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Typical of Mrs. Gardner, the Macknight Room contains an eclectic array of objects that were meaningful to her, from bottles containing sand that she collected near the Great Pyramids in Egypt in 1875 to seven plaster studies for John Singer Sargent’s reliefs at the Boston Public Library.

The room is named for New England artist Dodge Macknight (1860–1950), a popular watercolorist and a particular favorite of Mrs. Gardner. Macknight’s watercolors surround the top of the room. Gardner’s support of this young man and other young artists is reflected today in the museum’s artist-in-residence program.

Other examples of Gardner’s support of contemporary artists is the pastel Moonrise on a Canal by Sarah Wyman Whitman (1842–1904), who also probably designed the museum’s crest, seen on the front of the museum, and the 1915 bronze bust of Maria Acosta Sargent by Anna Coleman Ladd (1876–1939), purchased from the artist the year it was made, when Mrs. Gardner held a solo exhibition of Ladd’s work.

Not to miss in this gallery is Sargent’s haunting watercolor of Mrs. Gardner, made in this room in 1922, after her debilitating stroke and just two years before her death. Inscribed “To my friend Mrs. Gardner,” Sargent’s watercolor shows Isabella Gardner at the age of 82, wrapped in translucent, white drapery that seems to dissolve her form. By contrast, her pale face is alert and her eyes steady and focused, denying the fragility of her body.
6. Window Curtain. Modern reproduction of a 16th century original. Painted and gilded leather
7. Armchair. Italian (Venice), about 1790–1800. Wood
8. Tray. Italian (Venice), 18th century. Painted wood
13. Writing Desk with two side cupboards. Italian (Venice), about 1780. Painted wood
On the desk (left to right): glazed pottery Table Lamp; watercolor of Notre Dame de Rheims: La Chapelle Obsidiale by French artist Adrian Senechal, 1913; four tray Box, Japanese; cloisonné enamel Salt Shaker, Chinese; slate with inlaid mosaic Torcello, Italian, 19th century; silver Hand Mirror, Dutch, 19th century; brass Bowl
Near Eastern or Indian; two lacquer with quail egg shell Cigarette Boxes, Japanese; silver Candles, Italian, 18th century; creamware Inkstand, English or French, 18th century with a photograph of Isabella Gardner; pottery Jar made by Mona Freer; Portfolio, Italian; Magnifying Glass, German; lacquer Box, Japanese, early 19th century; ivory Letter Opener; round ivory Box, Japanese, 19th century; glass Bottle with a pewter top, Dutch, 18th century; brass, tin and lac Tray, Indian, about 1880.
On the tray: bronze Block with snake, 19th century; silver filigree Box, East Indian, 19th century; alabaster Figure with carved ankh, Egyptian, 19th century(?); Sword Guard, Japanese, 18th century; wood inlaid with ivory Box, Indian, 19th century
14. Side Chair. Italian, 1750–1800
15. Inlaid Night Stand. Italian, 18th century. Wood
On top: Sheffield plate candlestick, trays with candlesnuffers
Hanging on the chair: Basket. American, 19th century (?). Stained reed
20. Flowerpot. Chinese, 18th century. Porcelain
21. Table. English (?), 19th century. Wood
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5. Tip-Top Table. Japanese, 19th century. Lacquer inlaid with mother of pearl
11. Tip-Top Table. Japanese, 19th century. Lacquer inlaid with mother of pearl
12. Engraving Block with Saint Anthony. Italian, 16th or 17th century. Wood
16. Mirror. Italian, 18th century. Painted and gilded wood
22. A Road in Winter, Cape Cod, 1901–1904. Dodge Macknight. Watercolor on paper
23. Fan Design: Coppelia, 1911. Louis Kronberg. Pastel on paper
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4. Tip-Top Table. Italian, 18th century. Painted wood
6. Window Curtain. Modern reproduction of a 16th century Italian original. Painted and gilded leather
7. Aeolian Harp. American (Boston), 1906. Wood
8. William and Mary Corner Desk. English, late 17th century. Wood
11. An Italian (Venice) Lagoon, 1884. Pietro Fragiacomo (Italian, 1856–1922). Oil on panel
12. The Dead Lion. Raphaele Mainella (Italian, 1858–1942). Watercolor on paper
15. Candlesticks (two). Italian (Venice), 19th century. Glass
16. Mirror. Italian (Venice), 18th century. Painted and gilded wood
17. Console Table. Italian, late 18th century. Painted and gilded wood
19. Ostrich Egg
21. Fisherman’s Float. Glass and net
25. Settee. Italian, 18th century. Wood
27. A View of Popocatepetl from Cuantla, 1923. Denman Waldo Ross. Watercolor on paper
29. Oblong Box. Japanese, 1870. Lacquer
34. Stand. English, 19th century. Wood
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5. Box. German, around 1600 (?). Painted metal
6. Writing Table. English (?), 19th century. Wood
8. Photograph of a Portrait of Cherubini by Ingres, 1922
10. The Bridge. Dutch, 17th century. Ink and pencil on paper
12. A Lane Through an Orange Grove, Orihuela, 1904. Dodge Macknight. Watercolor on paper
15. Commode. Italian (Venice), 18th century. Painted wood

On the commode: A mixture of travel souvenirs and gifts from friends, including glass Bottles with sand collected in Egypt, 1875; “Avalon” Tile, 1923, Henry Chapman Mercer (American, 1856–1930); glazed Rose Jar, 1931 by Anita Linzee; Green Dog and Hexagonal Box, around 1900, by Frances Curtis
22. Tip-Top Table. Italian, 18th century. Painted wood
24. The Road to Cordoba, Mexico, 1907. Dodge Macknight. Watercolor on paper