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Laura A. Fry, *Pitcher*

Sabina Elliott Wells, *Vase*

Elizabeth E. Copeland, *Box*

Dominic Carter: As you walk around this case, notice the handcrafted details of these three objects, all made by women involved in the American Arts and Crafts Movement. The movement was started in England in the 1860s by artists and social reformers who objected to the dehumanizing work and machine-made products of industrialization. The fundamental idea, says curator Barry Harwood, was that handwork was ennobling.

Barry Harwood: And this led to the idea that if one surrounded oneself with handmade objects of beauty, one's life would be elevated.

Dominic Carter: The movement also wanted to give women a dignified way of earning their living—or, if they were better off, to help them beautify their homes.

One of the first things taught was pottery. The vase and the pitcher here show the high level reached by some participants. The unusual box was made by Elizabeth Copeland, a member of one of the Arts and Crafts clubs that flourished in many big cities throughout the country. The silver and enamel were meant to evoke decorative objects from the Middle Ages.

Barry Harwood: It is clearly handmade. The hand of the maker is meant to be visible. It's meant to be part of the aesthetic of the object, part of what made it beautiful and appealing.

Dominic Carter: One irony of the Arts and Crafts Movement was that its practitioners *tended* to make products that only affluent people could afford, in spite of the movement's populist ideals.