs. Frederick H. Wickett, 1952.1107 TL74.2019



The earliest example of hollowware on view is this silver service, which served in the social ritual of tea and celebrated the marriage of Emily Mandeville Cummings and Benjamin Rathbone Almy, who lived in Rhode Island. Each of the service's six vessels is decorated with motifs suggesting its contents, such as the cream pot's cow and milkmaid.

The service was made during the brief time the company was known as Gorham and Thurber, at the beginning of a pivotal period in which the small-scale manufactory ascended to ultimately become the largest producer of silver in the world.

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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Cup, 1855

Coin silver

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Percelay in honor of Maureen Percelay
Zusy 75.014

Middle-class and upper-class Americans purchased Gorham silver to commemorate births, marriages, and other celebratory events. Engraved with names, dates, and inscriptions, cups and goblets were popular presentation forms.

The bulbous cup adorned with acorns was awarded to Henry C. Johnson of the First Light Infantry Company, a Rhode Island militia company formed in 1818 as more of a social club than a military regiment, although many members went on to serve in the Civil War. Decorated with chased roses and morning glories, the straight-sided cup with engraving presumably marks the 1854 birth of a girl named Ida by her Uncle Benjamin. The goblet was purchased by parents who inscribed it "For our little daughter Maria Dimond Norris December 25, 1862."



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Goblet, 1862

Coin silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.496



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Rebekah at the Well Pitcher, 1852

Silver

Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of Angeline Russell Faran, 1978.267

TL58.2019.1

Another early example of Gorham hollowware, this pitcher represents the company's foray into producing complicated works in the Rococo Revival style, for which they received critical acclaim in the 1850s. The elaborately wrought repoussé and chased scenes from the Biblical story of the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah are well suited to this work, which was purchased by a father to commemorate the marriage of his daughter in 1854. Valued by Gorham as an exemplary achievement of their advancing silversmithing skills, the pitcher was depicted front and center in an 1852 print advertisement, representing the company's "rich stock of the finest quality of silver."



Bounty of the Land

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

M. W. Galt Bro. & Co., American, 1801 - 2001

Ice Bowl and Spoon, 1871 - 1874

Silver

Dallas Museum of Art, The Eugene and Margaret McDermott

ArtFund, Inc., 1989.5.1.McD TL50.2019.2.ab

As Anglo-American explorers made tracks within and beyond the boundaries of the United States, artists followed, and new images made their way into contemporary design. Silver icebergs populated with polar bears form this ice bowl, one of several versions Gorham created beginning in the 1860s. Its iconography relates not only to northern expeditions, but to the expansion of America's borders with the 1867 purchase of Alaska from Russia. Back home, Bostonian Frederic Tudor, known as the Ice King, had already perfected the process of harvesting New England ice and shipping it worldwide. This bowl, adorned with bears and hanging icicles, accompanied by a spoon with a rope-entwined bear, provided an impressive presentation.



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Presentation Water Pitcher, ca. 1867

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.92

Jabez Gorham (1792–1869) founded his company in 1831 as a small shop where a dozen employees made spoons and other smallwares by hand. By 1867—the year this pitcher was given to him “in appreciation of past favors”—the Gorham Manufacturing Company had grown to nearly 400 employees. The pitcher celebrated Jabez’s achievements and recognized his familial legacy, and Jabez specifically named it in his will, bequeathing it to his youngest grandson. Designed with an insulated interior, it kept its contents cool, as noted by the polar bear on the small iceberg on its lid.



Gorham Silver & Social Aspirations

Exceedingly Splendid

“The appearance of a dinner table set with silver for a large party,” noted one 1868 magazine, “is so exceedingly splendid that we can hardly wonder that fashion has adopted this metal for her own.”

Business magnate Henry Jewett Furber and his wife, Elvira Irwin Furber, set their table with an 816-piece silver service purchased from Gorham between 1866 and 1880. Designed to serve 24 people, the Furber service represents one of Gorham’s largest commissions and is shown in this exhibition’s pavilion in its near entirety. With one exception, the 129 hollowware vessels and 687 pieces of flatware are each engraved with Elvira’s monogram.

The plethora of forms seen on the formal Victorian dining table was in keeping with the era’s enthusiasm for extravagant expositions. Beginning in the 1850s, manufacturers across the globe showcased new technologies and products to international audiences at world’s fairs. Pavilions similar to this one were stocked with a wide range of products, assembling spectacles of style, innovation, creativity, and ingenuity. Gorham made its first appearance at a world’s fair at the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia—celebrating the founding of America—where they presented several pieces from the Furber service, including the epergne, *Cellini Vase*, *Cellini Tray*, and pitcher.

Storing the Furber Service

This custom-built oak trunk labeled #16—one of 20 made for the Furber service—now displays nearly 350 pieces of flatware and servingware in the *Angelo* pattern from the service. Although seemingly secondary to the silver wares, cases and trunks became an important part of Gorham’s business beginning in the 1860s. An 1871 account describes velvet-lined cases destined for the “most distant cities in the Union.”

RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Salad Set, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.16



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cheese Scoop, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.19



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Mustard Ladle, 1873
Sterling silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.20



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Salt Spoons, 1869
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.42



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Meat Server, 1873
Sterling silver with steel
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.13



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Fish Knife, 1873

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.21



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Cake Knife, 1873

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.22



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Large Scoop, 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.41



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fish Knives (part of a set of 12), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.34



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Salad Servers, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.15



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Carving Fork, 1873

Silver with steel

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.1.2



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Pickle Fork, 1869

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.46



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Dessert Knives (part of a set of 12), 1869

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.33



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Luncheon Tablespoons (part of a set of 24), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.37



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fish Knives, 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.43



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Teaspoons (part of a set of 36), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.36



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Dinner Knives (part of a set of 24), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.32



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Coffee Spoons (part of a set of 24), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.35



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Nutpicks (part of a set of 24), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.39



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Dinner Forks (part of a set of 23), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.27



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Dessert Forks (part of a set of 24), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.30



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fish Forks (part of a set of 24), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.29



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Luncheon Forks (part of a set of 24), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.28



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Dinner Tablespoons (part of a set of 24), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.38



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Game Knife, 1873

Silver and steel

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.2.2



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Ladle, 1873

Silver with gilding

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.10.1



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Basting Spoon, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.9



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Gravy Ladle, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.5



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Ladle, 1873

Silver with gilding

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.10.2



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Gravy Ladle, 1873

Silver with gilding

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.14.2



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pickle Fork, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.7



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Syrup Ladle, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.17



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Angelo Macaroni Serving Spoon, ca.1870
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.18



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Luncheon Knives (part of a set of 36), 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.31



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Gravy Ladle, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.14.1



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Ladle, 1869

Silver with gilding

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.44



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Carving Steel, 1873

Silver and steel

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.3



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Butter or Cheese Knife, 1869

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.40



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pastry Server, 1873

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.4



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Sugar Spoon, 1869
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.45



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Basting Spoon, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.12



Classical Design as Source Material

Reflecting a stylistic interest in ancient Greek and Roman design, the Furber service includes classical decoration and motifs. Gorham's designers used design books, plaster casts, and other objects for reference and inspiration. This candelabra and its mate rest on plateaus decorated with a cavalcade of horses, chariots, and riders taken from the Parthenon, a temple in Athens, Greece.

The design source for the plateaus' Parthenon frieze decoration was a set of plaster casts made by the Scottish sculptor John Henning I. Henning carved a mirror image of the frieze at a 1:20 ratio in slate, from which plaster casts were made and sold in sets. Henning's casts and the plateau friezes share the same figural spacing, with breaks between the plaster casts faithfully replicated in the silver.

RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Candelabra, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.81.2



Thomas Pairpoint, American, 1838-1902
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Plateau, 1876
Silver with gilding and glass
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.79.2



A Cast of Many

The many serving vessels in this case reflect changing American dining customs in the 1800s. Formal multi-course dinners were traditionally served *à la française*, with diners helping themselves from full serving dishes placed directly on the table all at once. Dining *à la russe* was adopted in the United States in the 1870s, with as many as 15 courses served one at a time by waiters. New styles called for new types of vessels to fill the Victorian dining room with splendor.

A work that appears to be a single piece of silver was often assembled from many parts. Handles, finials, spouts, and decorative components were cast by pouring molten silver into a mold. The triangular handles, handles on the lids, and the decorative winged figure on the many tureens and other serving vessels in this case were cast and soldered to the vessels' bodies. The bronze master casting patterns of these parts can be seen in the Gorham Workbench display.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Sauceboat, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.9



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fruit Stand, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.32



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Sauceboat, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.10



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Sauce Tureen, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.6ab



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Sauce Tureen, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.5ab



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Ice Cream Stand, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.33



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Vegetable Dish, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.1ab



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Celery Vase, 1875
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.35



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Vegetable Dish, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.2ab



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Covered Butter Dish, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.13abc



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Oyster Tureen, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.31ab



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Salt, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.12



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Salt, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.11



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pickle Dish, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.7



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pickle Dish, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.8



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Vegetable Dish, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.4ab



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Vegetable Dish, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.3ab



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Salad Dish, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.34



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Soup Tureen, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.30ab



Thomas Pairpoint, American, 1838-1902
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cellini Tray, 1874
Silver with gilding and glass
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.44



Presenting Gorham to the World

The epergne is the grandest and most complex piece in the Furber service. Gorham received permission from the Furbers to prominently display this work in the company's pavilion window at the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia. A personification of the United States, Columbia is dressed in a silver gown embedded with gilded stars. She stands on a globe while holding a gilded garland aloft, assisted by two putti. Adorned with golden hummingbirds, the shell-shaped bowls were designed to hold flowers. The oblong bowls, mounted with sterling repoussé plaques featuring allegorical representations of Love and Contentment, were to be filled with fruit.

Thomas Pairpoint, American, 1838-1902
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Epergne, 1872
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.80



Thomas Pairpoint, American, 1838-1902
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Plateau, 1876
Silver with gilding and glass
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.79.1



RISD MUSEUM

Something for Everything

In the late 1800s, the European formal dining style known as à la russe was adopted in the United States, moving serving vessels from the table to the sideboard. Without a large display of food, the dining table became a stage for the lavish display of flowers and large ornamental objects such as centerpieces, epergnes, and candelabra. As the 19th century progressed, more complex dinners evolved. The number of specialized eating and serving implements expanded as well, as seen in the nutcrackers, individual asparagus tongs, sardine tongs, and grape shears in this case.

Thomas Pairpoint, American, 1838-1902
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cellini Vase, 1875
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.52



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Thomas Pairpoint, American, 1838-1902
Cellini Stand, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.57



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fruit Stand, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.62



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Nutcracker, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.78.4



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Nutcracker, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.78.7



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Nutcracker, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.78.3



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Nutcracker, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.78.5



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Nutcracker, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.78.6



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Nutcracker, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.78.8



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Grape Shears, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.78.2



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Grape Shears, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.78.1



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Flask, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.213ab



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Sardine Tongs, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.77



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Sugar Tongs, ca. 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.76



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Asparagus Tongs (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.75



Design Inspirations and Influences

In 1879, the Furbers commissioned a number of pieces that signaled a major shift in the aesthetics of both the Furber service and the Gorham Manufacturing Company. Japan's display at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial International Exhibition had ignited the American Aesthetic movement, transforming silver design. The Furbers embraced this new style by ordering 260 Japanesque pieces, including the 24 peppers, salts, butter plates, fruit plates, and ice cream plates in this case, as well as sets of flatware, each decorated differently. Japanese books in Gorham's design library, such as Katsushika Hokusai's *Manga*, inspired many of these motifs.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Ice Cream Plates (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.64



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fruit Plates (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.63



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Water Pitcher, 1878
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.48



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tray, 1878
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.50



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pair of Cups, 1878
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.49



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Compote, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.65.1



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Compote, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.65.2



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Butter Plates (set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.68



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Salts (set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.66



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pepper Shakers (set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.67



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Melon Forks (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.73



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Ice Cream Spoons (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.71



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fruit Knives (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.767



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Berry Spoons (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.70



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fruit Knives (part of a set of 12), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.74



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fish Forks (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.765



A Splendid Assortment

By the second half of the 1800s, American women assumed a greater role in selecting objects to decorate the domestic realm. Their purchases coincided with a rapidly expanding world of manufactured goods for home use. Gorham enlarged the market for silver by offering an assortment of forms and designs to suit every desire. By 1874, the company was producing nearly 1,000 objects for consumers to consider, from silver wine goblets to crumb scrapers.

Gorham began photographing their products by 1856. Whether bound in large albums or sent to showrooms and retailers across the country, the photographs enabled quick dissemination of the latest in silver wares.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pitcher, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.55



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pair of Wine Goblets, 1875
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.47



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Candelabra, 1871
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.29



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Bread Plate, 1871
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.51



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Bread Knife, 1869
Silver with gilding and steel
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.23



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Crumb Scraper, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.6



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Crumber, 1873
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.11



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Crumb Tray, 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.24



Social Settings

Silver played a central role in many social customs and cultural rituals. Silver vessels and services made by Gorham responded to and influenced the formal late-afternoon event known as tea, as well as the American predilection for consuming coffee. Coffee was served at breakfast, and following European customs, black coffee was served after dinner. Services typically included a teapot, coffeepot, sugar and cream set, and a waste bowl. More elaborate services added a hot-water kettle on a stand and a hot-milk pitcher and tray. The Furber service also includes a toast rack, coffee urn, syrup pitcher, and spoon holder.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cake Basket, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.28



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Toast Rack, 1875
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.18



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Card Tray, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.24



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pair of Wine Coolers, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.46



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Table Bell, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.53



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Syrup Pitcher, 1875
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.19



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Spoon Holder, 1875
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.17



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Teapot, 1875
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.20



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Hot Water Kettle and Stand, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.23abc



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Coffee Urn, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.22abc



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Coffeepot, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.21



RISD MUSEUM

Thomas Pairpoint, American, 1838-1902
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Waiter, 1873
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.43



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Waste Bowl, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.16



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cream Pitcher, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.14



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Covered Sugar Bowl, 1874
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.15ab



A World of Styles in Providence

Inspired by Greek, Roman, Italian, Egyptian, English, French, American, Russian, and Japanese design, the Furber service reflected 19th-century American interest in and absorption of international cultures. The wine decanter presents Egyptian Revival style with gilded appliques of the deities Isis, shown as a pair of winged female figures, and Horus, shown as a falcon in the center. An intricate pair of fruit stands, decorated with foxes and grapes referencing Aesop's fables, resembles ancient Russian drinking vessels known as *kovsh*, typically produced in pairs, one silver and one gold.

Shown with rope-entwined tongs and populated with caribou and polar bears, the ice bowl alludes to American explorers bringing vivid imagery home for inspiration. Although the Furber service is stylistically diverse, its consistent combination of matte and polished silver with gilding unifies the individual works.

RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Caster Set, 1873
Silver with gilding and glass
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.42



George Wilkinson, English, 1819-1894
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Wine Decanter Set, 1873
Silver with gilding and glass
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.38



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Oil and Vinegar Cruet, 1875
Silver with gilding and glass
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.39



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fruit Stand, 1871
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.26



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fruit Stand, 1871
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.25



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fruit Stand, 1872
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.27



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Ice Tongs, 1869
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.25



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Ice Bowl, 1866
Silver and gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.54



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pitcher, 1876
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.56



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Egg Spoons (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.72



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Oyster Forks (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.764



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Knife Rests (set of 4), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.69



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Salad Forks (part of a set of 24), 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.766



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tray, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.768



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Napkin Rings (set of 12), 1869
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.45.26



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham's Design Library

Recalling ancient Greco-Roman and Renaissance classical ornament, this candelabra and its mate reflect the wealth of stylistic references made by Gorham designers and reveal the importance of the company's design library. The library held hundreds of illustrated books; albums of drawings, prints, and photographs; plaster casts of medallions, ancient gems, and classical and Renaissance sculptures; bronze sculptures and objects; and electrotypes. In 2005, nearly 1,800 volumes from Gorham's design library were given to the RISD Fleet Library, where they can now be viewed in Special Collections.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Candelabra, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.81.1



Thomas Pairpoint, American, 1838-1902
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Plateau, 1876
Silver with gilding and glass
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.79.3



Smallwares

Gorham made more than just tea sets, trophies, and flatware. In fact, many of the earliest items the company produced were small personal objects including thimbles, combs, and jewelry. The objects displayed here represent the types of smallwares made throughout Gorham's history.

Gorham's development of the steam-powered drop press not only aided the making of flatware, but positioned the company to break into the lucrative market of souvenir-spoon production. Souvenir spoons were functional, affordable mementos that commemorated places and events. The steam-powered drop press was also employed to produce the objects in this dressing set, which include a hairbrush, clothes brush, whisk brush, buttonhook, nail file, comb, and hand mirror. A die used to make a similar mirror can be seen in the Workbench section of the exhibition.

RISD MUSEUM

Silver “trimmings,” as Gorham called them, were produced for a number of goods, such as this purse. While the copper smoking set encouraged the leisure of smoking at home, pocket-sized match safes afforded elegance and convenience anywhere. Some items were purely for play, like the yo-yo and combination rattle and whistle. Other smallwares were business oriented, such as the miniature letter scale and elegant check cutter.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
New Bedford, Whaling City, Souvenir Teaspoon, 1891
Silver
Bequest of Mrs. Hope Brown Russell 09.733



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Miniature Shell Dish, 1890
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.250.1



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Miniature Shell Dish, 1890
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.250.2



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Letter Scale, 1890
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.227



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Matchbox, 1885
Silver
Gift of Barton St. Armand in honor of the late Mary Landis Hampson
1996.8.3ab



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Match Safe, ca. 1903
Silver
Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.17



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Match Safe, ca. 1889
Silver
Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.23



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Match Safe, ca. 1889
Silver
Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.11



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Traveling desk set, 1890
Silver and glass
Gift from the M. F. Collection 2013.120.1



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Match Vase, 1890
Copper with silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.256



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Match Safe, ca. 1900
Silver
Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.12



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Match Safe, ca. 1887
Silver
Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.10



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tray, 1883
Copper with silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.221



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Match Safe, ca. 1889
Silver
Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.46



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Box, 1880
Silver with copper and gilding
Gift from the M. F. Collection 2018.50



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Match Safe, 1881
Silver with copper
Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.19



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
1893 World's Fair Ring, 1892
Silver
Gift of Kathryn S. Smyth 2016.34



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Charlotte Hornet's Nest Coffee Spoon, 1893
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.369



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Match Safe, ca.1910
Silver
Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.41



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Match Safe, 1895
Silver
Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.35



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Roger Williams Spoon, 1891
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.324



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pin, ca. 1870-1880
Silver
Museum Purchase: Bequest of Eliza Taft, by exchange 2003.82



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
William Christmas Codman, English, 1839-1921
George W. Sauthof, German, 1852-1927
Martelé Check Cutter, Martelé 1903
Silver
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred T. Morris, Jr. 2006.114



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cigar lighter, ca. 1900
Copper with mixed metals
Gift of Deborah L. Maxwell, in memory of her father, Norman W.
Baker, RISD Class of '57 2009.107



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Grape Shears, ca. 1880
Silver
Gift of Kathy Field Malavasic in memory of her mother Doris Coles
Field 2016.68.6



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cincinnati Art Museum Souvenir Spoon, 1891
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.407



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Miniature Shell Spoon, 1890
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.250.5



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Yo-Yo, ca. 1972
Silver, steel, and fabric
Gift of Alfred T. Morris, Jr. 1991.011



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Rattle, 1884
Silver and glass
Gift of Kathy Field Malavasic in memory of her mother Doris Coles
Field 2016.123.2



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Dressing Set, ca. 1890
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.599



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Purse, 1903
Snakeskin and silver
Gift of Mrs. Jane Williamson 1986.001



RISD MUSEUM

Designing Gorham Silver *The Restless Laboratory*

By the early 1870s, Gorham silversmiths shifted away from classical sources and revival styles and increasingly adapted Japanese aesthetics and techniques. Japan's presence at the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia fueled the mania in the United States for Japanese design, which played a significant part in the development of the American Aesthetic movement. Japanese mixed-metal wares were especially impactful; for 19th-century Western audiences, the combination of silver and gold with base metals such as copper, iron, bronze, and steel was innovative. Critics and consumers praised "the prevalence of Japanese style in the novelties pouring forth from the restless laboratories of Gorham."

Gorham's designers also began drawing on their local surroundings. Rhode Island's many miles of coastline provided access to a watery world populated with myriad marine specimens. The depiction of underwater scenes and creatures—both natural and imagined—propelled the company's designers and silversmiths from the 1870s through the 1890s.

Glass/Enamel/Ceramic

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Count Gyula de Festetics, Hungarian, 1846 - 1922
Jewelry Box, ca. 1890
Silver and enamel
Gift from the M. F. Collection 2013.120.2



Enameled silver wares were very popular at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where the Gorham Manufacturing Company was awarded seven awards for their enamel work. Many pieces were designed in a Renaissance Revival style, such as this jewelry box featuring an outdoor feast. Gorham hired Hungarian artist Gyula de Festetics to create designs that were executed by a team of enamellers, most of whom were American women.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Bonbon Spoon, ca. 1893
Silver with gilding and plique-à-jour enamel
Anonymous gift 54.184

An example of Gorham's interest in combining silver with other materials, this spoon made for serving bonbons, or candy, features plique-à-jour enamel, a process in which translucent enamels are melted one color at a time inside a filigree framework of twisted wires. French for "open or against the light," plique-à-jour enamels were first developed in the 1300s and revived in the 1890s, becoming very fashionable despite their fragile nature and high cost. Gorham was one of only two American makers producing this type of enamelware in the late 19th century.



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Decanter, 1913
Silver and glass
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.491.1ab



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Whiskey Decanter, 1892
Silver and glass
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 1988.065



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cologne Bottle with Stopper, ca. 1900
Silver and glass
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.218ab

Gorham's electrodeposition of silver on glass was a novel technology that, as described in an 1894 company publication, employed "the genius of Electricity obediently doing and undoing according to the will of his new-found master, Man!" It was, however, women workers—not men—who carried out the steps to produce these fashionable wares, coating the glass surface with a metal-based flux that attracted the silver in an electroplating bath. The design was painted onto the silver-coated vessel using a resist varnish, then the work was placed in a bath that drew away the unvarnished silver, revealing the final decoration.



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Rookwood Pottery, American, 1880 - Present

Constance Amelia Baker, active 1892 - 1904

Pitcher, 1893

Earthenware with glaze and silver

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Edwin E. Jack Fund, 1989.200

TL70.2019.5



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Kitaro Shirayamadani, Japanese, 1865 - 1948

Pitts Harrison Burt, American, 1837 - 1907

Rookwood Pottery, American, 1880 - Present

Ewer, 1890

Earthenware with glaze and silver

Cincinnati Art Museum, William W. Taylor Endowment, 1973.104



By 1892, Gorham forged a relationship with the Rookwood Pottery, applying silver overlays to their glazed earthenware vessels using the same electrodeposition process used on the glass wares in this case.

Founded in Cincinnati, Ohio, by Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, Rookwood produced highly prized ceramics that were typically decorated by American women such as Constance Amelia Baker, who created the pitcher's fruit designs in colored slip, or liquid clay. The ewer with dragons was decorated by Kitaro Shirayamadani, a Japanese artist Storer hired in 1887.

RISD MUSEUM

Japanesque

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Teapot and Stand, 1871

Silver

Mary B. Jackson Fund 80.155ad



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Black Coffeepot, 1881

Silver with rattan

Gift of Kathy Field Malavasic in memory of her mother Doris Coles
Field 2016.68.1ab



Japan's showing at the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia generated a great interest in Japanese aesthetics, which were adapted by American and European artists in the development of the Aesthetic movement.

The teapot on stand is one of the first American pieces of Japanesque silver hollowware. The Japanese iron pot it was based on featured a basketry handle, which Gorham fashioned from silver in its version. Popular after dinner, black coffee was often served in elegant vessels like this example with a braided rattan-covered handle.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tureen on Stand, 1881

Silver with copper

Collection of Kathy Field Malavasic



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tray, 1881
Silver
Dallas Museum of Art, Decorative Arts Acquisition Fund, 1993.10

For reference and inspiration, Gorham silversmiths accessed the company's library of design books, which spanned many eras and cultures. This tray's design of a ferocious tiger derives from an illustration of a Japanese ceramic plate in *The Ceramic Art of Japan*, a book in the Gorham library. The Japanesque copper appliqué on the striking tureen on stand were inspired by the thousands of woodblock designs found in Katsushika Hokusai's *Manga*. Gorham owned at least 7 volumes of the 15-volume set.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Ice Cream Hatchet, ca. 1880
Silver
Gift of Kathy Field Malavasic in memory of her mother Doris Coles
Field 2016.68.3



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Hizen Cake Saw
Silver
Collection of Kathy Field Malavasic TL47.2019.5



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Hizen Pastry Server
Silver
Collection of Kathy Field Malavasic TL47.2019.4

Gorham produced flatware and serving utensils inspired by Japanese forms and aesthetics. The ice cream hatchet takes its shape from Japanese axes with spears (*ono su yari*), a type of ceremonial samurai weapon. The company's *Hizen* pattern, introduced around 1880, was named for a former Japanese province located in what is now the Saga and Nagasaki prefectures. The pastry server is populated with sinuous scaled dragons, and the saw's handle features koi fish and cranes—symbols of good fortune and long life.



RISD MUSEUM

Elephant

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Elephant Fruit Stand, 1881
Silver with gilding
Manoogian Collection, courtesy the Detroit Institute of Arts
TL59.2019

Inspired by silver Russian trompe l'oeil vessels imitating draped textiles, Gorham became the leading producer of these types of fantastic works. This monumental stand—perhaps the company's highest achievement in the style—suggests intricately woven, and patterned fabric with fringe of the finest silver threads, draped to form a litter carried by four richly adorned elephants.



The Use of Ivory

For thousands of years, artisans across the globe have made objects from African and Asian elephant-tusk ivory, but the beauty of those works typically has come at the cost of killing elephants. Ivory was a much sought-after material in the 1800s, and many elephants were slaughtered as a result. The objects museums hold reflect the actions and thinking of their times, and these works are historical examples of an inhumane practice.

The RISD Museum abides by rules banning trade in ivory as set forth by international governmental entities, in particular CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), an international agreement put into force in 1975 between governments to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of those species.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Trophy Cup, 1883
Ivory with silver and glass
Gift of Kathy Field Malavasic 2017.69.4

African and Asian elephants currently are endangered species and there is a related trade ban on ivory—realities that can challenge our ability to appreciate objects made from elephant tusks during earlier eras. Ivory has been considered a precious material for thousands of years, widely traded and used to create religious and secular works of art, often for the purpose of celebrating an achievement, person, or event.

Skill in carving, mounting, and employing the natural shape of the tusk is evident in the cup given to a tournament champion, the utensils made to serve family and guests, and the pitcher's intricately enameled mounts and silver handle, which references its source.



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Salad Fork and Spoon, ca. 1875
Ivory and silver
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 1988.066



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Martelé Pitcher, 1898
Ivory with silver, enamel, and gilding
Collection of Suzanne and Joel Sugg TL49.2019.5



Oriental East Indian

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Coffee and Tea Service, 1886
Silver with gilding and wood
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2014.25

This elaborate service blends Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Islamic, and Greco-Roman references. Its pattern, Oriental East Indian, was so named because it favored “oriental” styles (from the Latin *orientalis*, for eastern) over “occidental” ones (from the Latin *occidentālis*, for western). Each of the six pieces is individualized in its ornament, yet all come together harmoniously.

This service represents the highest levels of silversmithing technique, with relief decorations that required hundreds of hours of hand-worked chasing. Gorham’s chasers were among the most skilled silversmiths in the field, commanding the company’s highest pay for



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their many years of training and experience. One 1892 newspaper noted nearly 100 chasers sitting at workbenches “where the full light from long windows fell upon their work.”

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Coffeepot, ca. 1890
Copper with silver and ivory
Mary B. Jackson Fund 84.161

In 1881, Gorham introduced a line of copper-bodied wares that featured mixed-metal appliqué, decorative borders, and, often, a deep reddish-brown glossy finish. An 1882 article in the *Jewelers' Circular and Horological Review* noted that “copper predominates” this line, whose “colors are dark warm reds of finest polish, mellowing into yellowish browns . . . [with] the highest polish.” This hammered-copper coffeepot follows a Persian form, while its applied silver designs recall Katsushika Hokusai's *Manga*, a collection of the artist's sketches of Japanese flora, fauna, and figures that was part of Gorham's design library.



Trompe L'oeil

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tea Caddy, 1880
Silver with gilding
Museum collection S44.26

This silver tea caddy with a cloth cover seemingly secured with a piece of string tied in a bow is a playful example of Gorham's trompe l'oeil works. Meaning “trick of the eye” in French, trompe l'oeil is the attempt to make a thing look like something it is not. Here silver has been made to resemble woven and twisted textile fibers.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Fruit Plate, 1881
Silver with gilding and copper
Dallas Museum of Art, The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Art
Fund, Inc., 1989.6.McD TL50.2019.9



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Pitcher, 1879

Silver with copper

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of Eleanor Freed in memory of her parents, Esther and David W. Kemper, 82.529 TL51.2019

An important example of Gorham's trompe l'oeil work, this fruit plate characterizes the company's skill not only in fashioning realistic depictions of nature, but also in using copper as a sculptural material. The plate portrays the season of summer with ripe cherries and leaves bearing the evidence of hungry insects.



The pitcher's four intricately chased panels feature women engaged in seasonal activities, such as binding sheaves of wheat and harvesting fruit from trees, enhancing the natural elements of the design and illustrating the four-seasons motif popular in America in the late 1800s.

Turtles/Snakes

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Terrapin Ensemble, 1890

Silver with gilding

Private Collection, courtesy of the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields TL57.2019

This ensemble—produced to serve and consume terrapin, or turtle, soup—represents not only Gorham's realistic interpretations of marine creatures but also the company's response to and influence on popular culinary trends. Often served as a first course, turtle soup became a symbol of refined American dining in the 1800s. The form here indicates the intended contents, illustrating an important theory of design.

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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Snake Pitcher, 1885

Silver

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Edwin E. Jack Fund. TL70.2019.2

Incredibly inventive and dynamic, this trompe l'oeil pitcher appears to be composed of two snakes. Coiled to form the vessel's body and handle, they appear capable of slithering away or delivering a fatal bite to anyone within striking distance.

Gorham excelled in creating realistically rendered creatures. Here the deep relief of the snakes' bodies and scales exemplifies the advanced repoussé and chasing skills of the company's silversmiths.



Creatures

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pitcher, 1887

Silver

Collection of Kathy Field Malavasic TL47.2019.2

An important group of vessels made in the mid-1880s exemplifies how Gorham's chasers used age-old skills to create original, innovative works. On this pitcher's front, an otherworldly marine creature's face emerges from a ground of scales and seaweed. The handle is studded with circular bumps that suggest the suckers on octopus tentacles.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Punch Bowl and Ladle, 1885

Silver with gilding

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Edwin E. Jack Fund, 1890.383-.384
TL70.2019.3



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pitcher, 1882

Silver

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, William Cullen
Bryant Fellows Gifts, 2013 (2013.26) TL54.2019.2

Instilling a marine theme with otherworldly creatures, realistic pike and carp swim in waves that crest at the neck of the pitcher at far right, where a dragon forms the handle. The punch bowl's watery scene seemingly swells and sloshes, as would its liquid contents when served from the matching ladle with a shell-shaped gilded bowl. On one side of the punch bowl, a golden-eyed carp splays its fins. On the other, a dragon with gold eyes and tongue rides waves beneath the undulating rim populated with crabs, fish, and shells.



Marine

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Oyster Tureen and Stand, 1884 - 1885

Silver

Dallas Museum of Art, Discretionary Decorative Arts Fund and gift of
David T. Owsley via the Alvin and Lucy Owsley Foundation, 2005.9.A-C
TL50.2019.3.a-c



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tureen, 1884

Silver

Gift of Mrs. Pierre Brunschwig 81.072ab

These tureens appear to gyrate with strong swirls of waves, from which high-relief fish leap and dive. The design was first hammered out from the interior, then the exterior was decorated by hammering various chasing tools against the outer surface of the silver. Mounted with crabs, the handles were most likely cast knobby branches of coral. The sea urchin and lobster finials on the lids are characteristic of Gorham's ability to render extreme realism in silver.



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Narragansett Salad Set, ca.1885

Silver with gilding

Museum purchase: Bequest of Ida Littlefield 84.060



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Salad Servers, ca. 1880

Silver

The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.534

Known as the Ocean State, Rhode Island provided important source material for Gorham's aesthetic. Marine specimens often were cast as silver elements that were applied as ornaments or soldered together to form the objects themselves. In 1884, Gorham launched the *Narragansett* line, its name originating in the Native American tribe whose homelands comprise much of Rhode Island and its coast. The shell-shaped bowls of these servers look as if they were plucked from the ocean.



Mixed Metal

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Vase, 1880

Silver with copper and brass

Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2015.43



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tray, 1883
Silver and copper
Collection of Kathy Field Malavasic TL47.2019.3



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tray, 1883
Silver and copper
Collection of Kathy Field Malavasic TL47.2019.6



Inspired by Japanese metalsmiths' use of different metals and alloys, Gorham workers created silver, copper, and brass appliques of Japanesque and classical designs to decorate both hollowware and flatware. These appliques began as handmade wax models that were used to make master bronze casting patterns, from which molds were made that could create any number of metal casts. Appliques made from these casting patterns were then soldered onto an object's surface, including the textured surfaces of the trays and vase seen here. The vase is decorated with cast-copper appliques of a fork-plumed bird flying over a grassy mound. Two cast circular medallions were expertly "let in" to the vessel's surface, a process that involved cutting circles the same size as the medallions and precisely fitting and soldering these pieces into the holes.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Curio Vase, 1879
Silver with copper and brass
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri (Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust through exchange of the gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Frank P. Burnap, Mrs. E. A. Grosvenor Blair, Hilliard Hughes, Nettie Yanoff Brudner, Miss M. H. Bogie, and Mrs. John B. Stover; the bequests of Mary B. B. Crouch and Christine Hall Hough; and other Trust properties (92-17) TL55.2019.1



One of Gorham's more experimental lines, *Curio* was made by randomly scattering fragments of metals such as copper and brass onto sheets of silver that were heated to partially fuse the metals. The sheets were then rolled and shaped into hollowware vessels or transformed by the drop press into flatware handles.

Mixed-metal appliques often decorated *Curio* wares, such as the samurai figure on the vase, taken from Hokusai's *Manga*. Gorham's costing ledgers list more than 30 pieces offered in the *Curio* pattern,

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which also featured engraved decorations on fork tines, knife blades, and spoon bowls.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Curio Fork, 1879 - 1880

Silver with copper and brass

Gift of Kathy Field Malavasic in memory of her mother Doris Coles
Field 2016.68.2



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Curio Pepper Shaker, 1879

Silver with copper and brass

Gift of Kathy Field Malavasic 2017.69.2ab



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Curio Ice Cream Knife, ca. 1884
Silver with copper and brass
Dallas Museum of Art, Gift of Phyllis Tucker in honor of Charles R.
Masling, 1988.66 TL50.2019.6



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Toddy Kettle and Stand, 1883
Iron with copper, brass, silver and ebony
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.203abc



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Knife, ca. 1880
Silver and bronze with gilding
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund and Walter H. Kimball Fund
1989.007.2



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Knife, ca. 1880

Silver and bronze with gilding

Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund and Walter H. Kimball Fund

1989.007.1



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Knife, ca. 1880

Silver and bronze with gilding

Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund and Walter H. Kimball Fund

1989.007.3

In 1883 Gorham debuted *Banko Iron Ware*, an experimental line of iron hollowware with Japanesque silver appliqués. The bodies feature a deep red-brown texture that often is accented with granulations of silver and copper that appear to be sprinkled randomly or clustered as mounds on which figures stand or trees spring. The kettle was modeled after a traditional Japanese sake kettle. Its globular form is accented by a three-dimensional silver dragon whose body was painstakingly shaped to hug the kettle's curves. Gorham also experimented with flatware handles cast in bronze with designs accented in mixed metals.



RISD MUSEUM

Creating Gorham Silver *The Most Perfect System*

Gorham's success was built upon effective, profitable combinations of systematic processes. This method applied to their utilization of original artistic talent, their use of handwork and machinery, and their business strategies. From design drawings to costing ledgers and inventory control to trade catalogues, interrelated systems enabled the company's continual expansion of scale, technological advancements, and diversity of products. In 1871, the *Providence Journal* praised Gorham's well-managed, inventive approach as "the most perfect system . . . in keeping with an artistic idea, and artistic purpose." Gorham's well-managed, inventive approach was fully realized in 1890 with the opening of a state-of the art plant in nearby Elmwood.

In 1900, Gorham debuted one of their most successful lines, *Martelé*, which acknowledged Art Nouveau style through a characteristically distinct and original response. Conceived by head designer William C. Codman, the line's sinuous hand-raised forms with shimmering hammered surfaces systematically progressed from imagined ideas to design drawings to three-dimensional wares made by a number of silversmiths proficient in a variety of processes. The results were coded, inventoried, marketed, displayed, and sold around the world.

Presentation/Commemoration

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Tankard, 1898

Silver and ivory

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Ambassador and
Mrs. W. L. Lyons Brown Gift, 2014 (2014.70) TL54.2019.1



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
William Christmas Codman, English, 1839-1921
Herbert C. Lloyd, American, b. England, 1865-1951
Spaulding & Company, American, 1888 - 1973

Martelé Billings Cup, Martele1899

Silver

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 1990.004



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Loving Cup, 1902
Silver and boar tusk
Gift of Daphne Farago 1989.079



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Sachem Trophy Pitcher, 1887
Silver
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Houghton P. Metcalf, Jr. 1991.107



Gorham's trophy cups were often made for stock and sold through the company's numerous retail locations, where they could be custom-engraved upon purchasing or at a later date. Made in 1899, the three-handled loving cup was purchased from the Chicago retailer Spaulding & Co. and presented in 1913 to the eccentric millionaire and horse enthusiast C. K. G. Billings at the Vermont State Fair. The engraving was placed on the underside, so as not to disturb the cup's elegantly chased design. The loving cup with boar-tusk handles may have been purchased from Gorham's retail location in Montreal. The Montreal Hunt Club presented it to the winner of their green steeplechase, a race in which horses jump fences and ditches.

Other trophies, such as the pitcher, were custom made. Produced in October 1887, this pitcher commemorates the victory of the *Sachem*, a sailboat owned and raced by Jesse Metcalf of Providence. More than 100 hours of labor went into its making, 30 of which were spent chasing aquatic motifs and letters in the form of seaweed.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Apostle Spoons, 1894
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.565



Gorham's Ecclesiastical Department produced objects for the use and adornment of churches as well as for personal devotion and gift giving in the Christian tradition. These spoons would have likely been a present celebrating First Communion, or the first time a Roman Catholic child receives consecrated bread and wine. Featuring the names and images of the 12 apostles and Jesus, the spoons may have been as much an instructional tool as a celebratory gift.

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Athenic

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Athenic Vase, 1901
Silver with copper and enamel
Lent courtesy of the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Va., Gift of
Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., 71.969 TL112.2018

On the heels of Gorham's acclaimed *Martelé* line came *Athenic*, which embraced the handcrafted tradition and style of the Arts and Crafts movement while also incorporating elements of Art Nouveau. Introduced around 1901, *Athenic* featured works in both silver and copper with elements of glass, enamel, and ivory, making their debuts at world's fairs. This vase was produced for the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. On top of the silver body, copper mounts enhanced with brightly colored enamel form stylized peacock feathers, a popular Art Nouveau motif.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Athenic Cigar Box, 1901
Copper, silver, and cedar
Abby Rockefeller Mauze Fund 80.099

Copper was a popular material choice for a number of Gorham's works related to smoking, such as cigar lighters, ashtrays, and match vases. This cigar box with Art Nouveau silver decoration is lined with cedar, a material known for its humidity-absorbing qualities. An *Athenic* cigar box closely resembling this example was displayed by Gorham at the 1902 Exposition in Turin, Italy.



Martelé

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
William Christmas Codman, English, 1839-1921
Otto Colmetz, American, b. Australia, 1863-1950
Herbert C. Lloyd, American, b. England, 1865-1951
William L. MacMillan, American, 1867-1928
Martelé Tea and Coffee Service, *Martelé* 1901
Silver with ivory
Gift of Mrs. Kirkland H. Gibson 1992.071

Gorham's *Martelé* line was decorated almost entirely by hand. Once silversmiths raised and shaped the forms, they passed the works to chasers who interpreted the decoration using drawings made by the



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designers. The chasers were recorded by individual numbers noted in Gorham's costing records.

Large sets such as this tea and coffee service were often worked on by multiple chasers. Otto Colmetz, #10, was responsible for chasing the kettle on stand and coffeepot. Herbert Lloyd, #3, labored on the teapot and creamer, while William MacMillan, #16, chased the sugar and waste bowls. The design was by Gorham's chief designer, William Christmas Codman, who signed his name on the underside of the teapot.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
David Wilmot, English, 1853 - 1940

Martelé Night Vase, 1899

Silver with gilding

Collection of Suzanne and Joel Sugg TL49.2019.4

This vase was made as one of a pair that featured day and night imagery. The subject here is night, with numerous decorations on the theme. An owl perched on pine branches dominates one side of the vase, while on the other a bat flies over a sleeping female figure. Poppies, a symbol of rest, adorn the bottom. Figural decorations, rare in the *Martelé* line, were produced by Gorham's best chasers. London-born David Wilmot was hired by Gorham in 1875 and by 1892 had become a leading chaser. He spent almost 50 years working for the company.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Robert Bain, Scottish, 1866-1946

Martelé Ewer and Dish, 1900

Silver

Collection of Suzanne and Joel Sugg TL49.2019.3.ab

This set was made by one of Gorham's most talented chasers, Robert Bain, who joined the company in 1892. Bain primarily worked on special projects and completed only a few large pieces each year, including contributions to the *Martelé* dressing table and stool on the platform. This set's design is Art Nouveau, with swirling waves in the dish that encircle six female faces in the dish and rise upward on the ewer to ensconce the legs of a female figure that forms the ewer's handle.



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
William E. Jordan, American, 1861-1945
Martelé Tankard, 1900
Silver with gilding
Collection of Suzanne and Joel Sugg TL49.2019.6

Born and raised in Providence and affectionately known as Billy, William E. Jordan was apprenticed to Gorham in 1878, when he turned 18. A talented chaser, he rose through the ranks to spend his career—just shy of 50 years—working for Gorham. Jordan was charged with decorating a number of significant Martelé works, including this tankard exhibited at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, where Gorham debuted their *Martelé* line. Their impressive presentation of silver won Gorham the grand prize.



Jefferson Cup

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
William Clark Noble, American, 1858-1938
Joseph Jefferson Cup, 1895 - 1896
Silver
New Orleans Museum of Art, Gift of Jolie and Robert Shelton in honor of John Webster Keefe and E. John Bullard, 2011.3 TL52.2019

This monumental cup was made for the American actor Joseph Jefferson and presented as a gift from his fellow performers. Figures of Jefferson from his best-known productions—*Rip Van Winkle*, *The Rivals*, and *The Heir at Law*—are staged on three sides of the cup and an inscription to Jefferson adorns the body. This work was first modeled in plaster by the sculptor William Clark Noble, who delivered the model to Gorham to reproduce in silver. The final product took more than 1,000 hours to make, the majority of which were spent casting and chasing the elaborate scenes and figures.



Heller Flatware

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Florentin Antoine Heller, French, 1839-1904
Mythologique Flatware Design Samples, 1894
Silver
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.42

Throughout the late 1800s, Gorham recruited international designers who brought outstanding silversmithing and design talent to the company. One of these designers, Florentin Antoine Heller, was a sought-after silversmith and die-sinker trained in Paris. After working



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briefly at Tiffany's, Heller spent nearly 20 years creating some of Gorham's best-known flatware patterns, including *Fontainebleau*, *Old Masters*, *Versailles*, and *Mythologique*.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Mythologique Flatware Pattern Booklet, 1894
Paper, bound with string
Gift of Lenox Incorporated 2005.118.42.30

Throughout the late 1800s, Gorham recruited international designers who brought outstanding silversmithing and design talent to the company. One of these designers, Florentin Antoine Heller, was a sought-after silversmith and die-sinker trained in Paris. After working briefly at Tiffany's, Heller spent nearly 20 years creating some of Gorham's best-known flatware patterns, including *Fontainebleau*, *Old Masters*, *Versailles*, and *Mythologique*.

This sample set presents the 24 *Mythologique* designs, each depicting a different figure and scene from classical mythology. Gorham celebrated the release of *Mythologique* by publishing an illustrated booklet explaining the pattern's name and motifs. The sizes and shapes of the samples represent the variety of forms of flatware and servingware that could be ordered. The excess metal that remains between the fork tines would have been trimmed and smoothed on finished pieces—important elements of handwork retained in Gorham's production processes.

Flatware was initially made with a hand-hoisted drop press, which forced sheet silver (blanks) into two halves of a cut-steel die. Ever the visionary, John Gorham (1820–1891) commissioned a steam-powered version of the machine specifically designed for silverware production in the early 1850s, making Gorham the first American silver company to adopt this new and efficient technology. Evidence of the drop press's force, the excess metal that remains between the fork tines was trimmed and smoothed on finished pieces—important elements of handwork retained in Gorham's production processes.



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Admiral Dewey Cup

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

William Christmas Codman, English, 1839-1921

Admiral Dewey Cup, 1899

Silver, porcelain, and oak

Chicago History Museum, Gift of George Goodwin Dewey TL56.2019

One of Gorham's largest presentation pieces, this cup commemorates Admiral George Dewey (1837–1917), who led the United States to victory over the Spanish at the Battle of Manila Bay in 1898. The *New York Journal* launched a campaign to honor Dewey with a silver presentation cup, encouraging each American to send in one silver dime to be used in its production. Within five months, 70,000 dimes were collected and Gorham was chosen as manufacturer. While most of the dimes were melted down to create the cup, Codman's design kept some intact—note the lid, the border at the base, and the scales on the sea creatures, for example. The work features Victory flanked by eagles and holding a portrait of Dewey, as well as scenes from the admiral's life.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

William Christmas Codman, English, 1839-1921

Design for the Admiral Dewey Cup, 1899

Pencil, watercolor, and gouache on paper

Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.95

Standing just over six feet tall, this presentation drawing for the *Admiral Dewey Cup* is almost as impressive in scale as the cup itself. While the final form was largely unchanged from the drawing, some of the ornamentation was scaled back, most noticeably at the top. The two figures flanking Dewey's portrait were eliminated in favor of a single larger figure of Victory holding a laurel wreath in one hand and Dewey's portrait in the other.



RISD MUSEUM

Marketing Gorham Silver *Placing Silver Before the Public*

The creativity and innovation seen in Gorham's silver wares also pervaded the company's approaches to marketing and selling their work domestically and abroad. As an artistic firm established at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, Gorham was a pioneer in developing a new and evolving focus on advertising and market expansion. Gorham's vast sales force and networks of distributors, retailers, and wholesale venues were strategically supported by the company's trade catalogues, printed promotional materials, multimedia advertising campaigns, in-store marketing assets, promotional films, and sales manuals.

Gorham established and furthered its position as a leading silver firm in the U.S. and abroad by participating in regional, national, and international exhibitions and fairs. More than a dozen objects in this exhibition were shown in world's fairs and many others in broader varieties of public displays. These works required significant investments of time, expense, and effort, representing the company on a world stage and cementing Gorham's reputation as an industry leader.

William Christmas Codman, English, 1839-1921
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Nautilus Centerpiece, 1893
Silver gilt, pearls, turquoise, jade, garnet, tourmaline, amethyst, and shell
Dallas Museum of Art, gift of the 1990 Silver Supper Participants: Dr. and Mrs. Kenneth Altshuler, Mr. and Mrs. James P. Barrow, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan E. Boeckman, Mrs. Charles L. Bybee, Miss Wendy Garrett, Mrs. Albert G. Hill, Mr. and Mrs. S. Roger Horchow, Mrs. Barron Kidd, Dr. and Mrs. Mark L. Lemmon, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Marcus, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Marsh, Mrs. Eugene McDermott, Mr. and Mrs. Peter O'Donnell, Jr., Mr. David T. Owsley, Mr. and Mrs. H. Ross Perot, Mr. and Mrs. C. V. Prothro, and Mrs. Elloine M. Sinclair, 1990.176 TL50.2019.4



Designed by William Christmas Codman soon after he became chief designer at Gorham, the *Nautilus Centerpiece* is an outstanding example of the company's return in the 1890s to classically inspired motifs. Chosen by Gorham for display at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, it combines silver, shell, pearls, and semiprecious stones. Above the base of gilded shells adorned with the head of Neptune is the figure of his daughter Venus, who holds a jewel-encrusted nautilus shell. That shell is crowned by Nike, who celebrates America's victorious showing at the exposition. Gorham earned 55 awards in Chicago, the *Nautilus Centerpiece* being a major contributor to those honors.

RISD MUSEUM

1893 World's Fair

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Claret Jug, 1893
Silver-gilt, cut glass, amethysts, garnets, moonstones
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Marion E. Davis Fund, 2006.1246ab
TL70.2019.4.ab

Gorham brought an array of their latest achievements to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, including this claret jug. A publication produced for the exposition includes an illustration of the work and describes the process of "decorating portions of the glass with fired gilt." It summarizes the result: "With the addition of the silver-gilt frame in highly ornamental repoussé the culmination is reached, a truly dazzling product of the glass worker's and metal worker's arts."



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Wine Pitcher, 1893
Silver with gilding and glass
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri; Purchase:
The Charlotte and Perry Faeth Fund, 2006.19 TL55.2019.2

Dominated by a satyr mask, this wine pitcher—like the *Nautilus Centerpiece*—reflects Gorham's renewed enthusiasm for classically inspired motifs. Displayed at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, it represents the company's production of silver-mounted glass, a prized combination of materials and a popular choice for the fashionable American dining room. The attention Gorham received in Chicago exposed the company to new international audiences, including members of the press and officials of foreign governments, further increasing the firm's reputation and recognition.



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1900 World's Fair

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
William Christmas Codman, English, 1839-1921
Edward Zior Jr., American, 1895-1958
J. Hoare & Company, American, 1853 - 1920
Shreve, Crump and Low, American, 1796-
Martelé Wine Pitcher, 1900
Silver and engraved lead glass
High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Virginia Carroll Crawford Collection,
1982.306 TL53.2019

Representative of Gorham's new *Martelé* line, this pitcher was displayed at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, where the *Martelé* pattern debuted to critical acclaim, soon becoming highly successful. Conceived by the company's chief designer, William Christmas Codman, the pitcher features sinuous curves in the Art Nouveau style. Silver elegantly embraces the crystal form, which is intricately engraved with spiraling floral motifs that echo the animated metal surrounding it.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
George W. Sauthof, German, 1852-1927
J. Hoare & Company, American, 1853 - 1920
Martelé Claret Jug, 1900
Silver and glass
Collection of Suzanne and Joel Sugg TL49.2019.2

This claret jug's brilliantly colored body was manufactured in Corning, New York, the center of American glass production, also known as the Crystal City. Gorham collaborated with a number of American glass and ceramic firms, combining silver with materials and brands desired by their customers.

In 1900—the year that this jug was made—George W. Sauthof was one of the two highest-earning chasers at Gorham, where he worked from 1884 to 1927. Sauthof also made the three-handled loving cup in this case.



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
George W. Sauthof, German, 1852-1927
Martelé Loving Cup, 1900
Silver with enamel
Collection of Suzanne and Joel Sugg TL49.2019.1

Often given in the 1800s as trophies for hard-won athletic competitions, loving cups recall the large communal multi-handled drinking vessels traditionally passed from one person to the next at weddings, banquets, and other celebratory events. A rare example of *Martelé* work with enamel, this cup featuring red and yellow columbine flowers was one of more than 150 *Martelé* pieces shown at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, the site of Gorham's official international launch for the line.



1904 World's Fair Martelé

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
*Martelé Vase and Centerpiece, Martele*1904
Silver
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.180ab

This vase and centerpiece were made for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. Gorham costing slips list the numbers of the chasers responsible for their decoration. The number identifying the vase's chaser is indistinguishable, but records show that craftsman spent 150 hours carefully hammering the delicate flowers, leaves, and undulating lines that swirl up the sides of the piece, creating its sense of movement.



The chaser for the centerpiece was #30, William T. Thompson, who was born in England and hired by Gorham at the age of 21. Thompson spent a remarkable 280 hours creating floral designs and swirling lines to complement the vase. The vase and centerpiece were completed April 23 and 25, respectively—less than a week before the April 30 opening of the exposition.

RISD MUSEUM

1904 World's Fair Athenic

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Athenic Candelabrum, 1902
Silver
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2017.28.2



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Athenic Candelabrum, 1902
Silver
Elizabeth T. and Dorothy N. Casey Fund 2017.28.1



These candelabra were among the *Athenic* and *Martelé* objects Gorham produced for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. Their naturalistic and stylized floral ornament—and the movement of the vines, leaves, and flowers wrapped around their curving forms—are characteristic of the Art Nouveau style.

These objects are marked with a special intertwined SL stamp to denote their significance to the St. Louis fair. They were also illustrated in a special catalogue Gorham produced.

Erik Magnussen

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Erik Magnussen, Danish, 1884-1961
Spaulding & Company, American, 1888 - 1973
Candy Dish, 1926
Silver and ivory
Dallas Museum of Art, gift in memory of Ethyl Carradine Kurth,
1990.230ab TL50.2019.8.ab



This is an example of Gorham's early work in a modern style, instigated by a silversmith whose brief time with the company produced iconic objects. Hired by Gorham in 1925, Erik Magnussen arrived at the company with somewhat of a celebrity status. After studying sculpture in Copenhagen and silver chasing in Berlin, Magnussen had opened his own studio in Denmark in 1909. Characteristic of the first works he designed for Gorham, this candy dish features a hand-hammered finish, stylized plant motifs, and ivory.

RISD MUSEUM

Erik Magnussen, Danish, 1884-1961
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Pair of Candlesticks, 1928
Silver with turquoise
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.182

Erik Magnussen developed his silversmithing style in the same artistic circle as Georg Jensen, one of Denmark's most influential designers. Magnussen's early creations for Gorham reflected contemporary Danish silver design, characterized by simplified shapes with hammered surfaces and embellishments of curvilinear ornament and semiprecious stones—as seen in the turquoise spheres and shimmering silver planes of these candlesticks. Danish silver design had a great impact on American silver, as the trade publication *Jewelers' Weekly* had noted in 1920: "Like a breeze of fresh air there comes from far away Denmark some suggestions for silver design in their own and individual art in silver work."



Cubic

Erik Magnussen, Danish, 1884-1961
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cubic Coffee Service drawing, 1927
Gouache, graphite and black ink on beige wove paper
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2019.6



Recently rediscovered, this polychrome drawing provided a vivid preview of what would become one of the 20th century's most iconic works in metal. Its designer, Erik Magnussen, was hired by Gorham to inject a fresh, modern aesthetic into the company's silver wares. He responded with this dynamic contrast of black, silver, and gold that resonates as strongly in ink and gouache on paper as it does on the service's boldly patinated, gilded, and polished silver surfaces. Over time, the service's dark patinated-silver facets had faded considerably. This design drawing provided incontestable evidence of Magnussen's original intent, guiding the conservation treatment of the Cubic service conducted by the RISD Museum for this exhibition.

Erik Magnussen, Danish, 1884-1961
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cubic Coffee Service, 1927
Silver with patinated and gilt decoration with ivory
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.488

In 1927, Magnussen created his most radical work for Gorham. Resplendent with a gleaming surface of sterling, gold, and dark-patinated silver facets, the *Cubic* coffee service was a three-



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dimensional manifestation of the everyday objects Cubist artists had depicted in drawings and paintings. This bold realization positioned Gorham in the vanguard of Modern American silver design. Consisting of a coffeepot, creamer, sugar bowl, and tray, the service was entirely designed, executed, and marked by Magnussen.

The *Cubic* service became an immediate sensation when Gorham displayed it in their Fifth Avenue showroom. They described the set as “based on tall buildings seen from various perspectives and . . . sun shadows on set-back skyscrapers” and praised it for reflecting the “Lights and Shadows of Manhattan.”

Erik Magnussen, Danish, 1884-1961
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Cubic Salad Set, 1927
Silver with patinated and gilt decoration and ivory
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.489

In addition to the *Cubic* service, Magnussen designed salad servers, a bowl, a bonbon dish, a candlestick, and a sandwich tray for the *Cubic* line. Gorham’s customers, however, were not yet in step with Magnussen’s extreme modernism, and Gorham was a commercial enterprise for which profit was imperative. The firm quickly assured its clientele that the *Cubic* line “was merely for exhibition . . . a piece of Fine art . . . not intended for daily use.”



Modern

Edward Steichen, American, 1879-1973
Gorham Sterling, New York, 1930 (Juxtapositions), negative 1930,
printed 1984–86
Gelatin silver print
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Janet Singer, 2000.1103
TL70.2019.1

This dynamic composition of flatware represents a new direction that Gorham took in their advertising in the 1930s. Previous campaigns featured cheerful newlyweds and elegant dining tables, with all the flourishes of traditional style. After the 1929 stockmarket crash, however, the company sought a marketing approach that was more minimal and modern than old-world luxury. Gorham hired Edward Steichen, whose photographic work traversed the boundaries of art, fashion, and advertising, to create this new brand identity. This photograph accompanied the tag line “without being extravagant you can have the finest name in sterling,” emphasizing that affordability and style were not mutually exclusive. The featured flatware pattern, *Fairfax*, underscored a contemporary, yet timeless, aesthetic.



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Donald H. Colflesh, American, b. 1932
Circa '70 Coffee and Tea Service, 1960-1963
Silver, ebony and Formica®
Gift from the M. F. Collection 2017.47

Gorham hoped that Donald H. Colflesh—who was recruited fresh out of the Pratt Institute's undergraduate industrial-design program—would bring new perspectives to the company. His first design for Gorham, this coffee and tea service, conjures images of satellites, sleek rockets, and upward momentum, an ode to the era's fixation on space exploration. An aesthetic shift for Gorham, the *Circa '70* series mixes the traditional materials of silver and ebony with modern, minimalist design. The set was originally sold with a smaller, simpler tray. The version seen here was designed in 1963, after Colflesh left Gorham, and based on his design for the sugar bowl. Colflesh relayed his approval many years later, upon seeing the tray in person.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Donald H. Colflesh, American, b. 1932
Modern Beverage Server and Stirrer, 1959
Silver and plastic
Gift of Sam Hough 2006.113.1

After World War II, the pitcher saw a rise in popularity. Cocktails could easily be made and served in this Modern beverage server, mixed with a long-handled utensil known as a “stir-up spoon” that Gorham sold separately. The pitcher's sleek cylindrical shape contrasts with its bold, sweeping handle, which visually unites it with Donald H. Colflesh's other space-age designs for Gorham, such as the *Circa '70* service.



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Sheila M. Chandler, American, b. 1943
Ring Basket, 1965
Silverplate and plastic
Dallas Museum of Art, The Jewel Stern American Silver Collection,
Decorative Arts Fund, 2002.29.252 TL50.2019.7

This colorful basket has a somewhat unusual story. Its designer, Sheila M. Chandler, was a senior at Louisiana State University when she submitted her prototype—a fruit bowl made of silver rings and colored-glass disks—to the 1965 Sterling Today Student Design Competition, sponsored by the Sterling Silversmiths Guild of America.



Chandler was awarded second place, and her piece and other winning

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designs toured to venues around the country, including the RISD Museum. Gorham representatives must have seen the bowl while it was on view in Providence in 1965, for they contacted Chandler asking if she would sell them the rights to her design and she agreed. To achieve the look of Chandler's original concept at a more affordable price, the basket was produced in silverplate, with plastic disks instead of glass.

RISD/Dallas Martelé

William Christmas Codman, English, 1839-1921
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Martelé Dressing Table and Stool, 1899

Silver, glass, fabric, and ivory

Dallas Museum of Art, The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Fund, Inc., in honor of Dr. Charles L. Venable, 2000.356.A-B.McD
TL50.2019.1.ab

Born of the Art Nouveau style, the *Martelé* line was named after the French verb "*marteler*" (to hammer), referencing its hand-hammered finish. The line's evidence of handwork and its undulating forms were enhanced by Gorham's decision to typically make *Martelé* from 950 silver or finer, meaning the silver was at least 95% pure. This combination, or alloy, is softer—or more malleable—than sterling silver, which contains 92.5% silver and 7.5% copper.

Gorham chose the Paris 1900 Exposition for the line's official international launch, and it was met with sweeping success. The centerpiece of *Martelé's* debut was this solid-silver dressing table and stool, made from 78 pounds of silver over the course of 2,300 hours of labor. William Christmas Codman was awarded a silver medal and a gold medal at the exposition, Gorham president Edward Holbrook was inducted into the French Legion of Honor, and the Gorham Manufacturing Company secured the grand prize for metalwork.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
William Christmas Codman, English, 1839-1921
Joseph Edward Straker, English, 1843-1912
Franz Ziegler, German, 1869-1934

Potter and Company, American, fl. 1878-1910

Martelé Writing Table and Chair, 1903

Ebony, mahogany, boxwood, redwood, thuya wood, mother-of-pearl, silver, mirrored glass, and gilded tooled leather

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick B. Thurber 58.095ab



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Debuted at the 1904 world's fair in St. Louis, this writing table and chair were designed to be showstoppers in a crowd of stunning objects. More than 10,000 hours of labor, 75 pounds of silver, and a panoply of exotic materials make up this unique set, which deftly melds sinuous European Art Nouveau floral and figural motifs, French Rococo forms from the 1700s, and traditional Hispano-Moresque designs. Intricately wrought symbolism is found in the daytime poppies and the night owl below the mirror and the decoration of the legs, each representing one of the four seasons, with female masks surrounded by lilies, roses, chrysanthemums, and pine cones. The table and chair won the fair's grand prize in silversmithing.

Gorham Design Drawings *From Idea to Line to Object*

Every silver object begins as an idea. Selected mainly from the RISD Museum's collection of more than 2,600 Gorham design drawings, these examples reveal the steps between thinking and making. Many of the drawings are designs for completed objects, or similar examples, on view in the exhibition.

The discussions between Gorham designers and silversmiths can now only be imagined, but a record of these conversations is provided in these sketchy drafts, overlaid revisions, polished refinements, exacting dimensions, technical specifications, and production instructions. Tears, smudges, and corrections indicate that these were working documents laid down on workbenches, pinned to walls, and held by workers as they determined the best ways to transform intentions into finished, sellable wares. Dating from the 1870s to the 1960s, these drawings attest to Gorham's creative impetus, well-honed silversmithing skills, and innovative use of technology.

Recently discovered in the Gorham Manufacturing Company Archive at Brown University, the polychrome drawing of a fruit stand is the only known existing drawing for one of the 816 pieces in the Furber service. The single silver fox in the drawing became two golden foxes striding along intertwined gilded grapevines in the completed object.

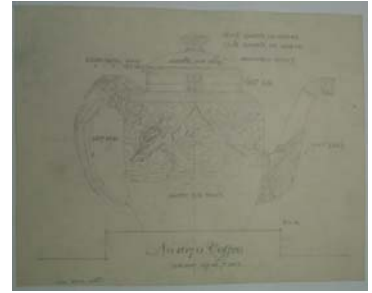
Depicting a coffeepot with a handle formed as an elephant's head, the design drawing notes the pattern number, the final object's intended weight in silver, and the numbers for the casting patterns used in its production. The drawing of a pickle dish shows two views: a plan view looking into the dish and an elevation view from the side.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Design for Furber Service Fruit Stand No. 775, ca. 1871
Graphite, watercolor, and gouache on paper
Brown University Library, Gorham Manufacturing Company Archive
TL28.2019.1



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Design for Coffeepot No. 1670, ca. 1935
 Graphite on tracing paper
 Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.1739



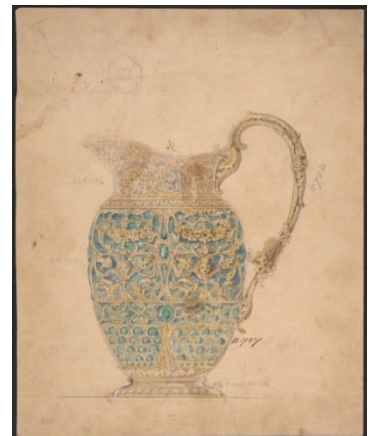
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Design for Pickle Dish No. 400, ca. 1935
 Graphite on paper
 Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.1729



Drawings in watercolors and gouache supplied important information about color for works that combined different metals and other materials. Referred to as presentation drawings, these renderings often represented commissioned works requiring a client's approval before production. Presentation drawings also documented important finished works, such as the blue glass pitcher in a gilded filigree framework shown in Chicago at the 1893 world's fair. The rendering of the glass ewer with a gilded and jeweled frame is similar to a claret jug shown in the Chicago fair.

Even for objects made solely of silver, watercolor and gouache renderings dramatically underscored design elements, such as the deep relief of the punch bowl's classical ornamentation.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Design for Pitcher No. S1152, ca. 1893
 graphite, watercolor, pen and ink, and gouache on paper
 Brown University Library, Gorham Manufacturing Company Archive
 TL28.2019.3



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Design for a Ewer, ca. 1890
Graphite, watercolor, and gouache on cut paper attached to paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.87



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Design for a Punch Bowl, ca. 1920
graphite, pen and ink, pastel, and gouache on gray paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.104



One of Gorham's most successful lines, *Martelé* features sinuous Art Nouveau style that was challenging to produce. The translation of the designers' drawings on paper to shimmering hand-hammered surfaces demanded insightful readings by chasers and other silversmiths, an iterative process revealed in these *Martelé* designs.

Martelé works frequently began as sketchy likenesses with handwritten notes and progressed to precise silhouettes with technical specifications before culminating in completed objects. Surrounded by animated lines that nearly suggest vibration, the drawing of the pitcher shows both a full rendering of the piece and a silhouetted outline. The drawing of the sugar bowl is very similar to the sugar bowl in the *Martelé* tea service on view in the exhibition.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Alfred J. Ottestad, Norwegian, 1878 - 1953
Otto Colmetz, American, b. Australia, 1863-1950
Design for Martelé Teapot MNZ, Martele1907
Graphite and pen and ink on cardboard
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2068



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
*Design for Martelé Kettle-on-Stand No. 9684, Martele*1897
 graphite, watercolor, gouache, and crayon on tracing paper
 Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2190



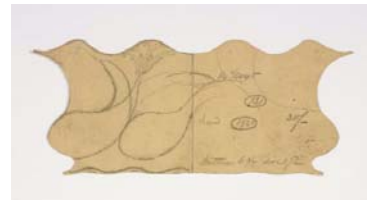
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
*Design for a Martelé Sugar Bowl, Martele*ca. 1905
 Graphite and pen and ink on paper
 Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2065



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
 William L. Hughes Jr., American, 1857-1932
 William Gray, 1864-1905
*Design for Martelé Pitcher DVK, Martele*1902
 graphite and pen and ink on paper
 Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.1930

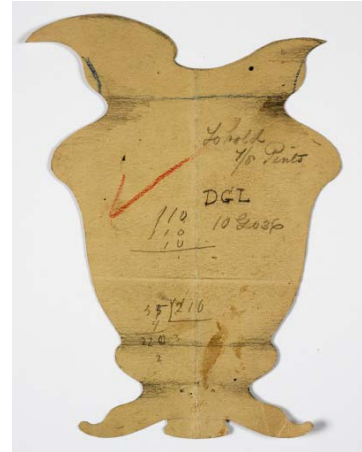


Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
*Design for Martelé Berry Bowl No. 131, Martele*1898
 Graphite on paper
 Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2196



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Otto Colmetz, American, b. Australia, 1863-1950
Herbert A. Taylor, American, 1892-1942
Design for Martelé Creamer DGL, Martele1903
Graphite and crayon on paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2208



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Otto Colmetz, American, b. Australia, 1863-1950
Herbert A. Taylor, American, 1892-1942
Design for Martelé Sugar Bowl DGL, Martele1903
Graphite and pen and ink on paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2209



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Herbert A. Taylor, American, 1892-1942
Otto Colmetz, American, b. Australia, 1863-1950
Design for Martelé Waste Bowl DGL, Martele1903
Graphite and crayon on paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2210



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
William J. Mason, American, 1853-ca. 1931
Herbert A. Taylor, American, 1892-1942
Charles Thomae, 1871-1958
Design for Martelé Waste Bowl DGJ, Martele1902
Graphite and crayon on paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2211



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
William J. Mason, American, 1853-ca. 1931
Charles Thomae, 1871-1958
*Design for Martelé Creamer DGJ, Martele*1902
Graphite and crayon on paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2212



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
David H. Glover, American, 1867 - 1929
Alexander MacBeth, 1865-1943
Henry Heath, 1861-1933
*Design for Martelé Candlestick H/RN, Martele*1905
Graphite and crayon on paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.2221



To facilitate the demanding production of the *Martelé* line, designer William Christmas Codman formed a special training school for silversmiths at Gorham in 1896. A review by the *Jewelers' Circular* underscores the challenge of transforming design into physical form: "While the designs are generally from one man, W. C. Codman, . . . the articles themselves were wrought under his direction by different skilled silver workers, and show to a considerable extent the individuality of the makers."

These polychrome presentation drawings demonstrate different stages in Gorham's design process. A rendering for a silver ewer designates an area for customized engraving, noted by the words "Inscription to come here." The drawing for another ewer, which depicts a female figure afloat in blue-green waves, remains in a conceptual state, with a handle so sinuous its function is questionable.

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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
*Design for a Martelé Ewer, martele*1897
 Graphite, ink, watercolor, and gouache on gray paper
 Collection of Gorham Division of Textron, Inc. EL006.84.77



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Design for a Martelé Ewer, Marteleca. 1900
 Graphite, watercolor and gouache on paper
 Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.59



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
*Design for a Martelé Soup Tureen, Martele*1899
 graphite, watercolor, pen and ink, gouache on gray paper mounted
 on board
 Collection of Gorham Division of Textron, Inc. EL006.84.10



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Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Thomas H. Yates, 1885-1947
*Design for Martelé Pepper RBH, Martele*1918
Graphite, watercolor, pen and ink, gouache on cardboard
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.1124



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Samuel R. Woolley, American, late 19th century -20th century
William E. Jordan, American, 1861-1945
*Design for Martelé Coffeepot H/BC, Martele*1905
Graphite, watercolor, pen and ink, and gouache on paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.1095



An accompaniment to *Martelé*, Gorham's *Athenic* line was introduced around 1901. *Athenic* works were fashioned in silver and copper with glass, enamel, and ivory. Stylistically, the line featured elements of Arts and Crafts design, such as hand-hammered copper. It also incorporated Art Nouveau style, as seen in the curvilinear silver decorations and mounts.

In the late 1800s, three-handled loving cups were popular gifts for contests and commemorations. The drawing of the *Athenic* loving cup with three small silver feet notes its status in Gorham's "special files" and instructs its return to Dept. G-2. Its inscription-ready applied silver plaque suggests its potential for personalization. The drawing of the *Athenic* loving cup with a tall stem bears the name of the designer, William Christmas Codman, as well as several sketched alternatives for the design of its base.

Although the drawing of the three *Athenic* vases decorated with colorful peacock feathers gives no

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indication as to whether all three were produced, the model AY212 was made and shown at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Design for Athenic Loving Cup AY209, Art Nouveauca. 1900
 Graphite, watercolor, pen and ink, and gouache on paper
 Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.1103



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
 William Christmas Codman, English, 1839-1921
Design for Athenic Loving Cup A4425, Marteleca. 1900
 Graphite, watercolor, and gouache on paper
 Collection of Gorham Division of Textron, Inc. EL006.84.15



Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Design for Athenic Vases, ca. 1901
 Graphite, watercolor, and gouache on cardboard
 Brown University Library, Gorham Manufacturing Company Archive
 TL28.2019.2

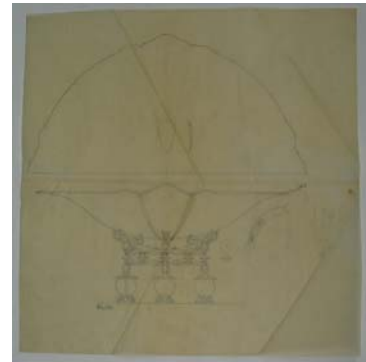


RISD MUSEUM

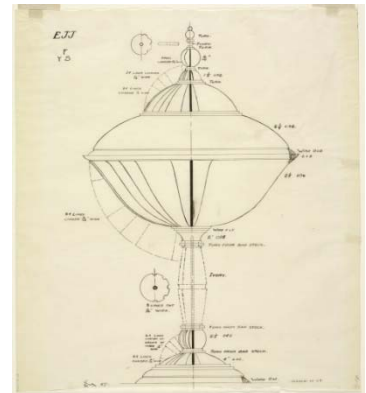
Hired in 1925 to bring a sense of modernism to Gorham's wares, Danish silversmith Erik Magnussen designed and made his own works in silver. His maker's mark—a zigzag E crossed with a zigzag M—and series of model numbers can be found on his drawings. Magnussen's renderings reflect the range of his designs, from fluid lines and curvilinear forms to precise geometrics and linear segments. His drawing of the dimensioned compote indicates that the stem is to be made of ivory cut with eight parallel lines that are 1/16-inch wide—similar to the ivory stem of his candy dish in the exhibition.

Hired by Gorham in 1956, designer Donald H. Colflesh created futuristic forms alluding to the space age and its use of high-tech materials. Although the sleek lines of his *Circa '70* tea and coffee service celebrate the Modern era, they are countered by his use of the decidedly traditional materials silver and ebony, as indicated on the drawings for the service's teapot and sugar bowl. The drawings specify how the pieces were made: the bodies were spun on a lathe and the handles, spouts, and finial bases were cast.

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Erik Magnussen, Danish, 1884-1961
Design for Compote EM229, 1927-1929
Graphite on tracing paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.1027

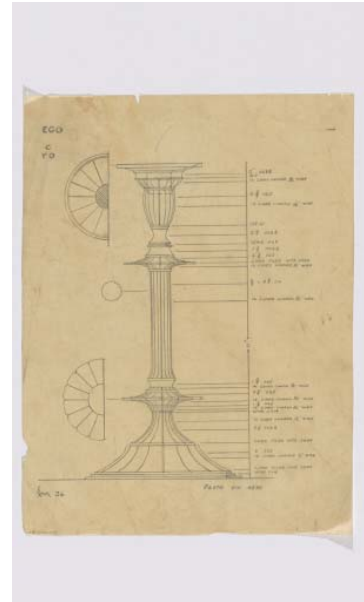


Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Erik Magnussen, Danish, 1884-1961
Design for Compote EM87, 1927
Pen and ink with graphite underdrawing on tracing paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.52



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Erik Magnussen, Danish, 1884-1961
Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Design for Candlestick EM33, 1927
Graphite on tracing paper
Gift of Lenox, Incorporated 2005.118.45.927



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raising, spinning, repoussé and chasing, engraving, stamping, and casting. Many of the tools seen here were made and used by Gorham workers.

For this exhibition, the RISD Museum produced a multi-screen video. The video features present-day metalsmiths engaged in the processes described above. It also incorporates footage from two historical films: *The Master Craftsmen*, made by the Gorham Manufacturing Company in 1926, and *Silver: Heirlooms of Tomorrow*, made about Gorham by the U.S. Bureau of Mines in 1930.

The RISD Museum thanks those who contributed to the creation of the Gorham Workbench:

Peter and Bonnie DiCristofaro

Joost During and Dianne Reilly, Yoast Silver

Jeffrey Herman, Herman Silver Restoration & Conservation

Valerie James, artist and jeweler (RISD MFA 2019, Jewelry + Metalsmithing)

Bill and Susanne Juaire, New England Copperworks and S. R. Blackington

Hugo Kohl, Hugo Kohl Jewelry

Avery Lucas, metalsmith and educator

Providence Jewelry Museum

RISD Jewelry + Metalsmithing Department

Robin Tagliaferri, granddaughter of Paolo Tagliaferri, Gorham Bronze Division

MJ Tyson, artist and jeweler (RISD BFA 2008 and MFA 2017, Jewelry + Metalsmithing)

Janet Zapata, independent scholar specializing in silver and jewelry

Kai Franz is the 2017–2019 Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Fellow in the Decorative Arts and Design Department at the RISD Museum. This installation and a related video on view in the Chace Gallery—contemporary contributions to *Gorham Silver: Designing Brilliance 1850–1970*—are the results of that fellowship.

Kai Franz, German, b. 1983

Fetish, 2019

Digital video, no sound

Courtesy of the artist TL79.2019

The term *fetish*, from the Portuguese word *feiticio*, suggests an object possessed of a super(natural) quality. Freud wrote of a young man who fetishized the shine on the nose of a woman, but this luminous shine was perceivable only to the young man. It was his own projection.

What happens to objects as they move in and out of a museum's database? Inside these glass vitrines, the silver works are held up to be consumed by our gaze, yet the objects also freeze, become inanimate. I am reminded of still-life paintings from a different time—they too come with a similarly fixed gaze: an uncanny charge, neither dead nor alive. Objects not useful, not useless. Objects, more or less

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precious, presented as rare commodities.

We follow these Gorham works during behind-the-scenes preparations for this exhibition, witnessing the types of touch, care, and attention they receive. Watching the conservation efforts, I notice the shine on the surface of the objects. The attention shifts, as though it is not the objects that are being polished, but the shine itself.

—Kai Franz

Kai Franz, German, b. 1983

Anti-Object (Homage To All Luncheons, In Fur And Without), 2019

3D printed PLA, modified g-code, Utah Teapot (virtual 3D model)

Courtesy of the artist TL77.2019

A tête-à-tête (French for “head-to-head”) is a meeting or private conversation between two people in an intimate setting. This case sets up a friendly conversation between two Gorham silver tête-à-tête tea sets and a hairy 3D-printed teapot. Without hair, this would be a Utah teapot, a 3D test model that has become a standard reference object and an in-joke within the computer-graphics community.

Let us imagine a conversation like this:

Tête-à-Tête, 1889–1890, handmade using traditional silversmithing techniques, says, “Look at your hair! Fuzzy fellow, you remind me of Meret Oppenheim’s cup and saucer.”

Anti-Object, the hairy 3D-printed version of a Utah teapot, responds, “My hair is real, but I see where you are coming from. If only I had eyes, I’d wink at Oppenheim all the time.”

All abuzz, **Tête-à-Tête, 1881**, the electroformed tea set, adds, “Additive, additive, additive.”

—Kai Franz