

## Decoration & Design



### VISIT THE BMA

The two butterflies that you see in this picture of the *Jardiniere* look different from each other. Find out how the third butterfly looks on the other side of the bowl.

The *Jardiniere* is currently on view at the BMA in the European Decorative Arts gallery on the ground floor.

*Jardiniere*, c. 1870. Designer: Christopher Dresser.  
Manufacturer: Minton's, England. Porcelain with overglaze and gold decoration. The Baltimore Museum of Art: BMA 2006.101

### *Jardiniere* Christopher Dresser

Do you have beetles in your house? Unlike brown beetles that dig in the dirt, this shimmering spotted beetle lives on a beautiful turquoise bowl. He sits on a golden leaf or flower petal that emerges from a group of slender green leaves and thin brown stems. Together the beetle, leaves, and stems create an elegant symmetric design.

#### The Artist

Christopher Dresser, trained as a botanist, had studied the structure of plants and drawn detailed botanical illustrations for many years. He was also familiar with the insects that live around plants. However, when he designed this bowl, he abandoned his scientific diagrams and transformed the shapes of beetles, butterflies, and plants into a beautiful decoration.

To make all parts of his design fit together in an orderly composition, Dresser carefully arranged the beetle's legs and antennae so that they would repeat the angles of some of the leaves and stems.

This beautiful blue bowl is like a big flowerpot—large enough to hold a luxurious potted plant. It is called a *jardiniere* [jar-din-er] and its name comes from the French word *jardin*, [jar-dan'] which means "garden."

#### Challenge for Students

Design a plate, cup, or vase with a fabulous ornamental insect such as a beetle, butterfly, bee, ant, or dragonfly. Include some plant life that relates to the shape and positioning of the insect.

Print the image on page 2 for your students.

For visitor information: [artbma.org](http://artbma.org)

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# THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART



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