


GOTHIC ROOM • NORTH WALL

303  Isabella Gardner placed her portrait by John S. Sargent in the most prominent corner of the final gallery of the museum. Most of the other objects displayed here were made in Europe during the late medieval period, around 1300 to 1500. Her painted presence emphasizes her role as creator of the museum.

The Gothic Room was not open to the public during Mrs. Gardner's lifetime, and in 1903, she allowed Sargent to use the space as a studio. He painted several portraits here, including that of violinist and composer Charles Martin Loeffler, which hangs in the Yellow Room. The museum's Artist-in-Residence program stems from this legacy of an artist working in the galleries.



Two Large Altars

Saint Thomas Receives the Virgin's Girdle

Unknown Italian (Liguria) artist, about 1485
Painted and gilded wood

Altar of the Holy Kinship

German (Saxony), about 1510–20
Painted and gilded lindenwood

Each of these altarpieces is remarkably complete for its age, and together they demonstrate different forms of church altar decoration.

On the left is a polyptych (many-paneled painting) showing Saint Thomas receiving the Virgin's girdle (a kind of belt). According to legend, Thomas was the only witness to Mary's assumption into heaven, and Mary dropped her girdle so that he would have proof of the event.

The Altar of the Holy Kinship, between the windows, depicts the extended family of Christ. Mary, his mother, and her mother, Saint Anne, are seated in the center, holding the Christ Child; below are the two half-sisters of Mary with their six children, five of whom became apostles. The figures above in the central panel represent male relatives, with God above them. In the wings are four female saints. Representations of the Holy Kinship became popular in the late medieval period, when an emerging middle class defined their place in society through familial and political connections.

In the style of Lucas Cranach the Elder

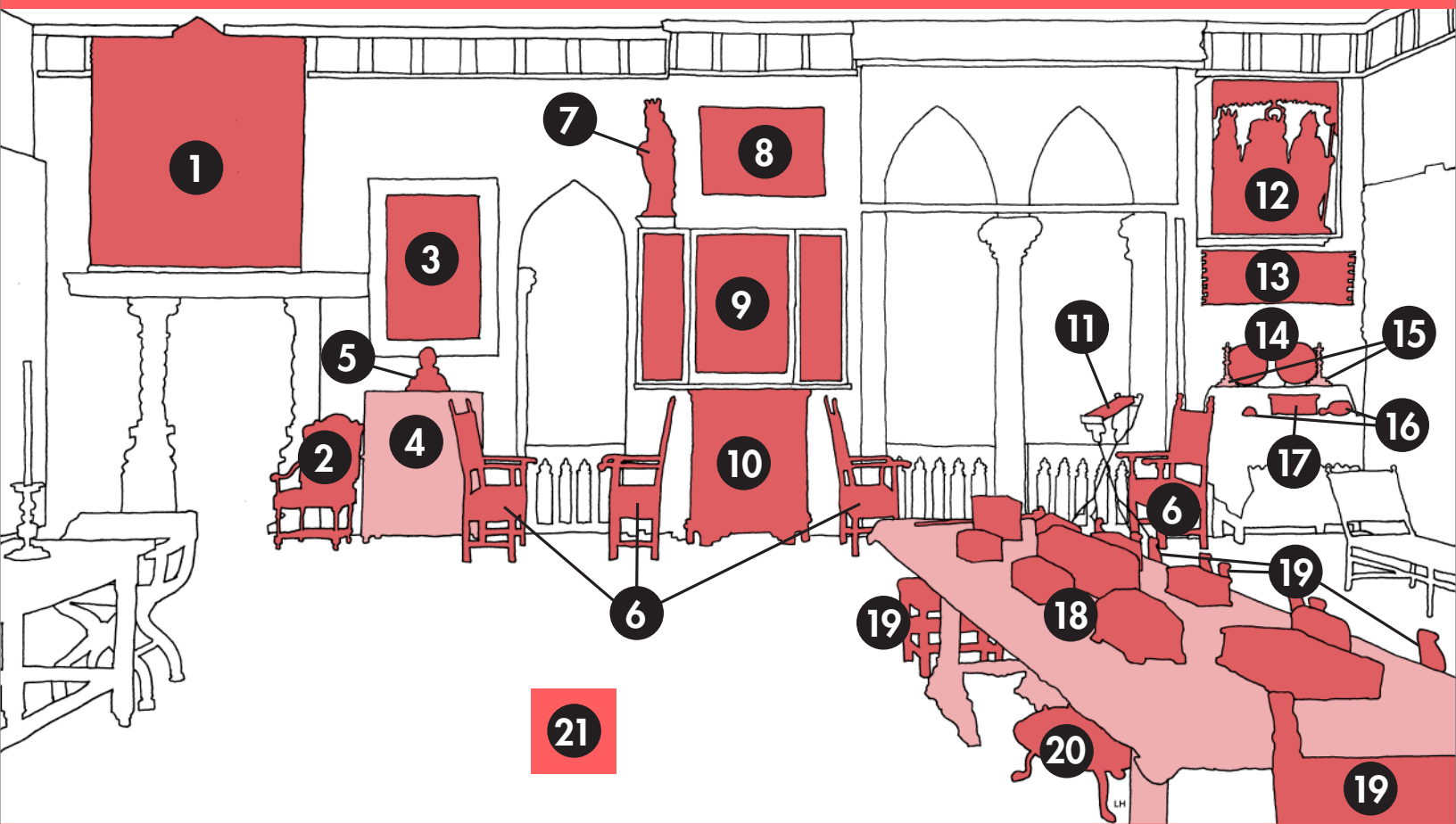
German, 1472–1553

Adam and Eve, 16th or 17th century (?)

Oil on wood

This puzzling painting was one of the first works by an old master that Isabella Gardner purchased. She bought it in 1892 as a painting by Lucas Cranach, but since then scholars have disputed that attribution. Some say the figures may have been painted by Cranach; others feel they are too sweetly portrayed and must be by another, less-talented artist. Also, no other known Cranach paintings include such large areas of sky or landscapes that appear to recede into space, as this one does. Is this a painting begun by Cranach and then finished or reworked by a student or assistant? Or is it by a later imitator?

GOthic ROOM • NORTH WALL



1. Saint Thomas Receives the Virgin's Girdle, about 1485. Unknown Italian (Liguria) artist. Painted and gilded wood

2. Armchair. Italian, 17th–18th century. Walnut and leather

3. Adam and Eve. In the style of Lucas Cranach the Elder (German, 1472–1553), 16th or 17th century (?). Oil on wood

4. Bargueño (desk). Spanish, in the style of the 17th century. Gilded wood with iron plates

5. Saint Bernardino. Italian (Tuscany), about 1475–1500. Painted terracotta

6. Armchairs. Central Italian, about 1600. Walnut, with modern upholstery

7. Virgin and Child. French, about 1350. Painted limestone

8. Field of Flowers (Millefleurs), Flemish, early 16th century. Tapestry; wool and silk, assembled from many fragments

9. Altar of the Holy Kinship. German (Saxony), about 1510–20. Painted and gilded lindenwood

10. Credenza. French, about 1500. Oak.

11. Plaques from a Processional Cross. Italian (Venice), about 1300. Silver, with remains of gilding. On iron lectern, French, 13th or 14th century

12. The Trinity with Saint Catherine and a Bishop Saint. German, about 1500. Wood

13. Carved Panel (front of a chest). French, 15th century. Wood

14. Two Plates. French (with fleurs-de-lys) and German. Brass

15. Candlesticks. Italian, 16th century. Brass

16. Food Molds: Cat's Head and Gourd. Unknown origin, 19th century. Copper

17. Liqueur Chest. Italian (Venice), 17th century. Leather and brass

18. Refectory Table. Italian, 16th century. Walnut


On the table: wood and leather, iron, and lead **Boxes**, French and Italian; iron **Bolt**; **Candle Snuffer**; **Door Knocker**; wood and mother-of-pearl **Casket**, Indian, 17th century; cast-iron **Bull's-Head Scepter**, Iranian, late-19th century; **Sermons of Johann Nider**, German, about 1476–78

19. Chairs. Central Italian, 16th–17th century. Walnut, with gilding

20. Brazier. Italian (?), 19th century. Brass

21. Candle Stand. French, 14th century. Iron

GOTHIC ROOM • EAST WALL

303  Isabella Gardner placed her portrait by John S. Sargent in the most prominent corner of the final gallery of the museum. Most of the other objects displayed here were made in Europe during the late medieval period, around 1300 to 1500. Her painted presence emphasizes her role as creator of the museum.

The Gothic Room was not open to the public during Mrs. Gardner's lifetime, and in 1903, she allowed Sargent to use the space as a studio. He painted several portraits here, including that of violinist and composer Charles Martin Loeffler, which hangs in the Yellow Room. The museum's Artist-in-Residence program stems from this legacy of an artist working in the galleries.

The east wall of this room is dominated by three large architectural elements. Similar objects throughout the museum add much to the overall ambience of the galleries.



Tambour. French, about 1500. Wood

The tambour (French for "drum"), or vestibule, may have enclosed a stairway. Woodland scenes on the panels include strange, hairy-legged wild men, which were thought to ward off evil and intruders.



Fireplace. Italian (Venice), 16th century. Stone

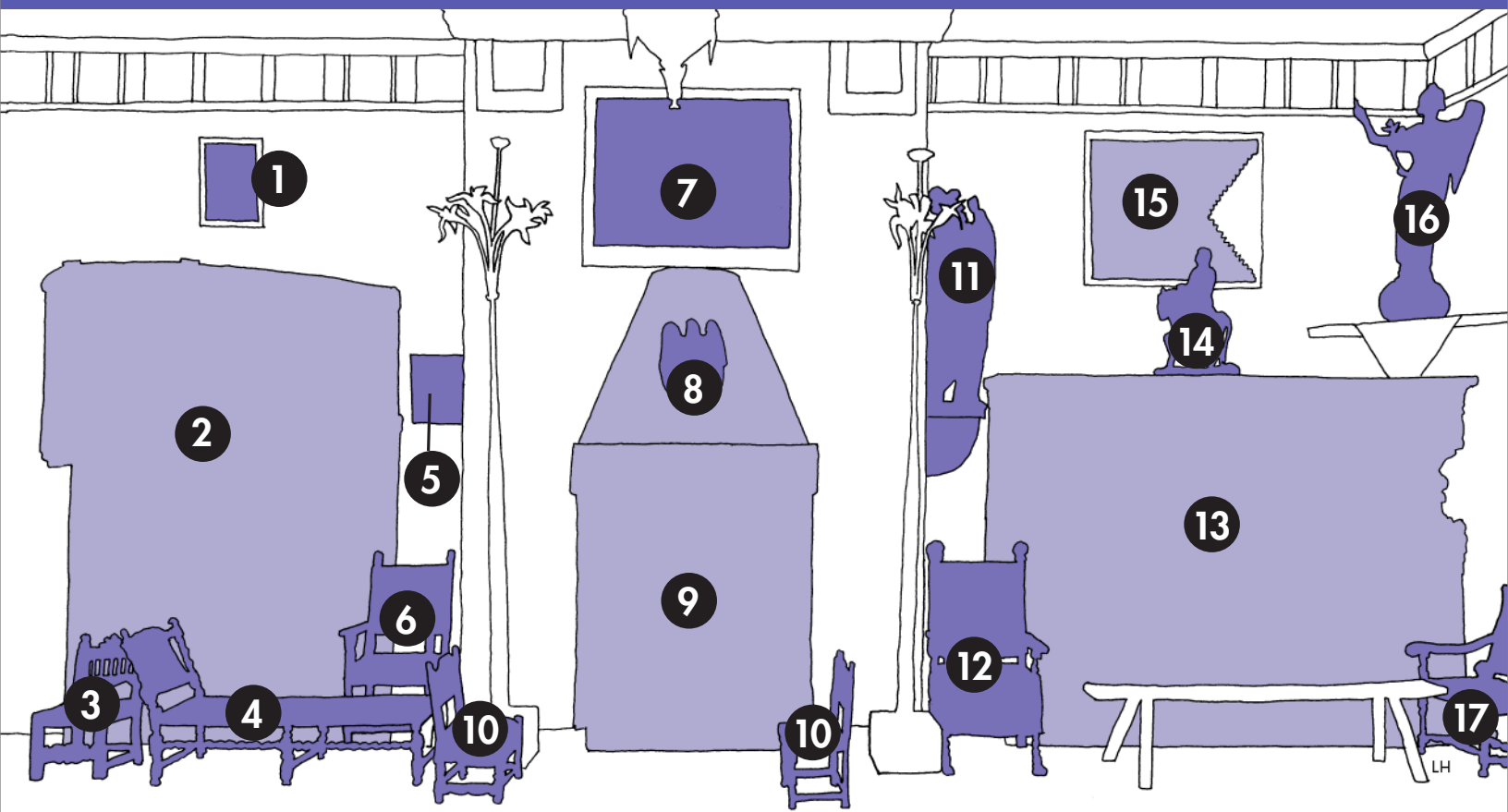
The stone fireplace has a conical hood like medieval wall fireplaces, which were vented through the ceiling rather than through a flue buried within a wall or chimney.



Choir Stalls. Italian, 15th–16th century. Wood

Wooden choir stalls became standard furniture in churches about the mid-13th century. Placed on the sides of the chancel, in front of the altar, they were used by the clergy during Mass.

GOTHIC ROOM • EAST WALL



1. Virgin and Child, about 1425–75. Unknown Venetian artist. Gold and tempera on wood

2. Tambour (screen for indoor porch or stairwell). French, about 1500. Wood. The bottom section of the tambour is made of two panels of a 15th-century French chest

3. Chair. Italian, about 1800. Wood with gilding

4. Day Bed. English, late 17th century. Wood with caning

5. Virgin and Child with an Apple, about 1430–80. Unknown Italian artist. Tempera on wood

6. Armchair. Italian, 16th or 17th century. Wood with gilding

7. Altar of Saint Maurice and the Theban Legion. German or Swiss, 1515. Painted wood

8. Coat of Arms of Queen Isabella of Spain. Spanish, about 1450–1500. Iron

9. Fireplace. Italian (Venice), 16th century. Stone

10. Child's Chair. Italian, 16th or 17th century. Wood with gilding

11. Magus (one of the Three Wise Men from the Bible). German, early 16th century. Painted wood

12. Armchair. Italian, about 1600. Wood with gilding

13. Choir Stalls. Italian, 15th–16th century. Wood


14. Mounted Saint (possibly Saint Hubert or Saint Eustace). German, about 1470–80. Painted wood

15. Pennant, with coat of arms of Pope Clement VIII. Spanish (Almodóvar del Campo), about 1592–1605. Silk velvet, with linen and metallic yarns

16. The Angel Gabriel. Italian, 19th century. Brass


17. Armchair. North Italian, 17th–18th century. Wood and leather

GOTHIC ROOM • WEST WALL

303  Isabella Gardner placed her portrait by John S. Sargent in the most prominent corner of the final gallery of the museum. Most of the other objects displayed here were made in Europe during the late medieval period, around 1300 to 1500. Her painted presence emphasizes her role as creator of the museum.

The Gothic Room was not open to the public during Mrs. Gardner's lifetime, and in 1903, she allowed Sargent to use the space as a studio. He painted several portraits here, including that of violinist and composer Charles Martin Loeffler, which hangs in the Yellow Room. The museum's Artist-in-Residence program stems from this legacy of an artist working in the galleries.




37  John S. Sargent
American, 1856–1925
Portrait of Isabella Stewart Gardner, 1888
Oil on canvas

Sargent painted this portrait in December 1887 and January 1888 at the Gardners' home, 152 Beacon Street, Boston. Gardner appears as an iconic, almost religious, figure: her symmetrical posture is rigid, her arms and the strand of pearls circle her body, and the patterns on the textile behind her suggest a crown and halo.

Perhaps because of this unusual presentation, critics and viewers were shocked when the portrait was exhibited in Boston. Isabella's husband was not pleased, and asked that it not be exhibited again. As a result, this room was closed to the public during Isabella Gardner's lifetime—but visitors could get a glimpse of the portrait from the hall at the top of the stairs.

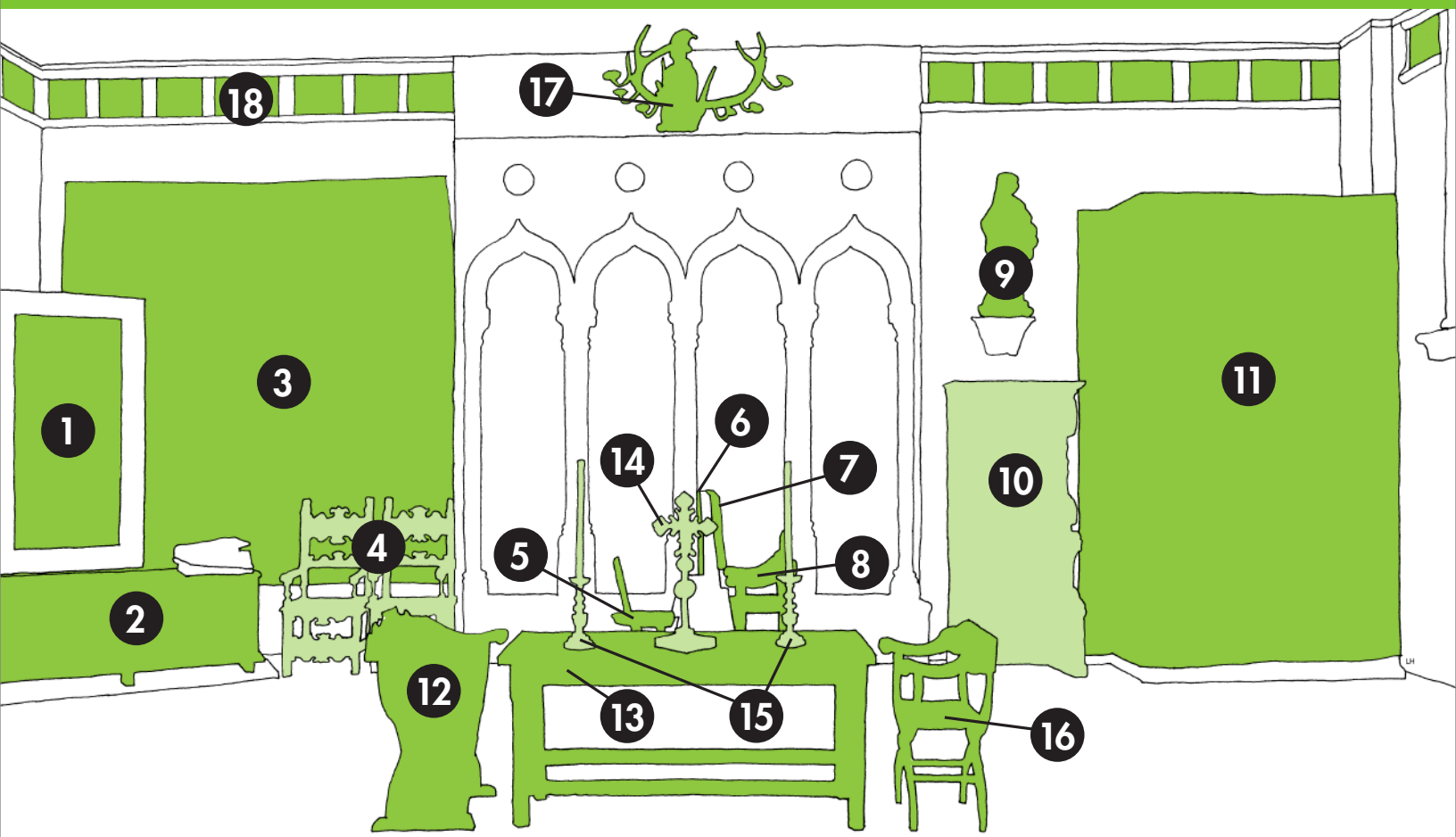


36  Giotto
Italian, about 1267–1337
The Presentation of the Christ Child in the Temple, about 1320
Tempera and gold on wood

This painting depicts the moment when Simeon and the prophetess Anna (at the right) recognize the infant Jesus as the savior. The Christ Child reaches across the altar towards his mother in a natural gesture. Giotto's ability to create believable space within the picture and his skill at depicting emotion made him one of the most famous artists of his time.


Isabella Gardner set the painting on a table, perpendicular to the window to get good light for viewing, with a chair placed as if a visitor could sit and contemplate the work. This arrangement occurs in other galleries, helping to focus attention and break up large spaces in the museum.

GOTHIC ROOM • WEST WALL



- 1. Portrait of Isabella Stewart Gardner,** 1888. John S. Sargent (American, 1856–1925). Oil on canvas
- 2. Chest.** Spanish, 15th century. Oak. On chest is a leather-bound Italian choir book, 1733
- 3. The Landlord and the Woodcutters.** Flemish (probably Tournai), about 1510–20. Tapestry; wool and silk
- 4. Armchairs.** Northern Italian, early 17th century. Wood
- 5. Peasant's Chair.** Italian (Alps), 18th century. Wood
- 6. Virgin and Child,** about 1325. Simone Martini (Italian, about 1280–1344). Tempera and gold on wood
- 7. The Presentation of the Christ Child in the Temple,** about 1320. Giotto (Italian, about 1267–1337). Tempera and gold on wood
- 8. Dante Chair.** Italian, 16th century, with later restorations. Walnut
- 9. Saint Elizabeth of Hungary.** German (upper Rhine or Swabia), about 1490. Lindenwood
- 10. Two Canopy Supports: A Bearded Friar (left); Virgin and Child with Saint Anne (right).** French, about 1400. Wood. Built into the sides of a modern throne.
- 11. The Education of the Prince of Peace.** Flemish (probably Tournai), about 1525–50. Tapestry; wool and silk
- 12. Savonarola Chair.** Italian, 19th century, with 16th century arms. Walnut
- 13. Table.** Italian, 19th century; marble top perhaps 17th century. Wood and pink cipolino rosso marble
- 14. Processional Cross.** Italian (Venice), about 1450. Gilded copper, on a wood core
- 15. Candlesticks.** Italian, 15th century. Brass
- 16. Dante Chair.** Italian, 19th century, in style of 16th. Walnut
- 17. Chandelier.** German (Bavaria), 16th century. Antlers and painted wood
- 18. Frieze: Portrait Heads and Coats-of-Arms.** Northern Italian, 15th century. Painted wood

GOTHIC ROOM • SOUTH WALL

303  Isabella Gardner placed her portrait by John S. Sargent in the most prominent corner of the final gallery of the museum. Most of the other objects displayed here were made in Europe during the late medieval period, around 1300 to 1500. Her painted presence emphasizes her role as creator of the museum.

The Gothic Room was not open to the public during Mrs. Gardner's lifetime, and in 1903, she allowed Sargent to use the space as a studio. He painted several portraits here, including that of violinist and composer Charles Martin Loeffler, which hangs in the Yellow Room. The museum's Artist-in-Residence program stems from this legacy of an artist working in the galleries.



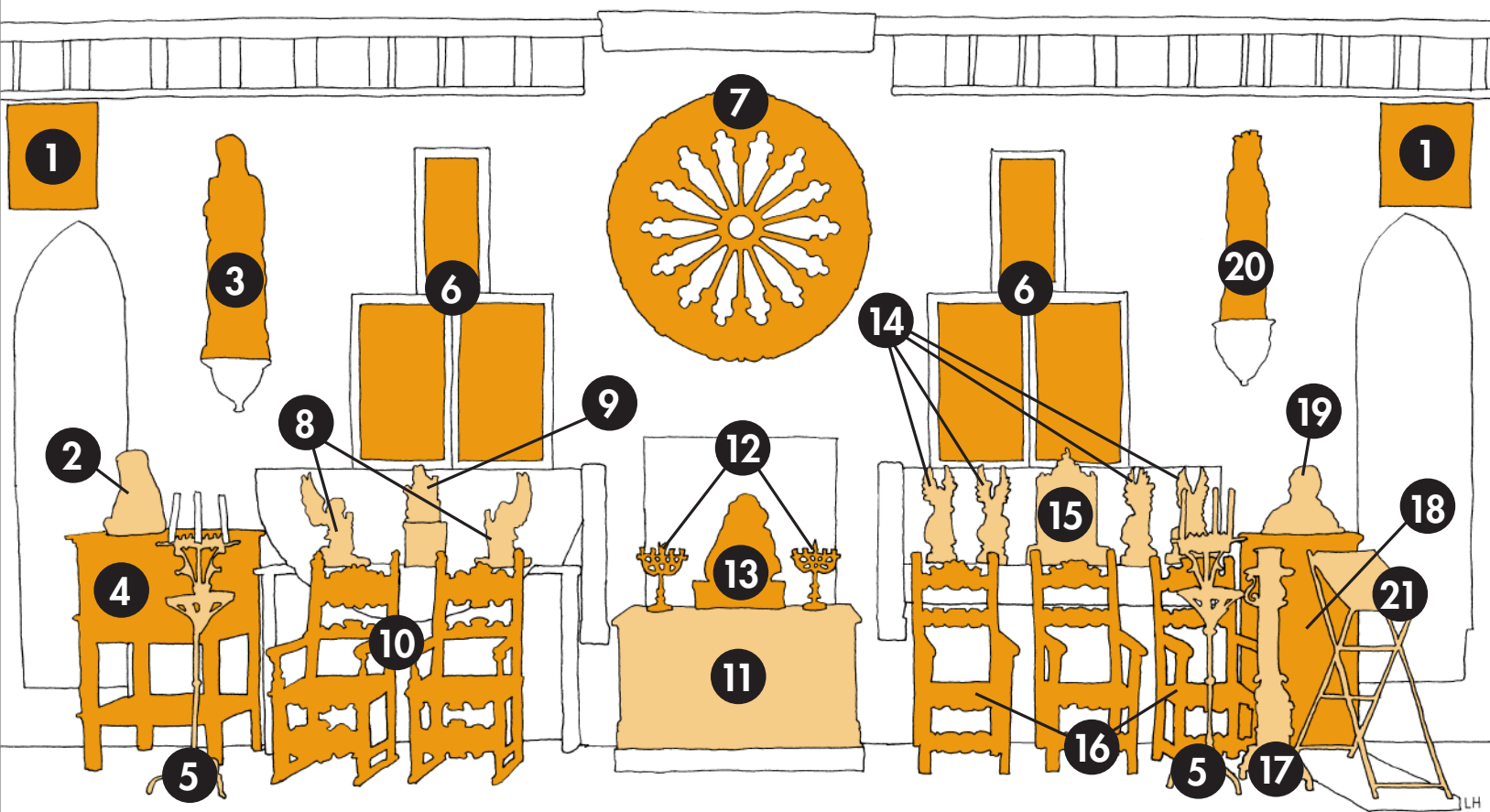
John S. Sargent
American, 1856–1925
Portrait of Isabella Stewart Gardner, 1888
Oil on canvas


37

Sargent painted this portrait in December 1887 and January 1888 at the Gardners' home, 152 Beacon Street, Boston. Gardner appears as an iconic, almost religious, figure: her symmetrical posture is rigid, her arms and the strand of pearls circle her body, and the patterns on the textile behind her suggest a crown and halo.

Perhaps because of this unusual presentation, critics and viewers were shocked when the portrait was exhibited in Boston. Isabella's husband was not pleased, and asked that it not be exhibited again. As a result, this room was closed to the public during Isabella Gardner's lifetime -- but visitors could get a glimpse of the portrait from the hall at the top of the stairs.

GOthic ROOM • SOUTH WALL



1. Coat of Arms of the Pisani Family. Italian (Venice), 19th century. Iron

2. Dominican Nun. Italian, 17th century. Painted terracotta

3. Saint Agnes. Italian (Spoleto?), about 1325–50. Painted and gilded wood

4. Credenza. French, 19th century, in the style of the 15th century. Wood

5. Candelabrum. Spanish, 16th century. Wrought iron

6. Six Stained-glass Windows:

Upper pair commemorates the marriage of A. Lienhard Jöchel (left) and Dorothea Hungerhausen (right). Austrian, about 1480–90

Four below from Milan Cathedral. Left to right: The Vision of Saint John, about 1420; Christ Washing the Feet of the Disciples, about 1480–90; two scenes from the life of Saint John of Damascus, after 1480

7. Wheel Window. Probably Italian, 15th century. Wood

8. Angel Candelabra. Italian, 15th century. Painted and gilded wood

9. Virgin and Child. Austrian or Northern Italian, about 1425. Painted and gilded wood

10. Armchairs. Northern Italian, early 17th century. Wood

11. Chest: Virgin and Child, with Saints Claude, John, Barbara, and Nicholas. French, about 1525. Walnut

12. Candelabra. Probably German, 19th century. Brass

13. Virgin and Child, 15th century. Workshop of Lorenzo Ghiberti (Italian, 1378–1455). Painted and gilded wood

14. Angels holding Candlesticks. Italian, 17th century. Painted and gilded wood

15. Gabled Shrine with the Virgin and Child. Italian (Veneto), 1450–1500. Painted and gilded wood

16. Armchairs, with Crest of Albergotti Family of Arezzo. Italian (Tuscany), about 1600. Gilded walnut

17. Torchère. Spanish, about 1400. Iron

18. Credenza. French, 19th century, in style of the 15th century. Oak

19. Bust of a Woman. Italian, 19th century. Painted and gilded plaster

20. St. Agnes. Italian (Aquila), about 1315. Painted and gilded wood

21. Lectern. French, about 1400. Iron. On the lectern is a pigskin book cover with brass mountings.