

# HATS & HALOES

self-guided tour



**MUSEUM  
OF FINE ARTS  
ST. PETERSBURG**

# HATS & HALOES

Hats, haloes, and head coverings can be seen in art from around the world and throughout history. Whether they are symbolic, religious, ceremonial or simply a fashion statement, head coverings provide insight into the aesthetics and values of the culture that made, depicted and wore them.



SCAN THIS CODE FOR A MAP IDENTIFYING  
THE LOCATIONS OF THE ARTWORKS

## DAILY WEAR

*Kline Monument*, A.D. 175–200

### FIND THIS IN THE ANCIENT ART GALLERIES

This Roman sculpture in the form of a kline (bed/couch) depicts a deceased woman reclining in front of her widowed husband. Winged figures of erotes (personifications of desire/love) surround them. She is dressed as he wishes to remember her. A separate veil drapes from her head, either the *flammeum* (bridal veil), or the *amictus*, associated with funerals. The three other pieces of clothing she apparently wears are traditional for a Roman married woman. The undergarment, or *tunica intima*, is accompanied by a sleeveless overgarment called a *stola*. Over the *stola* is the *palla*, or mantle. These last two pieces would have been fastened together with *fibulae* (brooches).



## BUDDHA'S HALO

*Buddha Sakyamuni*, 2nd–3rd Century A.D.

### FIND THIS IN THE ASIAN ART GALLERIES

The halo—the light rays or disk of illumination around a person's head—has been used to indicate sanctity, power, or divinity throughout the world for centuries. Here, it appears encircling a seated Buddha's head, as an indication that he has attained spiritual enlightenment. This sculpture was made in Gandhara, a crossroads of goods, trade, philosophies, and artistic expression between the East and West. The sculpture reflects this exchange of ideas: its Classical features were influenced by idealized images of Greek gods, and the garments mimic the drapery of Greco-Roman models. Likewise, the halo appears frequently in the art of the Western and Near Eastern world, particularly in ancient Roman images of gods, suggesting that a Gandharan artist may have adapted it from that source.



## THE FLAT CAP

Conrad Faber von Creuznach, *Albanus Wolffhart of Lindau*, c. 1530–34

**FIND THIS IN THE EUROPEAN ART, 13TH-18TH CENTURIES GALLERIES**

The sitter wears a *barett*, a flat cap common throughout Europe during the sixteenth century. In England it was called a Tudor hat, and in France, of course, it was called a beret. Initially these hats were worn by the nobility—who often set fashion trends, but eventually it spread to all classes. Such caps were not only stylish, but carried the connotation of education, much like the mortar board hats worn for graduations in the United States. The barett was made of a variety of materials including both silk and wool, depending upon the taste and means of the owner. Also depending upon the wearer's wealth, and sense of fashion, the hats were often adorned with small pieces of jewelry.



## CATHOLIC HALOES

Master of the Greenville Tondo, *Adoration of the Christ Child by Mary and Joseph*, Early 16th Century

**FIND THIS IN THE EUROPEAN ART, 13TH-18TH CENTURIES GALLERIES**

For many, the halo is associated with Christian figures of God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. Adapted from ancient Roman sources, these take on a variety of forms. In medieval images, for instance, they are often flat disks. Also, round haloes appeared on divine creatures such as angels or on deceased saints. A square halo indicated a holy person who had not yet passed away. Cross-shaped haloes, not surprisingly, were reserved for images of Jesus Christ. By the later fifteenth century, reflecting the increased realism of the Renaissance, haloes frequently were reduced to bands of glowing light, or rays extending outward from the head. These surfaces, as here, were often gilded to give them a great sense of heavenly illumination.



## NEWS TRAVELS FAST

Hendrick de Clerck, *Mars and Venus Surprised by Vulcan*, 1600

**FIND THIS IN THE EUROPEAN ART, 13TH-18TH CENTURIES GALLERIES**

Although we might not generally think of ancient Greek and Roman gods as hat wearers, such a head covering was an essential attribute of Mercury. He appears—in his winged hat—at the upper left of this painting. A god of many things, Mercury was associated with messages, commerce, eloquence, communication, travelers, boundaries, luck, trickery, and thieves. He also had the important role of accompanying the dead into the underworld. His winged hat thus reflects the swift travel associated taking souls to Hades, delivering messages, and the quick pace of commerce.



## THE DIADEM CAP

Studio of Michiel van Mierevelt, *Portrait of Margaretha van Santen*, 1615

### FIND THIS IN THE EUROPEAN ART, 13TH-18TH CENTURIES GALLERIES

This woman's headpiece—a diadem cap of delicate lace, starched linen, and fine pearls—seems to defy gravity. Today we might use hairpins to secure such headwear, but when this was worn, they used something else. By her ear you can glimpse what appears to be a tiny piece of metal. This is likely the *oorijzer*, or ear iron. This thin metal wire was wrapped around her head from ear to ear, and the cap was then secured onto it, completing the look.



## THE CORNETTE

Richard Hall, *Gathering at Church Entrance*, 1884

### FIND THIS IN THE EUROPEAN & AMERICAN ART, 19TH-20TH CENTURIES GALLERIES

The nun in this painting is wearing a *cornette*—a head covering made of heavily starched white linen folded upwards into large points. It takes its name from the French word *cornes*, or horns. This particular nun belonged to the Roman Catholic Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul. Founded in 1633, these women devoted themselves to serving the poor, providing both physical and spiritual aid. In France, they were known as “Gray Sisters” due to the color of their garb. Cornettes were originally popular in the medieval period, but over time became increasingly associated with nuns. Although impractical, especially for a group who worked for the sick and poor, these hats did have one practical function: if you needed a nun, they were very easy to spot in a crowd.



## THE CLOCHE HAT

Joan Sloan, *Cliff Dwellers' Country*, 1925

### FIND THIS IN THE AMERICAN ART, 19TH-21ST CENTURIES GALLERIES

The *cloche* takes its name from the French word for bell, the shape of which it mimics. These were extremely popular for women during the 1920s and early 1930s in the United States and Europe. Its popularity even shaped hairstyles of the time, including the so-called “Eton crop,” a short, slicked-down cut that was ideal to showcase the hat's shape. Originally, cloche hats were made of felt, sisal, or straw, and worn plain, though eventually designs began to feature more diversity in style and embellishments. The cloche hat was intended to be worn snugly on the head and low over the eyebrows. Sometimes hat-makers would even form the felt around the wearer's head right in the store to ensure a perfect fit.



Cover: Conrad Faber von Creuznach, *Albanus Wolphart of Lindau*, c. 1500–2552/53, Oil on panel, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Gilbert  
Inside: Hendrick de Clerck, *Mars and Venus Surprised by Vulcan* (detail), 1600, Gift of Dr. Gordon Gilbert in memory of Mrs. Adele Gilbert