The AKC Museum of the Dog
Permanent Collection Highlights
VIRTUAL TOUR

The AKC Museum of the Dog’s permanent collection consists of roughly 1,700 pieces of art featuring man’s best friend. The collection of the Museum is one of the finest and largest collections of canine-related fine art and artifacts in the world. It mainly comprises of paintings, watercolors, prints, ceramics, bronzes, and photographs – with the occasional mixed media piece thrown in for good measure. Additionally, historical objects such as dog show trophies, collars, and other dog-related objects are included in the collection.

Originally opened in 1982, the Museum of the Dog has depended primarily on donations to build its holdings. Large gifts and bequests from prolific dog art collectors such as Frank Sabella, Marie Moore, Dornwald Kennels, and the estate of Nancy-Carol Draper form the core of the collection. Several highlights of the painting collection came to the Museum through the estate of Cynthia S. Wood and generous donations from the Westminster Kennel Foundation.

The tradition of Animalier bronzes, which are bronze sculptures crafted by an artist that specializes in creating realistic animals, is celebrated in the galleries. In addition to examples by Pierre-Jules Mene and Antoine Louis Barye, modern works by 20th century masters Richard Fath and June Harrah are on display. Representations of dogs in ceramic goes back centuries, and the collection reflects that rich history. One can encounter works from Staffordshire spill vases to modern day productions of many breeds from factories such as Meissen, Rosenthal, and Royal Doulton.

While the museum collection is particularly deep in depictions of Mastiffs, Bulldogs, Great Danes, and German Shepherd Dogs, most AKC recognized breeds are represented in the collection but may not be on display. Much of the collection has been photographed, however, and can be accessed through the Permanent Collection page on the Museum’s website.
Long Live the Queen

Upon first entering the Museum of the Dog, one of the first pieces you will see is a carousel dog overseeing the first floor gallery. This is Queen, the Museum’s benevolent monarch with a mysterious past. In the nineteenth century, it was no longer just horses being produced as carousel animals. Before then, merry-go-rounds had to be operated by a man or a horse - trudging around in circles to power the ride. With the advent of steam power, this was no longer necessary. With this technological advancement, carousel animals could be larger, and carousels could now hold substantially more animals on them. All sorts of animals started being produced for carousels besides horses, such as giraffes, cats, tigers, pigs, swans, and, of course, dogs.

Queen was created in one of Charles Looff’s factories. Looff was Danish woodcarver named Charles I.D. Looff, has a very big presence at Coney Island. Looff designed and carved carousel animals, and his first merry-go-round was installed in Coney Island in 1880. Looff immigrated to New York in 1876 and opened his factory on Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn. In the coming years, he would open additional factories in California and Rhode Island.

She would be discovered in the early to mid-1960’s by an individual named R. Gordon Barton. Barton was on a buying trip in New York City for his art gallery in Middleburg, Virginia. While walking along Second Avenue, he was confronted with a massive carousel dog in the window display of an antique store. Barton immediately knew who would want to give an abandoned Queen a new home – Mastiff breeder and art collector Marie Moore. Marie Moore would go on to make her mark at the Museum of the Dog as the single most significant donor of art objects. By the terms set out in her will, Moore donated roughly 300 objects to the Museum, including Queen.
A Selection of Sighthounds

James Ward took up painting and started painting animals in the 1790s. Salukis showcases Ward’s style of painting. The sighthounds in the piece are created with vigorous and energetic brushstrokes, evoking movement and energy. The saluki’s ears are blown back by the wind as they charge their prey. Even the swirling clouds in the sky convey speed and activity. It is a painting that shows the transitional shift in depictions of dogs seen between the 17th and 18th centuries with the 19th century – one that presages Victorian works but still contains violent animals depicted in Old Master paintings.

The painting was originally shown at the British Institution in 1807. Engraver H.R. Cook reproduced the piece in the Sporting Magazine of December 1807 with the description, “This dog, so different from our English Greyhounds, is a very handsome animal, with a fine soft skin, the hair of its ears and tail appearing like silk and resembling it in softness”.

The dog in this painting is known as a Lcher. It is a dog type rather than a breed, a lurcher is usually a sighthound such as a greyhound crossed with another breed, commonly a terrier or herding breed. In the painting At the Garden Gate, artist Matilda Lotz paints a Lurcher type dog waiting to be let out of a gated yard. The type has been known in England since before the 17th century.

Back then, Lurcher dogs generally were bred by and belonged to nomadic groups like the Romani. The Lurchers traveled alongside their owners and were free roaming dogs. Lotz herself was a traveler and went abroad to Hungary in the year 1900. There, she traveled with the Romani herself, and surely encountered Lurcher dogs.
A Bustling Dog Market

Since the 18th century, this painting by Abraham Hondius has been associated with the city of Amsterdam. Ironically, no actual dog market is known to exist or have been recorded there. The architecture is a classical pastiche and the arrangement recalls a stage setting. Below is the kennel where masses of dogs squirm and writhe with all sorts of activity. Above them is the 'showroom' where an elegant lady with her servant select a small lapdog, while the gentleman in the center is engaged in picking out a sighthound from three that are being presented. On a social level, the painting has been noted for the rising interest in the activity of dog breeding among the upper and middle classes. Though prescient, in subject it is much more of a departure from traditional dog painting of the time. There is no clear precedent for this type of scene in the world of dog painting prior its execution, nor has there been anything like it since.

In essence, it is a group portrait of a large number of dogs. While some of the dogs portrayed may be generic, several them, such as the central Mastiff, appear to be renderings of individual dogs. The painting also functions almost as an artistic catalogue of dogs of the day. It has been suggested that at least sixteen distinct breeds are displayed. Add to that, there is the deliberate array of dog collars in the lower right which are quite specific in their rendering and detail.

In a sense, Hondius has created a kind of Kunstkammer (the German word for “Cabinet of Curiosities”) painting for dogs. Much like Dutch 17th century artists such as David Teniers, who memorialized patron's art collections, and other artists that created artworks of collections of shells and tulips, Hondius has chosen dogs. Though unlikely to have existed or belong to one owner, Hondius is displaying what could be available to the dog loving public of the day. Given its uniqueness, it may have been a commissioned work by a dog breeder or a purveyor of dogs and related articles such as collars and leads.

Arty challenge:
How many different dogs can you spot in the Amsterdam Dog Market?
A Pioneering Woman

This painting by John Dwight Bridge features Beatrice Godsol with her Sealyham Terriers. Bea Godsol was not an artist herself, but she was a very important female figure in the dog show world in the 20th century. Though she loved her Sealyham Terriers, Godsol's reputation as an exhibitor was made through her Newfoundlands that she bred with her husband, Major Godsol. Beatrice became a member of the Newfoundland Club of America in 1933 and was elected president of the club in 1951.

Additionally, both Beatrice and her husband were sought-after judges. Beatrice was one of the first women to be an all-round judge, meaning she was permitted to judge all AKC recognized breeds. At the time, this equaled 116 breeds! Additionally, she was the second woman ever to name Best in Show at Westminster. She judged in 1957 and named an Afghan Hound as Best in Show, the first time the breed ever took the title at Westminster. When describing her approach to judging show dogs, she once stated, “All dogs have faults. The great ones carry them well.”

Godsol was also very active in dog obedience. She saw obedience training as a natural extension of dog showing. She expressed her philosophy towards dog training in the July 1936 issue of Dogdom Magazine saying, “Anyone who has gone into the show ring with a hundred pounds of untrained puppy on the other end of the leash appreciates the difference between showing a dog who will pose and heel at command, and obedience tests seem to be a step in the right direction toward this end.”

Beatrice Godsol retired after 35 years of judging dog shows in 1970. She passed away in 1978. Her portrait by John Dwight Bridge is one of the few pieces in the AKC collection that features a dog fancier.
Presidential Pups

The history of pets in the White House is a rich one. From James Monroe’s Siberian Husky to Bo and Sunny the Portuguese Water Dogs, a rich variety of dog breeds have lived in the White House. A few of these dogs are featured prominently at the Museum of the Dog - namely, Millie the English Springer Spaniel and Barney and Miss Beazley the Scottish Terriers. These dogs belonged to George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush respectively. The portrait of Millie is accompanied by a letter from Barbara Bush, in which she states the following:

“Dogs have enriched our civilization, and woven themselves into our hearts and families through the ages, and I am delighted to see them acknowledged [at the AKC Museum of the Dog]. Dogs help us with law enforcement and help the blind to see; some protect us, others entertain us, and they all return the love they are given tenfold. Animals, especially dogs, have a way of bringing out the warmth and humor in most people, and I am so glad they have always been part of my family.

Warmly,
Barbara Bush”

Christine Merrill
Millie on the South Lawn
oil on canvas
1990
English Springer Spaniel
Gift of the William Secord Gallery

Constance Coleman
Barney and Miss Beazley at the White House
oil on canvas
2005
Scottish Terrier
Gift of Constance Coleman
A Prolific Dog Painter

For Maud Earl, painting dogs was in her blood. Her father George Earl, her uncle Thomas, and her brother Percy also painted dogs – a couple pieces by George Earl can be found in the Museum of the Dog’s collection. Born in London in 1864, Maud had an affinity for animals, and dogs in particular. She had an innate understanding of the animals, which enabled her to depict them in a way that was authentic. In an interview in the November 1898 issue of The Young Woman, she stated the following:

“You can’t paint dogs unless you understand them; I don’t mean merely from the fancier’s point of view. You must know whether they are happy and comfortable, and if not, why not. You must know how to quiet them when they become excited and nervous. You must know all their little likes and dislikes, and this knowledge come from long experience.”

Maud Earl’s early dog paintings were commissions from the world of dog shows and purebred dogs. One of her most important patrons was Queen Victoria, but she had other royal patrons as well. Maud Earl also painted dogs that belonged to the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duchess of Newcastle, and King Edward VII.

This outlook towards painting dogs is reflected in her creative process. Earl never liked working from a photograph – she painted from life. She would pose the dog she was painting on a stool, and she would settle the dog and make it comfortable enough to pose quietly for periods of time. A typical session would go from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm for two days, and after that Earl would put any finishing touches on at her leisure. She painted dogs her entire life, passing away in 1943. She is buried at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, just an hour’s drive north from the AKC Museum of the Dog.
Maud Earl produced two important portfolios of photogravures after her paintings, Terriers and Toys of 1902 and British Hounds and Gun Dogs of 1903. Creating prints of her works made the paintings accessible to a wider audience, who could buy the portfolios for their homes. In addition to being sponsored by the King, the list of owners of dogs portrayed represent a who’s who in the British dog world, from the Duchess of Newcastle, to Francis Redmond and William Arkwright. In the titles of the pieces, Earl continues her literary bent with references to Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, the Bible and even contemporary hymns. Though the allusions and quotations may seem arcane to us today, they would have been more common currency in an educated, British, upper-class society.

Photogravure was a fairly new technique at the turn of the century for reproducing paintings, thus making Earl’s work more accessible to the general public. People who bought these portfolios often did so for entertainment purposes. At a party, such portfolios would be brought out to look at as a group and stimulate conversation. Cleverly, these portfolios could entertain a variety of audiences. One could imagine that, at a basic level, there could be a “guess the breed” game. For the dog fancier, it could be “guess the breeder.” And at the literary level, it might even be “identify the quote.” How would you use this prints to entertain guests?
Folk Art at MoD

The Museum of the Dog permanent collection isn’t entirely full of Victorian art. One contemporary highlight is Dog Walking in Central Park by Kathy Jakobsen. Born in 1952, Jakobsen is an American folk artist. In an interview with Country Home Magazine, Jakobsen stated “my paintings and books don’t have sad people in them because I want to promote joy and harmony. I have to do whatever I can from right here in my studio to help make this a better world.” This philosophy is strongly reflected in this painting. The comfort and joy that it evokes is infectious. Examining the meticulously painted bricks of the Plaza Hotel feels almost meditative, as it becomes clear each detail was crafted with care.

This painting is populated by the important people, places, and dogs of the man it was painted in honor of, Dr. Robert Bishop. A dog fancier and breeder of Doberman Pinschers and Manchester Terriers, Bishop was also deeply dedicated to the arts. Bishop provided immense support to the Museum of the Dog over the years, when it first began in New York City as well as during the relocation to St. Louis and beyond. He also served as the director of the Museum of American Folk Art for fourteen years until his death in 1991. After his death, his friends and colleagues Do Dillon McLaughlin and Dorothy Welsh decided to honor his memory by commissioning a piece from Kathy Jakobsen.

Kathy Jakobsen
Dog Walking in Central Park
oil on canvas
1993
Gift of Do Dillon McLaughlin in memory of Dr. Robert Bishop

Arty challenge:

Create a piece of art based on a landmark in your town or city in the style of Kathy Jakobsen!

Submit your artwork on our website through our artwork submission page, and it will be featured on the @mod_communitywall Instagram page!
Porcelain Canines

The history of Royal Doulton ceramic manufacturing stretches back to 1815, when John Doulton, John Watts, and Martha Jones became partners and formed Jones, Watts, and Doulton. The company would go through a series of changes, including the retiring of Martha Jones. Doulton was granted a Royal Warrant and the right to use “royal” in the name of its products by King Edward VII in 1901.

The figures to the left were designed by Frederick Thomas Daws. Daws was a painter and sculptor, and many of his works were reproduced in porcelain. He became the main artist at Royal Doulton in 1930 for their Companion Dog Models.

A Royal Doulton Doberman

It was the winner’s 13th show: His catalog number was 13. And 13 years earlier, his great grandsire had taken Best in Show at the Garden. So much for unlucky numbers.

Ch. Rancho Dobe’s Storm, who was also Best American-Bred in Show, was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Len Carey. The breeders had given them pick of the litter when he was two months old. A year later, after his ring debut, he went to the top six out of 12 times out. Said Mrs. Carey:

He loves shows but always is anxious to get home to his own bed – which he generously shares with our son, Jeff.

John Rendel of the Times said Storm held one’s attention just by standing still. He stared “as though hypnotized, straight at his handler who knelt before him.”

Text from William F. Stifel, The Dog Show: 125 Years of Westminster, 2001
Precious Cargo

Dog carts were used historically in the Netherlands and Belgium for delivering milk, bread, and other common household items. During the Victorian-era Britain, dog carts were more commonly associated with bakers. These carts were outlawed in London in 1840, as they were believed to be a nuisance by pedestrians that shared the streets with the dog carts.

Strike a Pose

You may notice that many of the dogs depicted in these paintings are posed in a particular way. The dogs are posed in profile, with all four paws placed firmly on the ground. This position, and this type of portrait, is designed to best show the dog’s appearance, and how closely their appearance adheres to the breed standard. This is also known as the “stacked” position.

The purebred dog portrait developed around the same time as the establishment of The Kennel Club in 1870. After the advent of dog shows, the appearance of a dog became very important. The better a dog conformed to the breed standard, the better the dog performed at conformation dog shows. Owners took great pride in their winning dogs and wanted visual representations of these dogs. They commissioned portraits of their dogs in the stacked position to show how well they fit the breed standard.
**Personifying the Dog**

This delightful terrier smoking a pipe is named Bob. At the time he was painted during the Victorian Era, it was a popular trend to depict animals imitating humans in art. Art in England during the 19th often showed animals emulating habits (and in the case of Bob here, vices!) that were distinctly human. His scruffy fur and gleaming eyes give Bob a very human-like quality, as if he is turning to his pipe after a long day. The personification of dogs continues to this very day and can be seen in popular contemporary dog artists like William Wegman.

Bob's pipe is not the only thing that makes him unique, however. Artist George Earl completed a series of pieces that were painted on circular or oval canvases. George Earl is also the father of eminent dog painter Maud Earl – who has more artworks in the Museum of the Dog collection than any other artist.

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**Arty challenge:**

Draw a dog doing something you do in your everyday life! What kinds of things would think it would be funny to see a dog do?

You could draw a dog using a cellphone, eating a meal, getting ready for school, riding a bicycle...

The possibilities are endless!

Submit your drawings on our website through our artwork submission page, and it will be featured on the @mod_communitywall Instagram page!

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George Earl
Bob
oil on canvas
1871
Gift of Frank T. Sabella

Horation Henry Couldrey
The President
oil on canvas
1868
Newfoundland
Gift of Frank T. Sabella
William Wegman’s first dog was a Weimaraner named Man Ray, named after the surrealist artist. Man Ray the dog became a fixture of Wegman’s life and his artwork, appearing as the protagonist of his photography and videos. He was such a prominent part of Wegman’s work, and so well-liked by the artistic community, that Man Ray was named “Man of the Year” by the Village Voice after he passed away in 1982.

The collaboration continued with Wegman’s second dog, named Fay Ray, and eventually grew to include her puppies. This extended cast allowed Wegman to create many children’s books with his talented Weimerarners, including adaptations of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and Mother Goose. These projects expanded into video segments for Nickolodeon and Saturday Night Live. Wegman is still working with his Weimaraner’s to this day.

If you were to cast your dog or a dog you know in a famous story, what character would they play? What would the costumes look like, and how would their inclusion change the story? Use your imagination!
A Monumental Legacy

You may be familiar with a much larger sculpture created by Daniel Chester French - the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Born in 1850 in Exeter, New Hampshire, French was a pre-eminent sculptor with an impressive legacy, producing more than 100 public sculptures in his lifetime. After he dropped out of MIT in 1867, French’s artistic career was encouraged by May Alcott, sister of Little Women author Louisa May Alcott. You can still visit French’s summer home of Chesterwood, located in the Bershires in western Massachusetts.

Long Live the Queen

Many paintings in the Museum’s collection were created in the Victorian Era, which spanned the period of Queen Victoria’s reign from 1837 until 1901. Dog art was very popular during this time, and we have the influence of the Queen to thank for that. Queen Victoria’s commissioned pet portraits started a trend in British society and was hugely influential on the development of dog painting in general. Other members of the middle and upper classes were influenced to start collecting dog paintings as well, and the most well-to-do began to commission works of their dogs as well.

Maud Earl
Ch. Christopher of Notts and Ch. Cackler of Notts
oil on canvas
1899
Wire Fox Terrier
Gift of the estate of Cynthia S. Wood

Daniel Chester French
Imposing on Goof Nature
porcelain
1872
Gift of Stuart L. and Roberta Lee Berman
The National Dog of Cuba

The Museum of the Dog recently acquired two pieces featuring the Havanese into its collection. The first is a stamp from Cuba and features a happy Havanese. The Havanese is the national dog of Cuba, being native to the country and named after the country's capital, Havana. The dog featured in this stamp is named Ch. Puppy, who was bred by Alfredo Sanz Peraza, founder and former president of the Havanese Cuban Club. He was born in 1988 of a litter six in Havana, Cuba. He was one of the founders of the breed in his country, where he went on to be the most influential and dominant sire of his time. Because of his influence in the breed, he was selected as the model to represent the Havanese in the stamp sheet entitled Dogs, issued in 1992. Puppy became the first Cuban Champion of the breed at Expo. Canina in 1993, where he finished as Reserve Best in Show. Courtesy of Amri Aguilera.

Arty challenge:

Write a letter to a dog in your life and make a stamp featuring that dog!

Submit your artwork on our website through our artwork submission page, and it will be featured on the @mod_communitywall Instagram page!

Thanks to the efforts of Joan Ambrose and friends of the Havanese, the Museum was able to commission a beautiful bronze sculpture of Bono the Havanese. Sculptor Fan Yu created this majestic piece and unveiled it at the Museum on February 12. Named after the U2 frontman, Bono the dog is a rockstar in his own right. He is the most winning Havanese in the breed’s history. He has won 90 Best in Show titles, and he was rated as the #1 show dog in the country in 2019 by Dog News Magazine.
Arty challenge:

Create a cubist dog just by using basic shapes! It can be a drawing, painting, collage... whatever you like!

Abstract Dogs

The Museum of the Dog has a few abstract pieces in its collection! Two examples are Puppy with Ball by Oscar Thalinger and The Bravos by Alfredo Garcia Aguilar. Thalinger’s painting is an example of cubism. This art style was a revolutionary approach to representing forms that was pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque.

Cubism breaks down form into distinct planes and shapes, simplifying and abstracting the subject matter. This style is different than the other artwork you see in the Museum of the Dog because it intends on flattening the canvas and removing dimension. This art movement swept through Europe in the early twentieth century, and is still influencing modern artists to this day.

Oscar E. Thalinger
Puppy with Ball
oil on board
1950-1960
Gift of Russell Schroeder

Alfredo Garcia Aguilar
The Bravos
oil on canvas
1994
Gift of the artist
Thank you for virtually touring highlights from the Museum of the Dog Permanent Collection!

Complete Arty’s Challenges and submit them on our website at www.museumofthedog.org

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Have any questions? Email us!
info@museumofthedog.org

The AKC Museum of the Dog is a place where you can learn more about your own canine family members and honor the undeniable impact they have on our lives. We just celebrated our first year in the New York City location and we are so grateful for the support we have received from residents of the City and visitors around the world. We’re continuing our commitment to provide excellent programming, activities and exhibitions centered around our fine subject, the dog, to our supporters and followers during this time of unprecedented crisis in our nation’s history.

Our digital channels will serve as places to connect with our collection and our community until we can welcome you to our galleries in person again. Be sure to explore the MOD website (https://museumofthedog.org/) and social media profiles (Facebook and Instagram) where you’ll be able to see live programs, download art activities for the family, and take virtual tours of our exhibitions past and present. We’ve already been able to show past exhibitions to new audiences in other countries, and discovered new artists through submissions of our downloaded breed coloring sheets to the @MOD_Community Instagram profile!

Arts and cultural institutions have been hit hard by the pandemic and give some of the greatest pleasure to those who understand their important role in society at times like these. Your love of dogs and appreciation for the way they have been recorded and artistically displayed throughout history is why we appeal to you today. It is with your support that our programs and educational content are made possible and made accessible beyond our walls. Won’t you consider supporting us today? Whether through an annual membership, or a one-time donation, all gifts, large or small, are greatly appreciated. Your generosity will help sustain our beloved institution through this difficult time and will also support the growth of online content that will bring comfort and inspiration to our community now and in the future.

Give to honor your canine friends! With your help, we can continue to introduce and remind the public of the many ways in which dogs enrich our lives, especially during times of crisis. We thank you in advance and look forward to thanking you in person once our doors open again.

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