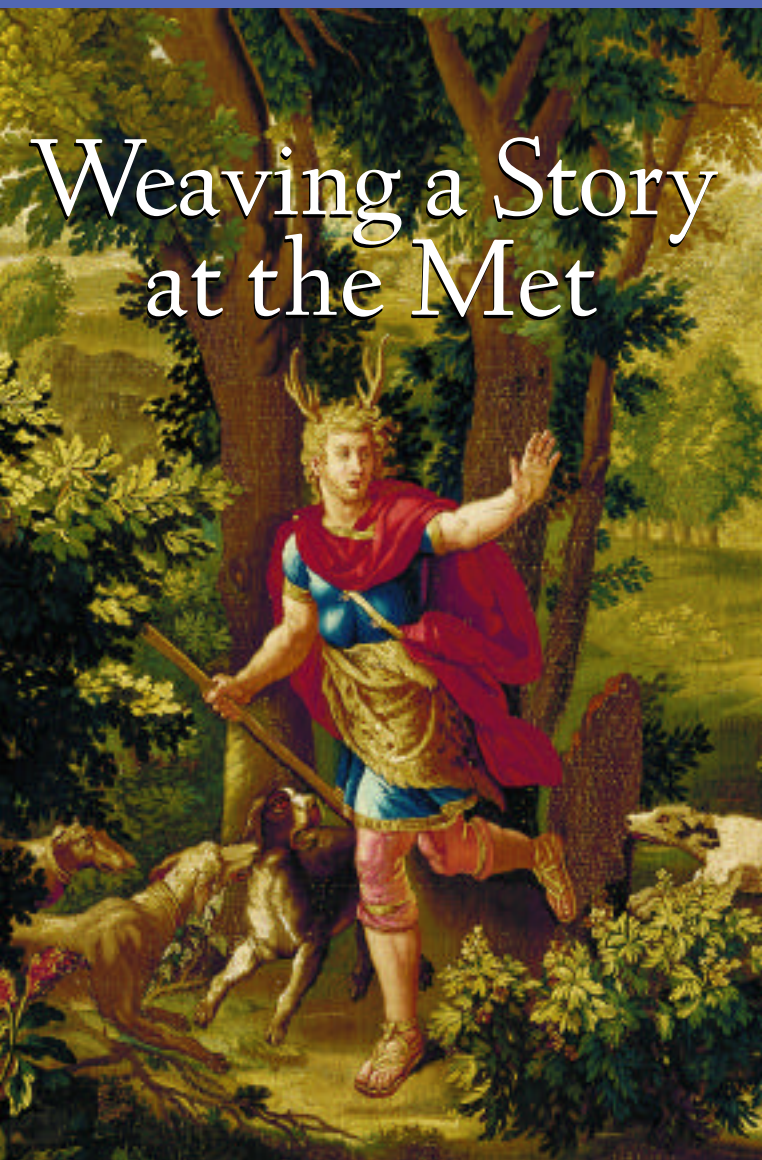




museum**kids**

Weaving a Story at the Met



The Metropolitan Museum of Art

T H E T A P

If you are a regular Museum**Kids** reader, you probably noticed that this issue looks a little different. We have taken out all the program information and put it into a separate flyer, so we have more space to give you other information, activities, resources, and all the great stuff you expect from us. The programs will be sent out separately, or you can pick up a copy at the Information Desk. (If your family would like to be on any of our mailing lists, just call 212-570-3961.) Let us know what you think of our new format, and tell us any terrific ideas you have for upcoming issues.

In the meantime, have fun with this issue, which is all about just one work of art—a tapestry with a wonderful story. We hope that looking at it and reading about it will inspire you to “weave” some stories of your own!—The Museum**Kids** Staff

What is a Tapestry?

A TAPESTRY, A WOVEN TEXTILE often showing a type of picture, was usually made to hang on a wall. While it was intended to be decorative, like a painting, it also helped to keep out cold, drafty air. Tapestries were more expensive than paintings, so they were valued as a demonstration of wealth.

Tapestries were woven on a loom, and as many as six to ten people might work on a tapestry at one time. (A tapestry like *Diana and Actaeon* was woven by about three weavers, and took about a year or a year-and-a-half to weave.)



The woven fabric was made of plain warp yarns—those going lengthwise—which were entirely covered during the weaving process by colored weft yarns. It is amazing to think that every single stitch was placed by hand.

- Tapestries were generally made as a set. They were hung around a room so that all the wall space was covered. A group of tapestries was called a chamber.
- Tapestries were usually woven by men; it was a respected and well-paid job. Boys began their apprenticeship when they were eleven or twelve years old.
- A king or nobleman going into battle might take his tapestries with him when he traveled. The tapestries would be rolled up and hung on the walls of the tent when he pitched camp. Tapestries were also used to divide large spaces into smaller ones, hung outside windows for parades and special days, displayed in churches, and traveled with the court and used as decoration.

What is the Story?

Quick: Something is going on in this tapestry. Why is that woman pointing her finger at that man? Why are the dogs nipping at his heels? And what are those things on his head?

The picture you are looking at comes from a tapestry that is hanging in the European Sculpture and Decorative Arts galleries on the first floor of the Museum. If you walk through the galleries of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, enter European Sculpture and Decorative Arts and head toward the Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court, you can see it hanging on the right wall.

The tapestry is one of at least ten based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Ovid, a Roman writer, collected mythological stories in which a

metamorphosis, or transformation, takes place. This one tells a story about the goddess Diana. (In Greece, she was known as Artemis.) She was the goddess of hunting, and if you look carefully, you can see some clues that show you this.

One day, Diana was bathing in the woods with her attendants. Actaeon, a human, was out hunting, and he wandered into the woods. When Diana saw him, she was very angry that he had seen her bathing. Even though he had not gone there on purpose, that didn't matter to Diana. She pointed her finger at him...and changed him into a stag. His own dogs attacked and killed him.

Do you think that Actaeon's punishment was fair? If not, what do you think she should have done?

ESTRYS

What is happening in this tapestry? Who are the most important figures? How can you tell?
What is the mood, or feeling, in this tapestry?



Diana and Actaeon. Wool and silk tapestry. French (Paris); designed before 1680; woven at the atelier of JEAN JANS THE YOUNGER (about 1644-1723), or at near the Gobelins, late 17th-early 18th century. Gift of Mrs. George S. Amory, in memory of her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Amory Sibley Carhart, 1964. 64. 208

Framed!

Surrounding the tapestry you will see a border, almost like a frame around a painting. What do you see inside it? You will notice different animals, like squirrels and monkeys, and fruits, like grapes and persimmons. The kind of nature represented in the border is very different from that in the main picture. How is it different? Why do you think these particular images were chosen?

Fit for a King

King Louis XIV owned a set of seven *Metamorphoses* tapestries, some of which are in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, Holland. Several of them were made in two versions—each the mirror image of the other. The *Diana and Actaeon* tapestry was woven by Jean Jans the Younger, who took over from his father as head of a workshop at the Gobelins, in Paris, France.

SSUE

Did you know...

...that the name Diana means "divine" in Latin? Artemis, as Diana was known in Greece, might have come from the Greek words *artemes*, meaning healthy; *artamos*, meaning butcher; or *arktos*, meaning bear. She was sometimes called Cynthia, after the place where she was born—Mount Cynthos in Delos, Greece.

...that there are wonderful books about Greek and Roman myths? Here are some you might want to track down. Books with a check are available in the Uris Library on the first floor.

Evslin, Bernard; Dorothy Evslin; and Ned Hoopes.
The Greek Gods. New York: Scholastic, 1966.

✓ Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998.

Low, Alice. *The Macmillan Book of Greek Gods and Heroes*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985.

✓ Proddow, Penelope. *Art Tells a Story: Greek and Roman Myths*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1979.

...that you can see tapestries and woven fabrics at other museums in New York City? Here are two you may want to explore:

THE CLOISTERS,

a branch of the Metropolitan Museum that houses medieval art. It is located in northern Manhattan. Look for tapestries, including the famed Unicorn series. Call (212) 923-3700.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN,

a branch of the Smithsonian, has weavings from South and Central America, as well as the southwestern United States. Call (212) 825-8096.



*The Unicorn Tapestries:
The Unicorn at the Fountain
Design: Parisian; weaving: South
Netherlandish, Brabant, Brussels, ca. 1500
12 ft. 1 in. x 12 ft. 5 in.
Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 37.80.2*



activity

Now It's YOUR Turn.

Think of a myth or story you have read that involves some kind of change—maybe a person changing into an animal, like the tale that is illustrated in *Diana and Actaeon*, or perhaps a different type of change, like a change of season. You can also make up your own story.

Using the border from the tapestry as a frame, illustrate your story. You can also write a description. When you are done, drop it off at the Information Desk, c/o Education, or send it to:

Frame Time, c/o **MuseumKids**, Education
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10028

We will send you a Museum goodie, so be sure to include your address. While you are at it, don't forget to let us know of any topics that you would like to see covered in an upcoming issue.





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