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Virtual ARTSmart Classes for Salt Air



Seashells (Mollusks!)

Visit the exhibition online at <https://www.mkbma.org/exhibitions/salt-air/>



Carol Haerer (United States, 1933 - 2002)

Lucine, 1966

Oil and acrylic on canvas

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, Eleventh Biennial Exhibition of Regional Art (1970) Purchase Award, acquired for the Friends of Art with K-State Works of Art Purchase Fund, 1970.4

Lucine shells of the Lucinidae family of clams are bivalves. The ones below are called Buttercup Lucine (*Anodontia alba*) because of the yellow interiors and were found on Sanibel Island in Florida. You can see the yellow in the painting as well.





Spiny Oyster shell, silver, and turquoise bottle, 20th century
KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of Mel and Mary Cottom, 2012.242

Seashells are often featured in jewelry, including pieces made by Indigenous artists. Their bright colors and sheen made them highly decorative and desirable.



Robert Morgan Kiskadden (United States, 1918 - 2004)
Shells, 1968
Oil over polymer on plywood
KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, Tenth Biennial Exhibition of Regional Art (1969) Purchase Award, acquired for the Friends of Art with K-State Works of Art Purchase Fund, 1969.11

These shells, a spider conch (*Lambis chiragra*) and a cowrie shell (family *Cypraeidae*) are univalves or gastropods – the creature living in them is a sea snail. Shells can also have symbolic or religious meanings. Marie Laveau (September 10, 1801 – June 15, 1881) was a Louisiana Creole practitioner of Voodoo, herbalist and midwife, who may have used shells for divining the future.



Renée Stout (United States, born 1958)

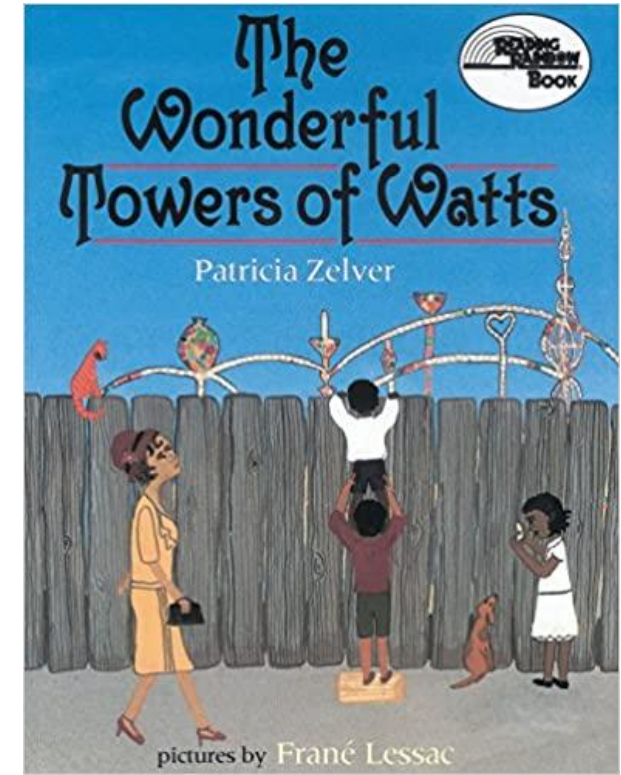
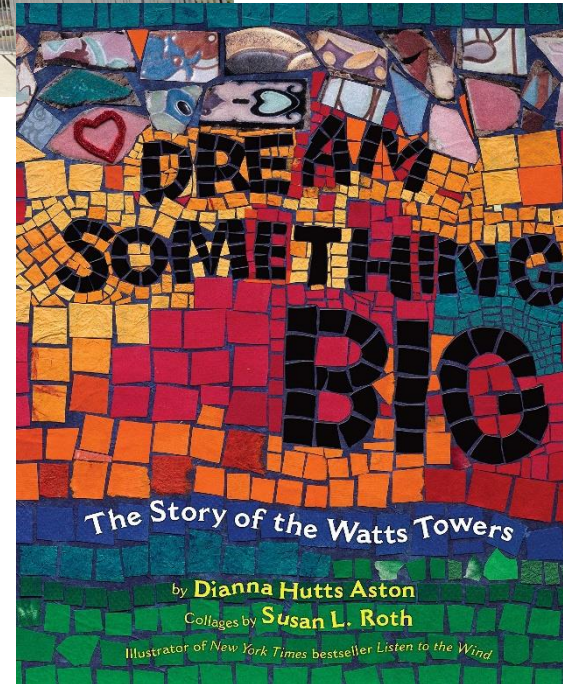
Laveau (Shells), 2001

Linocut on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of Zanatta Editions, 2004.359h



The Tower of Watts was built by beach comber Sabato Rodia in Los Angeles, California starting in 1920. It is adorned with things found on the beach, including lots of sea shells.



Seashells, in all their decorative varieties, have been used by many cultures to decorate objects.



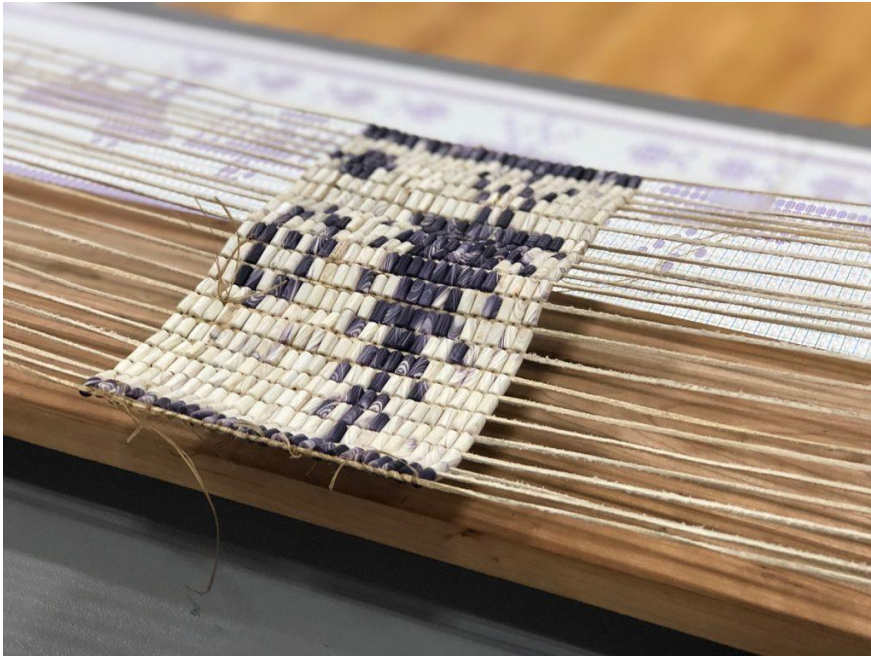
A sailor's valentine from c. 1900. COURTESY MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM. These were made by women in the Caribbean Islands and bought by sailors to take home to their loved ones.

Tiger cowries have been popular in various cultures, including those in Japan, India, and West Africa. These mollusks were used as modes of communicating messages between villages, as decorations, or associated with religious rituals and deities.

Photo by Panther Media GmbH/Alamy Stock Photo



Wampum belts are of cultural, sacred and symbolic significance to the Wampanoag nation. Through wampum belts, the Wampanoag share stories of their communities and culture. The beads are made from seashells.





Kwifoyin Society, Helmet Mask, before 1880
Bamum kingdom of Cameroon, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Mask (Mwaash aMbooy), Kuba (Bushoong subgroup), Kasai Province (former Kasai-Occidental Province), Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brooklyn Museum





Conch shells are used as horns in Hawaii. Shakere rattles are covered in cowrie shells in Ghana, Africa.



After checking out lots of seashells, ARTSmart friends made their own Sailor's Valentines. What items could you use to make designs if you didn't have seashells? What would you call it instead of a sailor's Valentine?

