

OBJECT LESSON PLAN

Lisa Seifried

Artist: Unknown

Title of the Work: Console Table

Tour: Docent Symposium

Acc. #: 1971.932

Theme: Bringing Furniture to Life

Date of Work: 1740



State how this object relates to the theme or focus of the tour: Following the Baroque grand period, secularism in art is taken to an extreme. This console table is not particularly useful, but is an excellent example of Rococo style. It represents imaginative fantasies, playful ideas, and flamboyance.

Objectives: What do you want students to know and what do you want them to experience through working with this object?

1. Students will consider the many uses of a table.
2. Students will recognize the elaborate materials and ostentatious nature of this table.
3. Students will contemplate why this table was made; how it was to be used; and where it was to be placed.
4. Students will understand the extreme nature of the Rococo style.

Questions:

1. What types of tables have you used today and how did you use them? (I used the kitchen counter to eat my breakfast; a desk to write on; a desk to key into my computer.) **What might some of those tables be made of?** (Wood; linoleum; plastic; metal.)

2. What might be some other ways tables are used? (To eat on; to set things on; to play games on; as altars; as a work space; to wrap packages; to create table settings; to hold lamps; to provide a space for magazines or snacks.)

3. Let's look at this table to decide what it might be made of. (Silver; gold leaf; wood; brass; lapis lazuli.) **To whom might those materials be accessible?** (Not everyone; wealthy people; gold, silver and lapis lazuli are considered precious metals and gemstones which are very expensive.)

4. Look at the size, shape, and style of this table to see if we can figure out how it might have been used. (There's only a small space to put things on; you could only access it from one side because it was meant to be placed against a wall; it's too high to sit and work at; it has clawed lions feet and gadrooned ornamental bands; it's so fancy that putting anything less ornate would look silly on it; perhaps it held a flower arrangement or lamp; perhaps it is meant to attract attention with its gold and silver scroll-like base.) **So we have a very expensive table that may not be very practical for an ordinary person.**

5. The Rococo Style is meant to be playful, entertaining, fantasy-driven, showy, curving, frivolous and impressive.

6. If you could animate this table and give it a personality, what might it be? (It would be flamboyant; over the top; too much make-up; showy; chatty.) **What might its voice sound like?** (European accent; girly; affected; over the top.)

7. Where might it be placed and what might it say about its surroundings? (It's so ornate that it belongs in a palace; in a fancy reception room; in the drawing room of a huge, ornate estate or castle; somewhere to attract attention; a place where light can be caught by the gold or silver; it is surrounded by a lot of gold furniture; paintings; mirrors; other ornate furniture.)

8. What might it think about its owner? (It must be a rich person; a person who wanted to show it off; someone who was just filling space and didn't need a practical table; a king; someone who needed attention; someone who wanted to look wealthy, prestigious or grand.) **How might the owner be dressed?** (They're wearing wigs; beautiful, long brocade dresses in candy box colors.) **What might they be doing?** (They're bowing; practicing their sitting.)

9. Just by looking at this table, what can we learn about this time period? (The people like fancy, showy furniture and rooms; they tried to impress each other; they weren't very practical; they seem silly.)

Transition:

OBJECT LESSON PLAN

Lisa Seifried

Artist: William France, Jr.

Title of the Work: Library Ladder

Tour: Docent Symposium

Acc. #: 2011.2

Theme: Bringing Furniture to Life

Date of Work: 1782

State how this object relates to the theme or focus of the tour: This library ladder was commissioned for use in a library on the English Badminton Estate of the 4th Duke of Beaufort. It is meant to be both useful and decorative in the Chinoiserie style. Students can animate the ladder to decide who might have owned it and what kind of surroundings it was in.



Objectives: What do you want students to know and what do you want them to experience through working with this object?

1. Students will consider how they use ladders.
2. Students will discuss the material, design, shapes, fretwork, latticework, and construction of this ladder.
3. Students will recognize that this ladder is meant for a library.
4. Students will animate the ladder to decide who might have owned it and what kind of surroundings it was in.

Questions:

- 1. Have you ever been on a ladder and if so, for what purpose?** (I climbed a ladder to change a light bulb; to get on the roof; to reach something on a shelf.) **What did the ladder look like?** (It was straight, one-sided, and had a lot of rungs; it had 2 sides which formed a V shape; it was metal.) **How might one move the ladder you were on from place to place?** (One had to pick it up and carry it; it was big, so I dragged it.)
- 2. Have you ever seen a ladder that looked like this one and if so, how was it similar or different?** (I saw a similar ladder at Home Depot, but it was blue, metal, and not fancy; I saw a ladder at Target that moved on wheels.)

3. Let's think about what might be "ladder-like" about this object. What might it be made of? (It's made of wood; carved wood; brass.) **Can anyone describe the design or shapes they see on this ladder?** (There are straight strips of wood which interlace & form patterns; I see crisscrossing wood; there are geometric shapes such as hexagons, lozenges (diamond shapes), parallelograms; I see floral and tubular cut-outs; it kind of looks Chinese; there's a shelf on top.) **These interlacing patterns are called latticework and the floral cut-outs and relief work is called fretwork. Someone mentioned that it looked Chinese. This style, while built by Englishmen for an English Country Estate was inspired by Chinese tea garden pavilions. Chinoiserie was a very popular style in Europe during the 17th Century. They thought it teased the imagination with scenes of an exotic culture.**

4. How might this ladder move? (It has casters or wheels underneath; it moves from side to side.) **What might that brass extension at the top be used for and how might it work?** (It's meant to hold something; it flips up; it's a lectern; maybe it will hold a can of paint.)

5. Have many of you seen any of the Harry Potter movies? If so, do you remember the library in the movie? Where were the books kept? (They were on shelves from floor to ceiling, two floors around the room.) **How did one reach a book in that library?** (Magically, the books flew off the shelves when you wanted one.) **The library in the movie is a real library in Oxford, England called The Bodleian Library. Since books don't fly in real life, how might one reach a book in the Bodleian Library?** (They must have had ladders; or step stools; automated arms.) **This is a library ladder.**

6. If we could animate this library ladder, just by looking at its style, decoration, and purpose, what type of personality do you think it might have? (It would be severe because of its straight lines; straight laced; kind of like an English butler – stiff; judgmental because it's looking down on us; studious like a librarian; Asian; exotic.) **Man or woman and why?** (Either) **What type of voice might it have?** (It would speak with an English accent like a butler; quiet like a librarian; terse.)

7. As a reporter, what might this ladder tell us about its library? (It's filled with hundreds of books – floor to ceiling; there are a lot of law books on the shelf; there are beautiful oriental rugs; there is a beautiful mahogany desk with a fancy lamp; the furniture is comfortable for reading; the ceiling is very high; so are the windows.)

8. What might this ladder tell us about its owner and why? (He's very smart because he surrounds himself with books; he's rich because he has a library in his home with beautiful furnishings; he's important because he collects important things like books and knowledge.)

9. What type of book might this library ladder select for you and why? (Fantasy – because I'm a dreamer; historical fiction – because I love learning about history; mystery – because my mom says things disappear in my bedroom.)

Transition:

OBJECT LESSON PLAN

Lisa Seifried

Artist: Philip Hainhofer

Title of the Work:

Augsburg Cabinet - Adam Eck

Tour: Docent Symposium

Acc. #: 1970.404

Theme: Bringing Furniture to Life

Date of Work: 1630



State how this object relates to the theme or focus of the tour: This Augsburg Cabinet was commissioned to be both impressive and hold important curiosities, collections, and papers. Its materials and decorative nature reflects the status of its owner.

Objectives: What do you want students to know and what do you want them to experience through working with this object?

1. Students will consider the use of cabinets.
2. Students will discuss the size, shape, decoration and usefulness of this cabinet.
3. Students will decide who might own a curiosity cabinet like this based on its materials, storage space, and style.

Questions:

1. Do any of you have cabinets at home that you keep things in? If so, what kinds of things do you keep in them? (There are dishes in the kitchen cabinet; clothes in the drawers of the bedroom cabinet; medicine cabinet has medicine; coats hanging in the cabinet by the back door; books in my room; books and a sweater in my locker at school.)

What might some of those cabinets be made of? (Wood; metal; mirror; glass.)

2. Let's look at this cabinet. What might it be made of? (Various woods; ebony; brass, and iron implements; ivory; a clock.) **So how many craftsmen do you think it took to make this cabinet?** (2 – a cabinet builder & an ivory carver; 3 – an ivory carver, a cabinet or marquetry craftsman & a clock maker; 4 – a locksmith, cabinet builder, clock maker & ivory carver.) **Philip Hainhofer, a German from Augsburg was known for designing and collecting these types of cabinets. The carvings are attributed to Adam Eck from the Czech Republic. The clock was made by Martin Johnson.**

3. Can someone describe some of the decorations they see? (Above the clock is an ivory statue of the Christian virtue Charity; ivory claw feet; scroll corners; terrestrial patterns; animal heads in the corner; lion mask pulls; caryatid figures in relief; wood

relief carving; engraved ivory inlay in floral motifs; 3 landscape scenes; volutes; 2 putti; the mythology of Icarus.)

4. Judging by the size, shape, and decoration of the cabinet, how might it have been used? (It has plenty of drawers to put things in; the cabinets open and might have more drawers inside; it's good for storage; if there are locks, important papers could be kept there; it has a clock to tell time; it's large and heavy; it looks like it has a lot of room; it's very decorative so was probably meant to hold important things.) **So we have a very decorative cabinet that tells time, is made of expensive materials, is large, and probably very useful.**

During the Renaissance when this cabinet was made, humanism, individual knowledge, scientific discoveries, and exploration became important. The more important a person was, his status could become apparent through the collection of important things.

5. If we opened the doors and drawers to this cabinet, what might we find? (We might find shelves; lockboxes; cubby holes; display case; tool chest; safe deposit box; small compartments.) **Does anyone know what a curiosity cabinet might be?** (It holds curious objects; it displays collections; it locks important things up; it stores important things.) **This is a curiosity cabinet from the Renaissance.**

6. Let's imagine that it's the 1660s and this cabinet was alive. Think of the Disney movie "Beauty & the Beast" when the English Teapot becomes Mrs. Potts. Based on how this cabinet looks and its usefulness, what kind of personality might this cabinet have? (It's sturdy; it's solid; it's very smart; it thinks it's important; it has a big ego; it's very showy; it's an attention seeker.) **Male or female and why?** (Male – it's too big and sturdy.) **What kind of voice might it have?** (Heavy German accent; deep; low.)

7. Imagine that it's a reporter. What room might this cabinet be in? (The entrance hall so everyone sees it when they come in; the living room where guests are.) **What other types of things might it see in the same room?** (It might see religious art; portraits of important people; heavy furniture; lots of books; sextant or navigation instruments; a lute.)

8. Who might own this curiosity cabinet and why? (A rich person; an intellectual; a scientist; someone who likes falconry or hunting; an important person because it can hold their important things; they can afford this fancy & expensive cabinet.)

9. What secrets might our solid, egotistical, German cabinet be keeping in its hidden drawers? (There is expensive jewelry hidden inside; important papers; precious items.)

Transition: