

Gaylen Gerber

Works in the exhibition:



Gaylen Gerber

Support, n. d.

Oil paint on impossible bottle (puzzle bottle), unmarked, United States, glass, painted wood, thread, 19th century

13,9 5,3 x 5,3 cm

An impossible bottle is a type of mechanical puzzle. The term refers to any bottle containing an object that does not appear to fit through the bottle's mouth.



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Support, n. d.

Oil paint on 12 fl. Oz. aluminum can, United States, Anheuser-Busch, printed aluminum, 21st century

13 x 7,6 x 6,3 cm



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Support, n. d.

Oil paint on fragment of a Luohan figure, China, sandstone, based mount, indeterminate age (18th century or earlier)

25,5 x 12,5 x 12,5 cm

An Arhat or Luohan, is one who has attained Enlightenment. Luohan are the major disciples of the original Buddha, Gautama Siddhartha, also known as Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha. They are the guardians of the true followers of Buddhism and are saved by the grace of Buddha who entrusted them with the protection of his teachings. Luohans are some of the only deities in the Buddhist pantheon who are depicted in totally naturalistic form, unlike other deities who are idealized and are often represented in

forms proscribed by Buddhist texts. This fragment was likely removed from the sculpture for safekeeping by devotees during a period of turmoil and was never reunited with the figure.



Gaylen Gerber

Support, n. d.

Oil paint on *Vigango* post, Giriyama people, Kenya, wood, based mount, 20th century
104 x 17,5 x 17,5 cm (41 x 7 x 7 in)

The *Vigango* posts of the Giriyama people are not necessarily grave-markers, although there has been confusion over this in the literature: *Vigango* posts are sometimes placed on the site of graves, but normally not. Their role is not to indicate the location of physical remains but to provide a new abode - a new body for the spirit of the deceased. Like the smaller and less elaborate *Koma* pegs, together with which they form a sort of genealogical map for the household, *Vigango* are erected sometime after the death of an individual, usually only when the spirit of the deceased indicates discontent with its lack of a body by appearing in a dream to some living relative.

These wooden bodies for spirits have a limited period of use. Just as they are erected only when the spirits of the deceased make themselves remembered, so they are neglected once the spirits begin to be forgotten. This restricted sense of genealogy is emphasized by the fact that the Giriyama alternate their names between generations, which tends to blur more distant ancestors into a stereotyped succession of names. Once an individual ancestor is forgotten, their *Koma* or *Vigango* are forgotten too - the soft-wood *Koma* rot away, and after a time the more enduring *Vigango* are left behind as homesteads move, no longer important because their spirits have faded from memory.



Gaylen Gerber

Support, n. d.

Oil paint on sādhu trumpet (Hindu trumpet), Nepal, horn, based mount, late 19th - early 20th century
14 x 20 x 5 cm

A sādhu is a religious ascetic, often a yogi that is dedicated to achieving moksha (liberation) through meditation and contemplation of Brahman and the renunciation of all material attachments. Sādhus live in caves, forests, and Hindu temples throughout India and Nepal. For the average Hindu, they are a walking reminder of Divinity. The horn is blown at the time of worship.



Gaylen Gerber
Support, n. d.

Oil paint on *Tchitcheri* (protective figure), Gurma people, Togo and Ghana, wood, based mount, 20th century
x 25 x 25 cm

81

Moba diviners influence and direct the planning, design, and ritual use of *Tchitcheri* figures which are protective figures promoting health and prosperity. Both the scale and the relatively abstract form of this particular work suggest that it was probably owned by an extended family or clan. It would have been associated with their origins and played a vital role in assuring their collective wellbeing.



Gaylen Gerber
Support, n. d.

Oil paint on *Lipico* (helmet mask), Makonde people, Tanzania, wood, pigment, 20th century
21,5 x 25,5 x 17,5 cm

Helmet masks such as this are common among the Makonde. The Makonde people of Tanzania and Mozambique are one of the most prolific art producing cultures in eastern Africa. One of the most prominent of these arts are the life size helmet masks called *Lipico* which are worn on the top of the head partially covering the face and slightly tipped upward so that the dancer can see. Masks play a prominent role in Makonde life serving to mark the end of the initiation and circumcision cycle for boys as they move into manhood. The *Lipico* masks show a wide range of Makonde life and society as they depict initiates, villagers, coastal Arabs and colonial officials. Makonde often embellish their masks (commonly portraits) with human hair and beards, insert pegs for teeth, will whiten the eyes and in a quest for realism often show human deformities. In some cases, there will be elaborate scarification on the face. Such scarification was done as a part of initiation ceremonies, and also when a ranking member of society assumed a more important political status or social level.



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Support, n. d.

Oil paint on *Lokapala* (figure of a guardian), China, earthenware, pigment, Tang Dynasty ca. 618 – 800 C. E.

51 x 25,5 x 10 cm

Guardians of various types have long played an important role in the religious imagery, literature, and visual arts of ancient China. The ancient Chinese feared malignant spirits seeking to encroach upon their resting place. To be ready for this impending struggle, representational guardians were produced in order to protect the deceased. During the Tang dynasty depictions of these guardian figures became increasingly more dramatic and aggressive.



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Support, n.d.

Oil paint on fragment of a corrugated bowl, Anasazi (Ancient Pueblo Peoples), Southwest United States, earthenware, 800-1200 C. E.

10 x 20 x 15 cm



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Support, n. d.

Oil paint on Samanid bowl with Kufic inscription *الحرص علانيه الفقر* (Envy is a sign of poverty), Khurasan, northeastern Iran, present-day Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, earthenware black slip painted on white slip under transparent glaze, 819-1005 C. E.

25 x 9 cm

The starkly graphic design of this bowl consists of one simple line of Arabic calligraphy that encircles the entirety of the bowl's deep inner rim. The gracefully elongated horizontals and sharp-tipped verticals of the letters are unique to an early type of Arabic calligraphy known as 'new style *kufic*'. This was a serving bowl likely used for entertaining on special occasions with a message of hospitality permanently expressed within the bowl itself: *الحرص علانيه الفقر* (Envy is a sign of poverty).



Gaylen Gerber

Support, n. d.

Oil paint on Colt 45 Malt Liquor 16 fl. Oz. can, United States, printed aluminum, paper, 21st century

19,5 x 11,5 x 18,8 cm

In much of the United States regulations prohibit open containers of alcohol in public. Consumers often attempts to circumvented these regulations by using a paper bag to conceal the container.



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Support, n. d.

Oil paint on *Tchitcheri* (protective figure), Gurma people, Togo and Ghana, wood, based mount, 20th century

137 x 25.5 x 25.5 cm



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Support, n. d.

Oil paint on fragment of 3400 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, concrete, based mount, 20th century

23,5 x 17,5 x 19 cm

The Ambassador Hotel was located at 3400 Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. It was in the pantry area of the hotel's main kitchen, soon after midnight on June 5, 1968, and following a brief victory speech in the Embassy Room ballroom of the Ambassador Hotel that Senator Robert F. Kennedy was shot along with five other people. Kennedy died from his injuries the next day and was the only fatality from this shooting. During the demolition of the Ambassador Hotel portions of the area where the shooting occurred were eliminated from the site.



Gaylen Gerber

Support, n. d.

Oil paint on *khôrô* figure, Lobedu culture, Limpopo Province, South Africa, wood, based mount, 20th century

119.5 x 17.5 x 17.5 cm

The focal point of Lobedu culture is the Rain-Queens Royal Kraal and more specifically the *khôrô*. The *khôrô* is a circular arena at the center of the royal kraal, which served as a meeting place. It was surrounded by a palisade of large poles, some figured, which were brought to the kraal by visitors in tribute to the Modjadji Queen. Leaders from the district are called upon to provide poles for the Queen's *khôrô* when in need of renewal. This symbolized the solidarity of the Kingdom. Figured palisade examples were exclusive to the queen's *khôrô*.



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Support, n. d.

Oil paint on lintel fragment depicting Kala of Angkor, Khmer, Bayon Style, Cambodia, stone, based mount, 13th century C. E.

28 x 23 x 11,5 cm

Khmer sandstone lintel fragment, elaborately carved in bas-relief, depicting 'Kala of Angkor', one of three principal animal deities in both Buddhist and Hindu mythology, a toothy lion style creature, with the body of a man, regarded as a ferocious monster symbolic of absolute time in its all devouring aspect, and associated with the destructive side of the god Shiva.

In Khmer temple architecture, the Kala serves as a common decorative element on doorway lintels and walls, depicted as a large mythical lion-mask creature, an all-devouring demon who was used to guard holy places, having the face of a beast, with a large upper jaw lined by large carnivorous teeth, bulbous eyes, claws, and no lower jaw, wearing a Khmer style crown on his head. In this minor depiction, Kala is shown with his toothy lion head, and strong humanly body, holding a thick stone above his head, which normally would have supported the major deity Shiva, towering over him, positioned standing in the celestial 'Svarga' heavens, amongst a shrouded motif of swirling clouds about him, wearing a long stylized sampot of cross-hatched pattern, naked torso, knees bent, and feet pointed left.



Gaylen Gerber

Support, n. d.

Oil paint on cinematic prop of severed ear from The Hughes Brothers' *Dead Presidents*, 1995

2 x 6 x 4 cm

The severed ear is a cinematic prop from the 1995 American thriller *Dead Presidents* written and directed by Albert Hughes and Allen Hughes (as the Hughes Brothers). In the spring of 1969, the principal character – Anthony Curtis enlists in the U.S. Marine Corps and is immediately sent to Vietnam leaving behind his middle-class life in the Bronx. In Vietnam, his squad loses several members and the remaining soldiers subsequently commit atrocities such as executing prisoners, beheading corpses, and collecting body parts for trophies. Returning to the United States, Curtis' life after Vietnam is reflected in the film's drifting lack of resolution.



Gaylen Gerber

Support, n. d.

Oil paint on drug spatula, Chimú culture, Northern Peru, carved llama bone, turquoise, based mount, ca. 900 to 1450 C. E.

17.5 x 3.2 cm

A carved drug spatula that depicts a bound prisoner of war kneeling, with hands bound behind his back, wearing a shirt or tunic adorned with a circular pattern that matches that of the spatula, his profile visage embellished with inlaid blue turquoise eyes and round white shell ear ornaments.



Gaylen Gerber

Support, n. d.

Oil paint on Kashiki bowl, Nonomura Ninsei artist's mark, Kyoto Prefecture, Japan, Kyō ware, Edo Period

9,5 x 16 x 16,5 cm

Ninsei (仁清) was a Japanese potter. He was born Nonomura Seisuke (野々村), and later received the first name Seiemon (清右衛門). He was later bestowed the artistic name Ninsei with a seal. The name Ninsei is also applied to wares made at the potter's workshop from the mid-17th century in the precincts of Ninnaji, a temple at Omuro, north-western Kyoto. Ninsei is credited with establishing a standard of elegance and refinement that has characterized Kyoto ceramics ever since. Ninsei is considered the first maker of kyoyaki, a type of Kyoto pottery that was extremely successful in the 18th and 19th centuries, and is also said to have been a painter which is reflected in the pictorial decorations of this and many of his other ceramics.



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Support, n. d.

Oil paint on tea bowl, Saga Prefecture, Japan, Yobitsugi Karatsu ware, early 18th century Momoyama – early Edo period

6,3 x 10,8 x 10,1 cm

Stemming from aspects of Japanese culture which embraces beauty in the imperfect, the yobitsugi technique combines pottery shards from other works to complete a restoration. As a result, cracks and repairs in a work of pottery are often seen as highlighting the history of the object and are thus celebrated as an art form itself. These restorations often employ the technique of Kintsugi (golden joinery) which is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum. Artworks using Kintsugi are regarded as more resilient and beautiful for having been damaged and preserved. Early Karatsu pieces like this tea bowl not only uses the yobitsugi technique to retain the special character to the piece but intentionally used gold lacquer as dull-colored 'Kintsugi' for harmony.



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Support, n. d.

Oil paint on *Coca-Cola Aluminum contour bottle*, designed by Turner Duckworth, United States,
printed aluminum, 2007
18,4 x 6,3 x 6,3
cm



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Support, n.d

oil paint on snake form (shrine object, amulet, currency), Lobi, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire,
Ghana, iron, 20th century
3,8 x 55,9 x 10,1 cm

Among the Lobi people of Burkina Faso, snakes have long been feared and venerated as protective entities. Much of their metal currencies are shaped in the form of serpents. The two-headed representation is thought to be a reminder that apprehension and respect exist side by side.