



## Papier Mâché Plant Models

Germany, 1880-1900

On loan from the Cindy Daniel and Doug Lipton Collection, Healdsburg

As early as the 15th century Persia and India (particularly Kashmir, India) were important centers for the art of papier mâché products. Originally these recycled waste paper products were extravagantly lacquered and embellished until almost indistinguishable from lacquered wood and became highly sought after in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Demand far exceeded supply, and workshops were set up, notably in France and England. Russia and Germany both took interest in papier mâché production & products by the mid-19th century. Germany was most remarkably to produce a village of prefabricated papier mâché houses lasting for a few years despite weather conditions.

These models were most likely used as instructional aides in botany classes helping students understand the physical anatomy of plants in larger than life versions, showing basic plant structure and reproductive organs. Aside from being practical instruction tools, these models are quite beautiful and illustrate the fragility and complexity of various plants. On display here are Chamomile (genus – Anthemis, at back right), Horsetail (genus – Equisetum, front right), Turks Cap Lily (genus – Lilium, front center), and Scotch Fir (genus – Pinus, back left). Interestingly their common names are in both English on the left side of the label and in German on the right side.



## Mexican Tin Retablos

Saint Leonard, The Hermit (Patron Saint of Prisons and Prisoners) 18th Century, oil on tin

On loan from the Jim Kidder Collection

Retablos, better known as “laminas” in Mexico, are small oil paintings on tin, zinc, wood or copper which were used in home altars to venerate the almost infinite number of Catholic saints. The literal translation for “retablo” is “behind the altar.” This genre of folk art, deeply rooted in Spanish history, represents the heart and soul of traditional religious beliefs in 17th, 18th, and 19th century Mexican culture. Colorful, spiritual, symbolic, allegorical, historical, folkloric and charming are just a few of the words that best describe this unique art form.

A process which was originally introduced to converted Indians by the Spanish, the retablo was an art form that flourished in post conquest Mexico and then ultimately, with the introduction of inexpensive mediums such as tin, reached its pinnacle of popularity in the last quarter of the 19th century. These oil paintings were sold to devout believers who displayed them in home altars to honor their patron Saints. The Mexican retablo is a hybrid of indigenous artistry, centuries old catholic iconography and Spanish culture. This unique combination of subject and style reflects the historical, cultural and religious links between “old” and “new” worlds.



## Science Charts

Denoyer-Geppert Company, circa 1940

On loan from the Cindy Daniel and Doug Lipton Collection, Healdsburg

In the 19th century, educators revived pictorial maps to teach geography, natural science, history, and literature. By the 20th century, such pictorial maps had become popular for their decorative qualities. However, because they were often displayed on classroom walls then discarded when they became tattered, many have become scarce. Moreover, because they were printed in limited editions, not always formally copyrighted, they escaped library collections. Pictorial maps have existed since at least the 16th century, although because of their ephemeral nature, most surviving examples date from the 20th century.

Denoyer-Geppert founded in Chicago in 1916 by L. Philip Denoyer and Otto E. Geppert was the company who published this set of natural science maps on display. They were the original manufacturer and supplier of “visual demonstration equipment for geography, history and the biological sciences,” including globes and maps until they ceased operation in 1980.

The two images displayed show the life cycle of insects. They were hand painted then printed on canvas in limited editions. Commissioned for these maps, the original paintings were created by artist M. Richten, who signed each image as a work of art.