

# BIRDING GUIDE



# EGYPTIAN GALLERY

## COFFIN WITH CORN-MUMMY

Egyptian, Ptolemaic Dynasty (330–30 BCE), wood, linen, earth, and pigment.  
Gift of Natacha Rambova, UMFA1952.020~\_A–C. Below, left.

### BIRD:

Falcon, most likely a Lanner Falcon, but possibly a Peregrine Falcon.

### BIRD INFO:

Falcons are widely distributed throughout the world, found on all continents except Antarctica. Falcons are known for their ability to precisely control their flight at incredibly high speeds. Lanner Falcons are found throughout Africa, southern Europe, and in some places in the Arabian Peninsula. ("Lanner falcon," 2024) Peregrine Falcons are found on every continent and are the fastest animal on earth, being able to dive up to 240 miles per hour. ("Peregrine falcon," 2024)

### HISTORICAL INFO:

We know this is a falcon for two reasons. First, falcons, especially Lanner Falcons, were sacred to Horus, Ra, and later combinations of Ra-Horakhty, all of whom were frequently depicted with falcon heads. The falcon was "among the most ancient of divine images in Egypt" and represents kingship, the unification of Egypt, and a link to the gods

(Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012, p. 60).

Falcons were a part of ancient Egyptian life, used in falconry, kept as pets, and were even mummified (Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012). Ancient Egyptians additionally associated some of their spiritual forms (ba) to be a human-headed bird, usually a falcon (Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012).

Second: the artist has added facial markings known as "malar stripes." These dark markings on falcon's faces help reduce glare from the sun to help the birds hunt.



^ PEREGRINE FALCON  
< LANNER FALCON

### DID YOU KNOW?

We have Peregrine Falcons in Utah! They are found near cliffs and occasionally nesting in the tall buildings downtown.

## THOTH IN THE FORM OF IBIS

Egyptian, Late Period, 26th Dynasty (664–525 BCE), Egyptian faience.  
Gift of Natacha Rambova, UMFA1952.003\_A,B. Below, right.

### BIRD:

African Sacred Ibis.



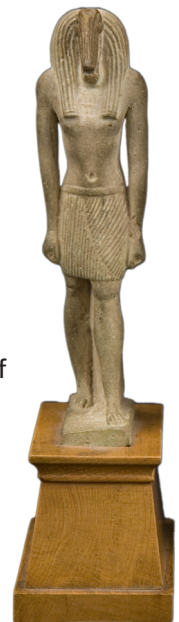
IBIS

### BIRD INFO:

African Sacred Ibis is a species of wading birds native to much of Africa and some very small portions of Iraq, Iran, and Kuwait. Despite its name and its prominence in Ancient Egyptian religion, the species is currently extinct in Egypt ("African sacred ibis," 2024).

### HISTORICAL INFO:

We know that this is an ibis because of the depiction of the long, curved bill on the statue. There is a support attached under the bill on this statue, likely to keep the face sturdy, since actual ibis' bills are long and curved. The god depicted is Thoth, the god of writing, learning, magic, and wisdom and was the inventor of writing. Thoth is depicted here in his ibis form (he also appears as a baboon), which he is associated with possibly





because ibis wade on the shores near papyrus plants, which are wetland plants that were historically used to make paper. Another reason Thoth may be associated with the ibis is that an ibis' beak looks like a half-moon, and Thoth was also the god of the moon (Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012). Ibis were venerated and were kept on massive bird sanctuaries and are frequently found mummified (Bailleul-LeSuer, 2012).

**DID YOU KNOW?**

We have an ibis species in Utah! The ibis you can see at the Great Salt Lake and its surrounding wetlands is called a White-faced Ibis. It is similar in structure, but is smaller and a glossy maroon with iridescent metallic green and bronze on the wings. In breeding season, White-faced ibis have white plumage around their faces.



these birds are frequently associated with power, authority, and the gods. Because of this, the Golden Eagle is the most common national animal in the world ("Golden Eagle," 2024).

**HISTORICAL INFO:**

Eagles, especially Golden Eagles, are the emblem of Zeus, king of the gods and god of the sky and thunder. Not only does Zeus turn into an eagle in multiple stories, but he also has a personal eagle, the Aetos Dios, that served as his messenger and companion (Aetos Dios, 2024). While there are multiple stories about how the Aetos Dios came to be, one is particularly relevant to this artwork. In one story, the eagle appeared as a good omen for the gods at the start of the Titanomachy, the 10-year war between the Grecian Olympian gods and the older Titan gods that ended with Zeus as the head of the pantheon. Zeus took the bird as his war standard. Many warriors wore this symbol as a way to express their power and call upon Zeus during battle (Aetos Dios, 2024; Eagle of Zeus, 2024).

# ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN ART GALLERY

**DID YOU KNOW?**

You can find Golden Eagles in Utah's mountain regions. This bird is Utah's state bird of prey.

**BLACK FIGURE WARE TWO HANDLED JAR**

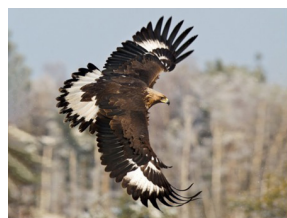
Manner of the Antimenes Painter, Greek, Athens, Late Archaic Period, ca. 510–500 BCE, terracotta with glaze. Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum and Emma Eccles Jones, UMFA1990.001.001. Above, middle.

**SARCOPHAGUS**

Roman, Italy, Late Roman Empire, ca. 325–330, Greek mainland marble. Purchased with funds from the Marriner S. Eccles Foundation for the Marriner S. Eccles Collection of Masterworks, UMFA1989.005.002. Below.

**BIRD:**

Eagle, most likely a Golden Eagle.



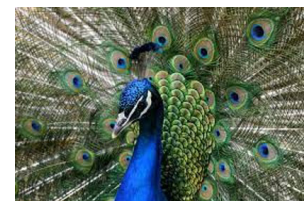
**GOLDEN EAGLE**

**BIRD INFO:**

The Golden Eagle is a large predatory bird found throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Due to their massive size (Golden Eagles can be up to 3.3 feet tall with a wingspan of 5 ft. 11 in to 7 ft. 8 in. long),

**BIRD:**

Indian Peafowl, specifically a Peacock.



**PEACOCK**



# ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN ART GALLERY CONT.



## BIRD INFO:

Indian Peafowl are native to the Indian subcontinent, but they are found everywhere around the world except Antarctica. The males' brilliant plumage has made them a popular way to decorate the homes of the wealthy throughout the world since at least the 10th century BCE. In addition to their role as pets and decoration, they were often a luxury food item for much of human history (Indian Peafowl, 2024).

## HISTORICAL INFO:

Peafowl, and more specifically the male peacocks, have been revered and imbued with meaning since people knew they existed. They are the national bird of India and are a sacred bird in Hindu culture. In ancient Rome, they were the sacred animals of Juno, queen of the gods and protector and special counselor of the state (the Roman equivalent of Hera). Juno was jealous that Jupiter (Zeus) had attacked a woman named Io, and Jupiter turned Io into a cow to protect her. Juno stole Io and ordered the 100-eyed giant Argus Panoptes to guard her. Jupiter sent the god Mercury to kill Argus and freed Io, returning her to human form. To honor her guard, Juno had the eyes of Argus placed in a peacock's tail (Ovid, 2004). The peacock was a popular symbol for Roman, Byzantine, and later, Christian, artists as it was a symbol of paradise, renewal, and spring (Mosaic with a Peacock and Flowers, 2024). This is likely because of an ancient myth that peacock flesh did not decay after death. The birds on this

sarcophagus are not only eating food, symbolizing plenty and rebirth, but are a symbol of eternal life and the enduring nature of the soul (Koloski, 2017).

## DID YOU KNOW?

Peacocks are frequently found wandering around zoos like Tracy Aviary and Hogle Zoo because they are comfortable around people and won't leave an area they know they're getting fed.



# EUROPEAN GALLERY

SWALLOW

## 🔍 SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

Master of Santa María DE LA HOZ, Spanish (Segovian), active in the last quarter of the 15th century (fl.c.1496–1520), oil and tempera on panel. Purchased with funds from the M. Belle Rice Fund and the Wilma T. Gibson Trust, UMFA1998.36.1. Facing page, left.

## BIRD:

Swallow.



## BIRD INFO:

Swallows are found on all continents, including Antarctica. The most common species of swallow is the barn swallow, easily identifiable by their vibrant blue coloring and their long, forked tail. Swallows are small, fast-moving passerine songbirds that can drink and eat on the wing (Barn Swallow, 2024).

## HISTORICAL INFO:

While this bird is difficult to identify due to its size, the shape of the tail and wings indicate that it is a swallow. The swallow is associated with the resurrection of Christ, "drawing parallels between the bird's return in spring and Christ's emergence from the tomb" (Stafford, 2023). As John the Baptist is the cousin of Jesus Christ, it would make sense for the swallow to be present in this image, drawing a connection between the figures and their role in spreading Christianity.





**DID YOU KNOW?**

Utah is home to many different swallow species, the most common of which are Cliff Swallows, Barn Swallows, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows. To find these birds, look for small, fast-moving birds under bridges, on the sides of houses, and along cliffs during the spring and summer.

**FRAGMENT OF CRUCIFIXION WITH FIVE SAINTS**

**(VIRGIN MARY, MARY MAGDALENE, JOHN THE EVANGELIST, FRANCIS OF ASSISI, AND ANTHONY OF PADUA)**

Antonio Zamara DA CHIARI and Matteo Zamara DA CHIARI, Italian, 1432–1494 and 1452–1532/35, ca. 1480, fresco transferred to canvas, partial gift of Garner D. Irvine, with additional funds from LaReta Creer Kump, UMFA1984.088. Next page, below, left.

**BIRD:**

Pelicans are a widespread species of bird found on all continents except Antarctica.



**PELICAN**

**BIRD INFO:**

Pelicans are found in warm regions. They are large birds characterized by a long beak with a throat pouch used to catch prey and draining water before swallowing. Most pelican species have white plumage, with the exceptions being Brown and Peruvian Pelicans (Pelican, 2024).

**HISTORICAL INFO:**

When this religious painting was recently restored, birds were revealed hiding at the very top. Why are the pelicans, a bird primarily associated with the ocean, at the crucifixion? According to an old legend, in times of scarcity and to prevent its chicks from starving, pelicans would pierce their chests





# EUROPEAN GALLERY CONT.

with their beaks and feed their chicks with their own blood (Esparza, 2016).

Additionally, some legends hold that a mother pelican can revive dead chicks with her blood, which will lead to her dying in their stead (Pineschi, 2018). These stories represent the Christian belief that Jesus Christ's sacrifice redeemed the world's sins through the crucifixion and his love for humanity. This legend possibly arrived because pelicans press their head into their chest to fully empty their pouch, and the food they regurgitate can be bloody.

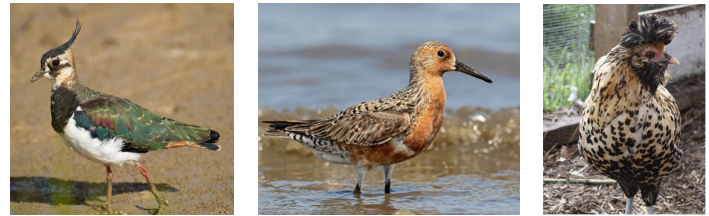
## DID YOU KNOW?

Utah's Gunnison Island, located in the Great Salt Lake, is home to around 10-20% of the entire American White Pelican population in the summer, and is one of the largest nesting sites for the bird in the world. Due to low lake levels, pelican nesting numbers have dropped as the island is no longer protected from land-based predators (Nelson, 2023).



## BIRDS IN A LANDSCAPE

Melchior D'HONDECOETER (Dutch, 1636–1695), undated, oil on canvas. Gift of Mrs. Herbert I. Michael, UMFA1965.017. Below, right.



### BIRD:

Chickens (most likely Brabanter chickens), pigeon in flight, northern lapwing, and possibly a Red Knot or a Ruff in the corner.



### BIRD INFO:

The birds in this painting are an excellent example of the ways birds have been domesticated and bred by humans to exhibit specific traits. The chickens that have distinct puffs on their heads are very likely Brabanter Chickens which feature in multiple paintings by Melchior d'Hondecoeter and are known for being calm, intelligent, and suitable to colder habitats (Brabanter, 2024). While other breeds of chickens



have this puff of feathers, such as Polish Chickens and Bantam Sultans, they are not likely the ones depicted here. Polish Chickens'



crests frequently cover their eyes, and Bantam Sultans did not enter Europe until the 1800s. We can also narrow down the species of pigeon flying based on human-bred traits to likely being a Berner Lerhce (Berne Lark Pigeon, 2017), though it could be some other early form or passenger pigeon. The bird in the foreground of the lower left corner in the foreground is a Northern Lapwing (Northern Lapwing, 2020). The final bird in the back corner is difficult to identify, but could be a Red Knot (Red Knot, 2020).

### HISTORICAL INFO:

This is a vanity painting, a genre that flourished in the Netherlands in the 17th century. The artist, Melchior d'Hondecoeter, was an animaliar painter who almost exclusively painted birds, usually exotic or game birds, in park-like landscapes (Melchior d'Hondecoeter, 2024).

### DID YOU KNOW?

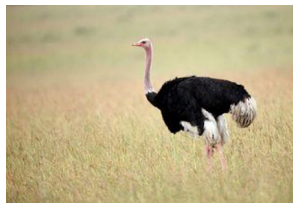
There are over 1600 different chicken breeds recognized worldwide and over 300 breeds of domestic pigeons. Humans have been breeding both of these birds for thousands of years! (Chickens, 2024; Shapiro and Domyan, 2013).

## MEMENTO MORI

Melchior D'HONDECOETER (Dutch, 1636–1695), undated, oil on canvas. Gift of Mrs. Herbert I. Michael, UMFA1965.017. Top right.

### BIRD:

Ostrich (Feathers).



OSTRICH

### BIRD INFO:

The ostrich is the largest bird in the world and is completely flightless. There are two species of ostrich: The Somali Ostrich and the Common Ostrich, which have slightly different coloring. The ostrich is a bird of extremes. They can be up to 9 feet tall and can run up to 43 miles per hour. (Common Ostrich, 2020).



### HISTORICAL INFO:

Ostrich feathers have been a luxury good used for decoration in Europe since the medieval era. They were imported from West Africa, Egypt, and Syria into Italian and Spanish ports and then dispersed through most of Europe (Ostrich feather trade, 2023). Memento Mori paintings (meaning “remember you will die”)



are works of art designed to remind the viewer of their mortality and of the shortness and fragility of human life. Despite your accomplishments and possessions, you will die and you should adjust what you view as important accordingly.

# JAPANESE ART GALLERY

## ARTICULATED RAPTOR

Unidentified artist, Japan, 19th century, steel and silver. Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum, UMFA1981.025. Below, left.

### BIRD:

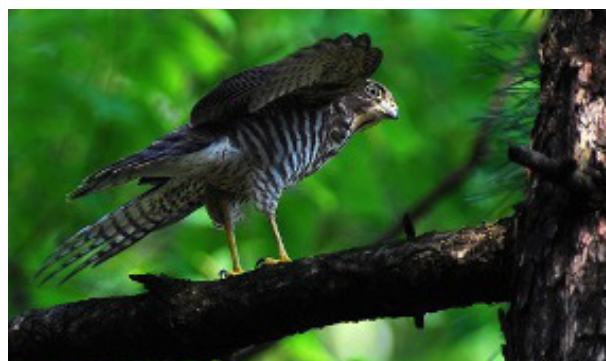
Raptor, possibly a Japanese Sparrowhawk.

### BIRD INFO:

While this species is not easily identifiable, this bird shares many characteristics with the Japanese Sparrowhawk (the long toes, good for grasping prey out of the sky, prominent eyes, and similar beak shape). (Japanese Sparrowhawk, 2024).

### HISTORICAL INFO:

Japan has a long history of puppetry and mechanized automata. This impressive raptor, which is fully articulated, is actually simple compared to other examples of Karakuri puppets, some of which can serve tea and shoot arrows (Karakuri puppet, 2024).



RAPTOR

# MODERN & CONTEMPORARY GALLERY



SWIFTS

## EVENING SWIFTS

H. Lee DEFFEBACH (American, 1928–2005), 1983, acrylic on canvas. Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum, the Associated Students of the University of Utah, and the Salt Lake City Arts Council, UMFA1986.046. Right.

### BIRD:

Swifts.

### BIRD INFO:

Swifts are rapid, highly aerial birds that spend most of their time in the air. They drink, mate, eat, and bathe on the wing. While swifts look similar to swallows, this is an example of convergent evolution where two or more species evolve similar traits without being related to each other. Swifts are actually in the same order as hummingbirds, Apodiformes (Swifts, 2024).



### HISTORICAL INFO:

Please refer to gallery label.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Because swifts rarely land on the ground and their nesting sites are difficult to reach and monitor, there is actually not that much known about them. Tracy Aviary has recently supported Montana Audubon's efforts to study swifts through the Conservation Fund: Montana Audubon – Up High and Under Waterfalls in Search of the Glacier Dependent Black Swift (Projects We've Supported, 2024).

# ART OF THE PACIFIC GALLERY

## BROLGA BIRD AND MIMI SPIRIT FIGURES

Unidentified artist, Australia, Aboriginal peoples, 20th century, bark, pigment, and string. Purchased with funds from the Dayton Hudson Foundation, UMFA1981.077. Top right.

### BIRD:

Brolga.



BROLGA

### BIRD INFO:

Brolga are a crane species found in Australia and southern New Guinea. They are one of Australia's largest birds and can be anywhere from 2-4 feet tall (Brolga, 2024). The name Brolga is taken from Indigenous Australian language Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi), in which they are called buralga (Brolgas, 2024).

### HISTORICAL INFO:

Brolga feature in many stories from traditional Indigenous Australians cultures. They appear in Dreamtime stories (an Indigenous Australians concept that has no equivalent in western culture. It roughly means a period of time, stories of ancestors, a way to explain the world, a connection with ancestors, the natural world itself and our

relation to it, personal and cultural) (Aboriginal Art Introduction, 2024). In a well-known Dreaming of Brolga, the bird was originally a beautiful girl obsessed with dancing. She refused all men, including a wirrinun (shaman) who wanted her for a wife. When she continued to refuse, he eventually tried to abduct her. The Great Spirit intervened, turning her into the bird we see today, where she is still dancing (Rule & Goodman, 1979).



## DID YOU KNOW?

Brolga are similar in size, coloring, and behavior to Utah's Sandhill Cranes. Like Sandhill Cranes, these birds will "dance" during breeding season for their mates.

## SPOON

Unidentified artist, Indonesia, Timor Island, 20th century, horn. Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum, UMFA1987.001.017. Next page, top left.

### BIRD:

A crested bird from Timor Island, though the specific species is unclear. It could possibly be a Yellow-crested cockatoo, a yellow-vented bulbul, a sooty-headed bulbul, or an orange-footed scrubfowl.

### HISTORICAL INFO:

Ceremonial spoons, like this one, were carved from Asiatic buffalo horn. The most frequently encountered designs are variously stacked geometric patterns interspersed with profiles of birds and found among the Antoni and Tetun people of Timor. Ceremonial spoons are used with farewell meals for the deceased. "Spoons associated with these feasts served as a reminder to mourners that the deceased's soul had assumed

# ART OF THE PACIFIC GALLERY CONT.



the form of a bird and, in successfully achieving this metamorphosis, had permanently separated itself from the living and their communities” (Alpert, 2020).

## DID YOU KNOW?

Among the Atoni, the name for the spoon in ritual language is “kol kotin,” meaning the backbone of birds (Alpert, 2024).

# AFRICAN ART GALLERY

## HELMET MASK (BUNDU OR SOWEI)

Unidentified artist, Sierra Leone, Mende or Sherbro peoples, 20th century, wood. Gift of the Carl C. Ashby Trust, UMFA2006.4.62. Right.

### BIRD:

Unidentifiable.

### HISTORICAL INFO:

These masks are part of a pan-West African tradition that symbolizes the transitions of girls to womanhood. The elaborate hairstyle, fat roles, and dark colors are a mark of cultural beauty aesthetics. The masks serve as the visual connection to the spirit world, and thus conceals the human head entirely. Birds on top of these masks are



representative of an emissary between two realms, further emphasizing the spiritual power of the mask (Learn More: Mende Soweï Mask 1, 2024).

## KING'S HEADDRESS

Nigeria, Yoruba peoples, mid-20th century, basketry framework with beads. Owen D. Mort, Jr. Collection of African Art, UMFA2008.32.31. Below, right.

### BIRD:

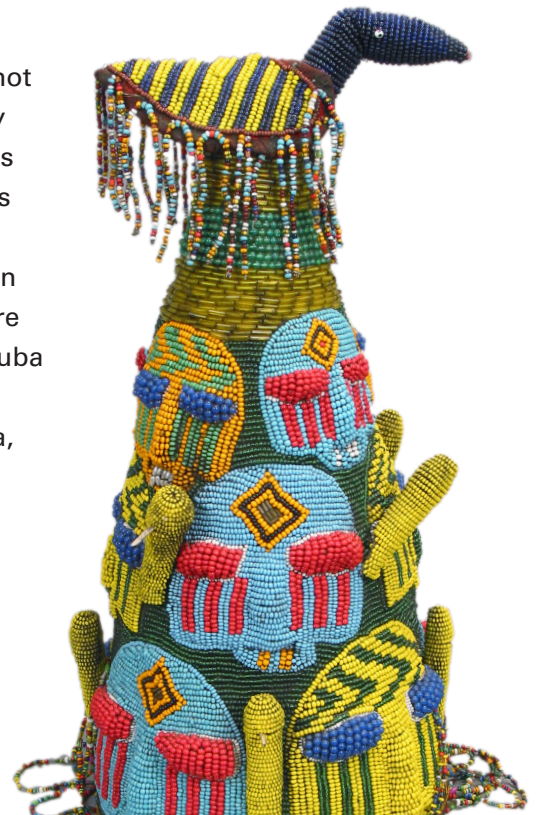
Unidentifiable.

### HISTORICAL INFO:

The bird on top of this Yoruba Oba crown is a motif found on all Obas’ (ruler in Yoruba language) crowns. (Oba’s crown, 2024). The bird has multiple layers of meaning. One meaning is that birds represent a king’s ability to mediate between spiritual (òrìsà/orisha) and secular worlds, but it is also used to allude to the power of women and that the king has their support (Yoruba: Create a Royal Crown, 2024). The bird also recalls how Odùduwà, a Yorube divine king and creator deity in the Yoruba religion, assisted by a mythical bird, created habitable land on the primordial waters at Ilé Ifè (modern day Ife in Nigeria), where he eventually became the first king (Oba’s crown, 2024).

### DID YOU KNOW?

This bird does not have a tail likely because the tails on these crowns can bend and it has likely broken off. The birds are removable (Yoruba Style Beaded Crowns, Nigeria, 2024).





# ANCIENT MESOAMERICAN ART

## PLATE WITH JAGUAR/SERPENT/ BIRD MOTIF

Guatemala, northern etén region, Maya culture, 600–900, earthenware and pigment. Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum, UMFA1979.269. Right.

### BIRD:

Resplendent Quetzal.

### BIRD INFO:

The resplendent quetzal is found in Central America and southern Mexico in tropical forests. It has very colorful plumage, especially known for the males long iridescent tails. Because of this, it is near threatened. It is the national animal of Guatemala (Resplendent Quetzal, 2024).



### HISTORICAL INFO:

Q'uj'umatz is the god of wind and rain of the Postclassic K'iche' Mayaa. This god is related to Tohil, the K'iche' sun god, god of fire, war god, rain god, mountains, war, and sacrifice. He has attributes of feathered serpents of other Central American cultures like Quetzalcoatl. Resplendent Quetzals are culturally significant to Guatemalan culture. Its tail feathers symbolize spring, plant, sprout, and a figure of freedom. High ranking rulers could wear their feathers (birds could not be killed and so had to be gently gathered from birds in the wild). During their ceremonies to Tohil, the K'iche' would offer quetzal feathers to the god (Tohil, 2024).

### DID YOU KNOW?

The male resplendent quetzal feathers were so valuable in ancient Mayan culture that they were used as a medium of exchange (Sherry, 2024).



# AMERICAN & REGIONAL ART GALLERY

## THE WASATCH MOUNTAINS WITH SALT LAKE CITY AND GREAT SALT LAKE IN THE FOREGROUND

Gilbert Davis MUNGER (American, 1837–1903), 1877, oil on canvas. Gift of Kenneth Nebenzahl, purchased in part by Friends of the Art Museum, UMFA1977.022. Next page, top.

### BIRD:

Gulls, probably California Gulls.

### BIRD INFO:

There are two subspecies of California Gulls, one of which breeds in the Great Basin region near the Great Salt Lake. They migrate in adulthood to the west coast, before returning to Utah to breed (California Gull, 2024).

### HISTORICAL INFO:

California Gulls are Utah's state bird due to a story called the "Miracle of the Gulls." (Miracle of the gulls, 2024). According to the traditional story, a horde of Mormon crickets came and swarmed all the plant material in their path, including the crops the initial pioneer settlers planted. The settler farmers prayed, and the gulls came and gorged on the crickets, saving the crops.



# AMERICAN & REGIONAL GALLERY CONT.

## DID YOU KNOW?

While modern historians think that the miracle of the gulls is greatly exaggerated (the damage to the crops in 1848 was also due to frost and drought), the psychological relief of the gulls was likely immense, which is why the story remained so important in Utah and LDS culture (Miracle of the gulls, 2024).

idealized version of a rooster to better emphasize the ideas of morning, renewal, and the dawn.

## HISTORICAL INFO:

Please refer to plaque.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Paul Manship's work features in many places in New York City, New York. His works can be found in the Central Park Zoo, at the Rockefeller Center, and Central Park. His work is considered to be a major precursor to the Art Deco movement (Paul Manship, 2024).

## MOODS OF TIME: MORNING

Paul MANSHIP (American, 1885–1966), 1938, bronze. Purchased with funds from the Marriner S. Eccles Foundation, UMFA1983.005. Right.

## BIRD:

Rooster.

## BIRD INFO:

Unlike in *Birds in a Landscape*, we can't identify the breed of rooster in this sculpture. It's not meant to be a realistic depiction of the bird, but rather an







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Major support provided by:

**†Hugh and Kathie Zumbro**

