



William Morris

MYTH, OBJECT AND THE ANIMAL

FAMILY GUIDE



Above WILLIAM MORRIS, *Mazorca Installation* (detail), blown glass and rope, 12 x 3 x 10 feet, courtesy of William Morris Studio.



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MYTH, OBJECT AND THE ANIMAL

April 9 - August 20, 2006

A FAMILY GUIDE TO THE EXHIBITION

This guide is one that adults can use with children to explore the exhibition. The questions in this publication are only a guide. Please feel free to ask other questions and make discoveries on your own!

William Morris: Myth, Object and the Animal is an exhibit of beautiful sculptures, or three-dimensional works of art. Believe it or not, all the pieces in this show are made of glass! BE CAREFUL and please don't touch; they are extremely fragile.



Glass in the Past

Did you know that the history of glass goes back 4,000 years? From ancient Mesopotamia, glassmaking moved west to Egypt and Europe, and at last to America. Since the first settlers arrived, glass has been an important industry in the United States. However, it was not until the past 100 years that glass has been thought of as an art form. Before then, glass objects had to do a job. They were used as containers, window panes and even eyeglasses. Now, glass is also used to make beautiful sculptures that do not have a specific function.



The Science of Glass

Glass is made from natural materials found all over the world. The main ingredients are sand, ashes from burned plants and crushed stones. In order to make glass, these ingredients have to be heated to almost 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit. That's hotter than lava from a volcano!

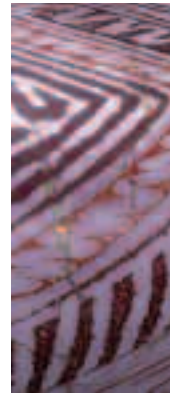


How it Works!

To create his amazing sculptures, William Morris gathers hot, melted glass on the end of a long pipe. He blows through the pipe to inflate the glass like he would blow up a balloon. While the glass is still very hot, he continues to blow and mold the glass to shape his sculpture. Morris also adds color and texture to his sculptures. He sprinkles powdered glass and minerals on the outside of his pieces to make the glass look more like clay, bone, shell, stone, bronze, leather or metal.

Find It!

Find these surfaces in the exhibit. Without touching, describe how you *think* each piece feels.



Above | William Morris working in studio, courtesy of William Morris Studio

Who is William Morris?

Since a very young age, William Morris has been interested in animals, archaeology and art. When he was a kid, he was fascinated with the local Native American burial grounds that he saw while hiking and camping around his home in northern California. His long-time love of nature and history can be seen in his sculptures. Today, he works and lives near Seattle, Washington and continues his nature walks.





Did you know?

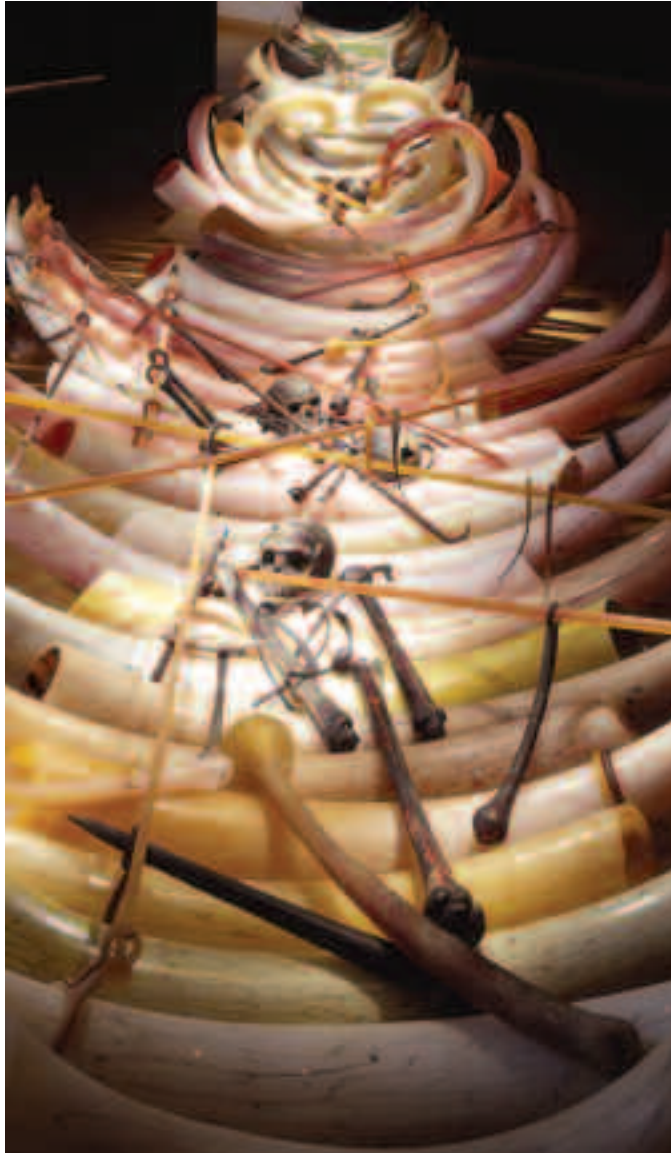
William Morris studied under Dale Chihuly, the pioneer of glass art. Morris was Chihuly's "gaffer" or master glassblower. Even though Morris worked alongside Chihuly for years, his art has a style all its own.

Find Chihuly's *Boat Installation* in the Chattahoochee Legacy Gallery.

- *Does Morris' art look like Chihuly's?*
- *How are they different?*
- *What do you think inspired Chihuly?*

Above: DALE CHIHULY, *Boat Installation*, 2001, blown glass and wood, approximately 120 x 240 x 72 inches, Museum purchase made possible by Thornton and Sue Jordan with Miles, and C.Dexter Jordan Jr. and Pat Jordan, with Mint, Ruth, and Zach, in Memory of C.Dexter Jordan Sr., Chairman of the Board of Trustees, 1956-1963, of the Columbus Museum and one of the five original Life Trustees.

Opposite: WILLIAM MORRIS, *Anasazi Crows* (detail), blown glass and steel stand, 17 x 23 x 5 inches, courtesy of William Morris Studio.



MYTH

Throughout history, artists have been inspired by myths and have illustrated them in their work. Art from ancient civilizations helps us understand their history and tells us about their tales and legends.

What is a myth?

A myth is a special story that describes how something came to be. Myths usually explain why we believe certain things about animals or nature. These stories do not necessarily have to be true. Myths are most often made-up or imagined. For example, there are myths that explain how the zebra got its stripes and why there are clouds in the sky.

William Morris was inspired by such ancient tales and myths. Through his artwork, William Morris tells stories about how people, animals and nature live together.

Above WILLIAM MORRIS, *Cache* (detail), 1993, glass, wood and metal, 5 x 6 x 36 feet, courtesy of William Morris Studio.

Make up a myth!

Find the piece titled *Cache*. What stories does it tell us about the people and the elephants? How did the tusks and bones come to be like this? What was the relationship between the people and the animals?

Write your own myth on the paper at the right that explains this scene.

Look Closely

- Describe the colors you see.
- Do you see any patterns or designs?
- What do these shapes remind you of?
- Look closely at the surface of the tusks. Are the tusks protecting or hiding the bones?





OBJECT

Digging the Past!

In addition to myths, William Morris was inspired by certain objects. For hundreds of years, people have been making objects. Past civilizations' objects are today's artifacts. An **artifact** is something that someone in the past made or used. It's something that gets left behind when a person leaves an area. An artifact can be a tool, a weapon or something used in the home. Artifacts are important for what they can tell us about the people who used them. *Have you ever found an artifact? What did it tell you about the person who owned it?*

Look Closely

Find the large installation titled *Artifact Panel*.

Did you know that there are almost 400 glass objects on this wall?

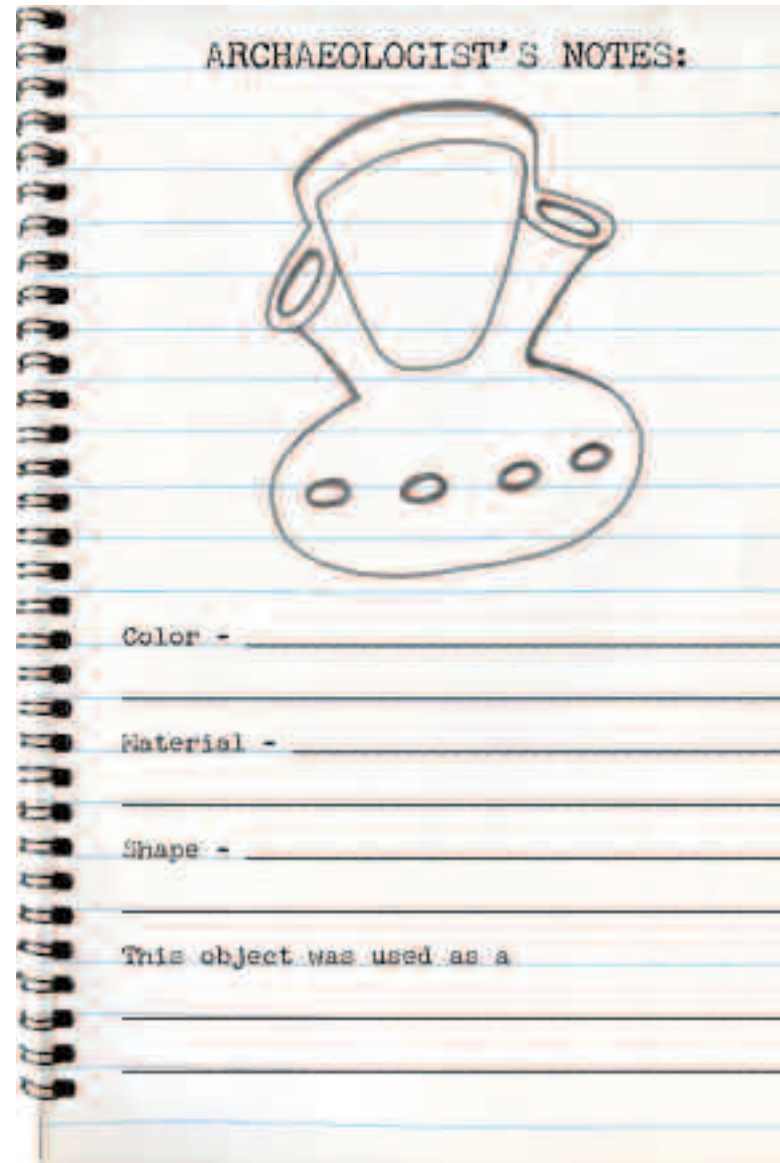
- What kinds of shapes do you see?
- Do you see any objects you can recognize?

Above WILLIAM MORRIS, *Bullseye Panel* (detail), blown glass and steel brackets, 97 x 98 x 16 inches, courtesy of William Morris Studio.

ARTifacts

If you were an **archaeologist**, or a person who studies artifacts to learn about past peoples, you would document each artifact you find. First, you would write down what material it was made of and its size, color and shape. Next, you would draw a picture as a record of your discovery.

Uncover clues of the past by finding the artifact outlined on the journal page at the right on *Artifact Panel*. Like an archaeologist, color the artifact and record the details on the journal page.





Awesome Adornments

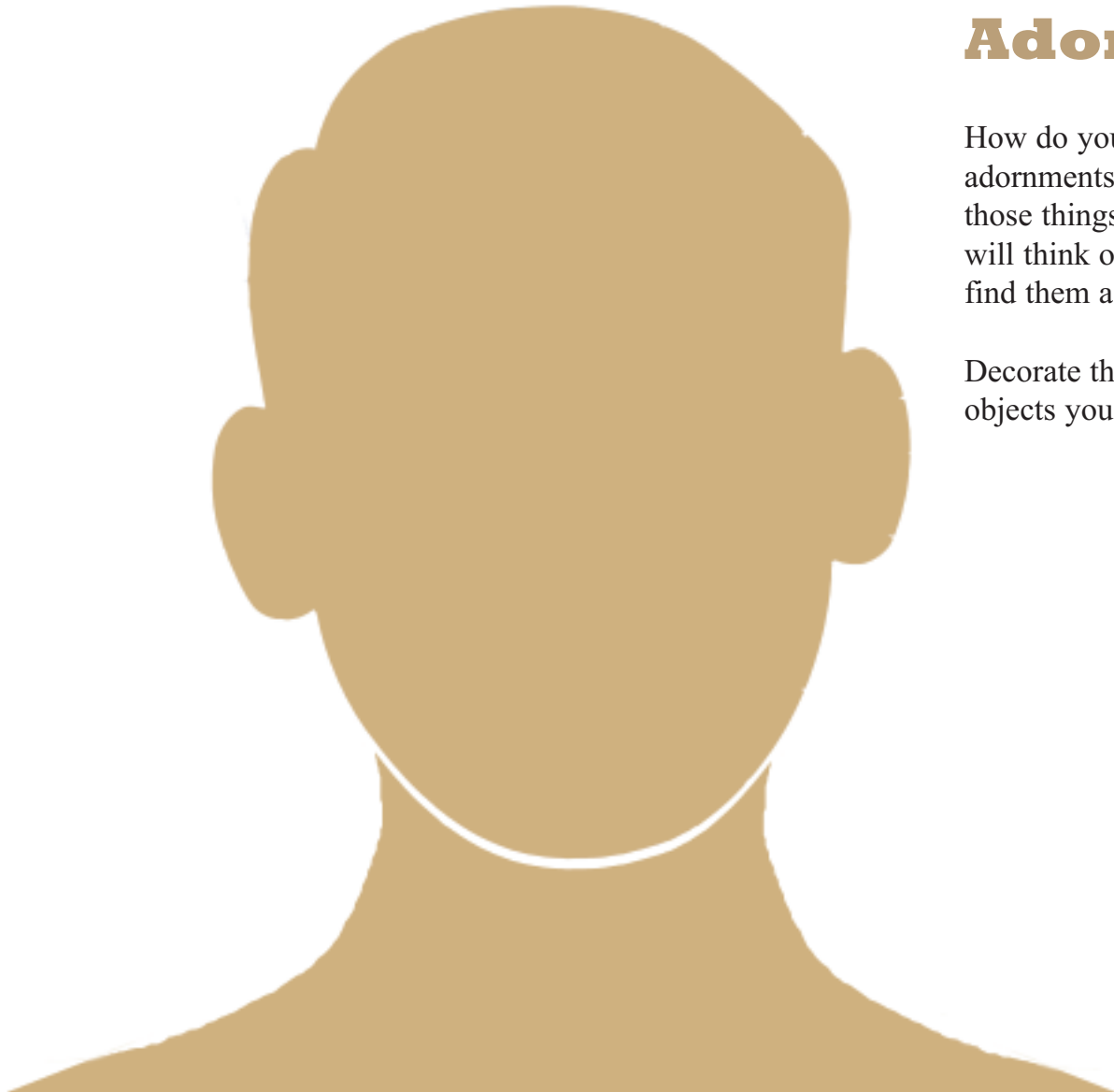
As long as people have been making objects, they have also been wearing objects. Many artifacts are the objects that people once used to adorn themselves. An **adornment** is something that is added to the clothes or body to serve a purpose or because it is interesting to look at. Sunglasses, earrings and hats are just a few examples of adornments.

How are you adorned today?

Look Closely

Find the pieces titled *Man Adorned*.

- Describe the kinds of adornments you see.
- Why are these figures decorated this way?
- What other artifacts do you think these people would leave behind?



Adorn Me!

How do you decorate yourself? What adornments do you wear? Why do you wear those things? What do you think future people will think of your adornment objects if they find them as artifacts someday?

Decorate the figure at the left with objects you wear.



ANIMAL

Animals in Art

Animals have been an important part of art for centuries. More than 15,000 years ago, ancient artists drew bison, deer and horses on cave walls. Since that time, people have included animals in their paintings, drawings and sculptures.

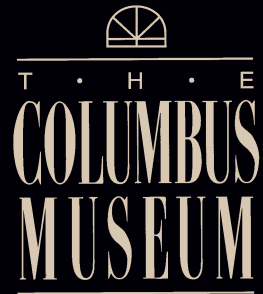
In most cultures, animals are used in art as symbols. They are often personified, or connected with different human characteristics or qualities. For example, the deer was a symbol of gentleness and kindness to Native Americans. The raven represented mystery and the unknown.

Above WILLIAM MORRIS, *Trophy Panel*, blown glass and steel, 30 x 291 x 14 inches, courtesy of William Morris Studio.



Find It!

Find the following animals in the exhibit.
What do these animals represent to you?



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