



How Things Convey Meaning: Decorative Arts Objects as Artifacts
Monday, September 28, 2009

Hal Nelson, Curator of American Decorative Arts
Draft Outline

- Discussion of several contemporary decorative arts objects
 - o Material
 - o Design
 - o Use
 - o Context: what do these objects communicate about patterns of everyday life and contemporary values – what we consider important, fun, meaningful?
- Discussion of the Various Roles Objects Play in Daily Life
 - o Storing and Containing
 - o Sharing
 - o Displaying
 - o Concealing
 - o Enhancing Comfort
 - o Eating and Drinking
 - o Other
- How Do Objects Communicate Values and Meaning
 - o Personal Choices and Shared Values
 - o Taste and Currency
 - o Style
 - o Affluence
- High Chests and Other Forms of Containment
 - o New York High Chest (Room 15)
 - o Hadley Chest (Room 15)
 - o Salem High Chest (Room 15)
 - o Connecticut High Chest (Room 13)
 - o Lady's Work Table (Room 14)
- Silver
 - o Marble Silver Collection: Themes and Variations (Room 12)
 - o Allan Adler Punch Bowl (Room 12)
 - o Michael and Maureen Banner Tea Service (Room 12)



-
- Ceramics
 - Delftware (Room 15)
 - Society of the Cincinnati (Room 13)

 - Applying Concepts to Other Areas of the Collection and Non Decorative Arts Objects
 - Ralph Earl, Mrs. Elijah Boardman (Room 13)
 - Postwar Ceramics in California (Room 6)
 - Sam Maloof Music Stand and Chair (Room 6)
 - Allan Adler Silver (Room 6)
 - Louise Nevelson (Room 6)