

COLOR OUR COLLECTIONS



**THE HUNTINGTON**

# ABOUT THE OBJECT



Samuel Casey (American, 1724–73) was a silversmith in Rhode Island during the mid-18th century (1700s). By this time, coffee drinking—and the lively atmosphere of the Arabian Peninsula ([metmuseum.org/toah/ht/10/wap.html](http://metmuseum.org/toah/ht/10/wap.html)) coffee houses—had made its way from the Near East to Europe, and then later to the Americas, where coffee production thrived in the colonized regions throughout the Caribbean, South America, and Central America. The popularity of coffee drinking grew, largely in part due to the heavy taxes imposed by King George III on tea. If this reminds you of the Boston Tea Party, you'd be right! A beautifully decorated pot like the one on this page would likely have been part of a larger service (set) and would have been very expensive, so not very many people could have owned something like this.

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Samuel Casey, *Coffeepot*, ca. 1760. The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens.

## More to Explore...

### DESIGN YOUR OWN COFFEEPOT:

- You can either recreate our coffeepot or create your own by drawing it on a blank page.
- Draw your coffeepot in any shape you like. We're talking about the body, the handle, and the spout. Get creative!
- Now, think about the pattern on the silver pot pictured here and how you might change it. You can practice making different pattern designs on the back of this page before you draw it onto your coffeepot.
- See that bird on the top of the lid? That's called a finial or knob (think knob or handle). You would pull back on the finial or knob to swing the lid up and open. You'll need one of those. This pot is empty and needs to be filled with hot coffee!
- Go ahead and color your design any way you want, but if you think it would look better just shaded with pencil, that's okay too. After all, YOU are the designer!

Here are a few ways to decorate silver pots for coffee, tea, hot water, or chocolate:

**Repoussé:** hand-hammering from the reverse or inside to create a low relief design.

**Chasing:** hammering from the front or outside with various tools that depress or push aside the metal without removing any silver from the surface.

**Engraving:** a design carved into the surface with a sharp tool called a burin; silver is lost in this process.

**Applied:** a separate design element applied to the surface; this could be a separate metal decoration soldered on (with melted metal), silver-gilt (gold leaf to make it look gold), or enamel (colored glass powder that melts together when heated to look glossy).

## QUESTION CORNER

- ◆ Look at the tea kettle or coffee maker in your kitchen. Does yours look like Samuel Casey's coffeepot? Look closely and try to come up with at least three things that you think are similar, and then at least three things that are different.
- ◆ What shape did you decide your coffeepot would be? Tall and narrow? Short and round? Some other shape?
- ◆ Which decoration methods from the list above do you think Samuel Casey used on his coffeepot? How did you decorate your pot? Did you create your own pattern? Did that pattern include leaves? Animals? Shells?