

Decorative Arts

How many of the following designs or motifs can you find on objects in the galleries? Examples are everywhere! Look closely at the carpets, wallpaper, watches, and furniture designs.



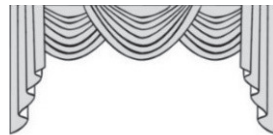
Floral and fruit designs
Cornucopia and pineapple



Animal hoof or paw



Roman/Greek columns



Drape or Swag



Urn



Lotus Flower



Griffin
(part eagle, part lion)



American Flag



Fan

MUNSON

Skilled artists design and create all of the things used in a home: furniture, dishes, metal objects like “silverware,” textiles, wallpaper, and clothing.

A motif is a symbol or design found in the decoration of an object. A motif can be a symbol for a more complex or bigger idea. For example, an American flag is a symbol of the United States of America.

Many motifs have roots in ancient history. A cornucopia filled with fruit and nuts has its beginning in mythological stories about the god, Zeus. Today it is a common symbol for plenty and harvest, which is why it is linked with Thanksgiving. Another example is the lotus flower design that refers to rebirth or renewal, a motif that began in ancient Egypt.

Notice the figure in the center of this scene holding a cornucopia. The figure is an attendant of Ceres, the goddess of the harvest.



*Pair-case Watch, Stoakes, 1750, silver, parcel-gilt, 66.7 x 50.8 x 30.5 mm,
Proctor Collection, Frederick T. Proctor Watch Collection, PC. 222*