

Introduction

- Welcome to Stuff.Jpg a podcast about images and stuff.
- Tom introduction
- Ask Tom to draw Santa

Saint Nicholas

- Describe what you see:

<u>Production</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Image</u>
How was it made? <i>Tempera on wood. Gold leaf. Using iconography conventions to create portrait.</i>	How was it transmitted/circulated/displ ayed? <i>Displayed in St Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mt Sinai.</i>	What visual effects are used? <i>Gold leaf</i>
What genre is it? <i>Saint icon</i>	What relation does it have to other texts/works? <i>Saint icon, for worship. Story of St Nicholas</i>	What is the composition? <i>Bust at center. 10 discs - hierarchy of Jesus, disciples and saints. Heavenly bodies.</i>
Who made it? <i>Unknown</i>	How was it interpreted? <i>Venerated saint in the orthodox religion.</i>	What do the visuals mean? <i>Hairline - in orthodox iconography means the subject is a teacher or intellectual. Bible in lefthand - indicates priesthood Bishop vestments</i>
When was it made? <i>Late 10th c. AD</i>	Who was the audience? <i>Worshippers Pilgrims Monks</i>	
Who was it made for? <i>Unknown to me - educated guess: made for the monastery</i>	Why this audience?	
Why was it made? <i>Worship</i>		

This is an icon of Saint Nicholas, surrounded by other saints. It's from St Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mt Sinai in Egypt and was made sometime around the late 10th century.

Saint Nicholas is the patron saint of many things, but was most famous for gift giving. He was probably born in the 3rd century to a wealthy Greek Christian family in Anatolia. Plague killed off his parents leaving him a rich orphan. He entered the priesthood and would eventually become a Bishop.

- Do you know the story of Saint Nicholas? Can you guess from this painting?

His big claim to fame is saving three girls from being forced into sex work. The girls' father was a good but destitute man and he couldn't afford dowries for his daughters. Obviously, the only alternative is they become sex workers.

Nicholas heard of the plight of the three virgin girls, and being rich, pious, and modest he conceived of a plan to save them.

For three nights in a row, he snuck to the bedroom window of the destitute family and chucked gold inside. This is an image of that incident.

Most of Saint Nick's miracles involve triplicates. His association with children is believed to have come from another story, illustrated here.

The story goes: during a terrible famine, a butcher, struggling to stock his store, lured three small children into his home.

He killed the children and placed them in a pickling barrel. He planned to cure the succulent baby meat and sell it as ham.

Priest Nicholas was visiting the region helping to give out aid. Being a good fellow, he instantly saw through the butcher's lies and found the baby barrel. He did the sign of the cross and the ham babies came back to life.

Saint's icons are interesting because you do get this derivative effect, prominent features of saints are exaggerated. For Saint Nicholas for some reason it's the butt head.

Father Christmas

I think most people are aware that Santa Claus is a mix of Saint Nicholas and some other folkloric elements from Europe. In England this was Father Christmas, in Germanic regions Yule. Some people consider Odin to be an early version of Santa. Generally these midwinter personifications are merry partymakers, they host feasts and bring gifts.

- What do you see here?

<u>Production</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Image</u>
How was it made? <i>Woodcut reproduction</i>	How was it transmitted/circulated/displayed? <i>Distributed pamphlet</i>	What visual effects are used? <i>Cross-hatching</i>
What genre is it? <i>Illustration for a pamphlet: The Examination and Trial of Father Christmas by Josiah King</i>	What relation does it have to other texts/works? <i>Illustration of the story in the pamphlet: Father Christmas is on trial for the sinning associated with the Christmas celebrations.</i>	What is the composition? <i>Father Christmas is sitting in a chair in front of a feast (bottles, dishes, pies). In a doorway an angry mob holding swords.</i>
Who made it? <i>Printed for Charles Brome</i>	How was it interpreted? <i>Satirisation of the banning of Christmas</i>	What do the visuals mean? <i>Father Christmas is on trial Christmas: old man, fur</i>

When was it made? <i>1687 (originally published 1658)</i>	Who was the audience? <i>Royalists</i>	<i>trimmed clothes, beard</i>
Who was it made for? <i>Public distribution</i>	Why this audience?	
Why was it made? <i>To defend Christmas against criticism</i>		

This is a cover for 'The Examination and Tryall of Old Father Christmas' published by Josiah King. According to the Oxford Dictionary this is the earliest citation for 'Father Christmas' as a phrase.

Between 1645 and 1660, Parliamentarians outlawed Christmas. Puritans believed the custom was sinful extravagance, and in this story Father Christmas is an old man on trial for his life.

These pamphlets were a form of public debate, subtweeting for Royalists and Parliamentarians. Some even refer to this period of time, post Gutenberg press, as the 'Pamphlet Wars'. The very first market place of ideas.

This is an earlier similar pamphlet published in 1646, just after the banning of Christmas, called 'The Arraignment, Conviction and Imprisoning of Christmas'.

- Describe the image
- Have you spotted the author? Simon Minc'd Pye.

<u>Production</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Image</u>
How was it made? <i>Woodcut reproduction Letterpress</i>	How was it transmitted/circulated/displayed? <i>Distributed pamphlet</i>	What visual effects are used? <i>Phylactery - speech scroll</i>
What genre is it? <i>Pamphlet</i>	What relation does it have to other texts/works?	What is the composition?
Who made it?	How was it interpreted? <i>Satirisation of the banning of Christmas</i>	What do the visuals mean? <i>Public discourse on the issue of Christmas celebrations Christmas: old man, fur trimmed clothes, beard - symbolises age (wisdom)</i>
When was it made? <i>1646</i>	Who was the audience?	
Who was it made for? <i>Public distribution</i>	Why this audience?	

Why was it made?		
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It's a really charming story:

Father Christmas in the beginning is described as a fat and jolly man, wearing a rich gold and silver coat. He is imprisoned by the Puritans and kept in prison for so long that he becomes thin enough to squeeze between the jail bars and escape.

Despite being thin and losing his shine, he is recognised and kept safe by townsfolk who tell him not to worry, as Christmas can't be banned forever.

Sinterklass

We've talked about OG Santa, English Santa, and I want to talk about American Santa - who is in my opinion the archetypal Santa Claus - but to do that we must first travel to the lowlands.

- What do you see in this image?
- Who is that next to the Bishop?

These are illustrations from Saint Nicholas and his Servant, a picture book written by Jan Schenkman in 1850. This book is the origin of a bunch of Dutch traditions around Sinterklass. Including his servant: Zwarte Piet.

It's a classic morality tale for children - be good or Sinterklass will punish you. The story is a series of short poems each with an illustration. Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet visit the poor, rich, good and naughty children of a Dutch town.

In the book Saint Nicholas arrives in the Netherlands on a steam boat from Spain. Steam boat was chosen as it was a fun new transport option - like Santa arriving in a bendy bus in the 2000s.

Previously, Sinterklaas was a mythical character in the same vein as Father Christmas. Schenkman made the decision to change him into a friendly bishop, like the original Saint Nicholas. Sinterklaas is the carrot of this carrot and stick metaphor. Sinterklaas hands out sweets and toys to good children.

The stick is represented by Zwarte Piet. In the first versions of the story, he was just a nameless servant then he became a Black Moorish page. He was given the name "Black Pete" and became a comedy character, a clown. Piet's job is to put naughty children in his sack and take them back to Spain to work on the farms until they learn to be good.

Here's something fun: Zwarte Piet could be interpreted as a version of Krampus. Traditionally a black goat demon in chains who picks up naughty children and stows them in a... wicker basket.

Some of the classic Santa ideas appear in this book: Sinterklaas and Piet stand on top of homes, listening through the chimneys to hear which children are nice and which are

naughty. He keeps a book containing the names of good and naughty children. He asks his servant to prepare the presents for the good children, like Santa's elves. Children's stockings are left out for presents. He leaves in a hot air balloon - not quite a reindeer pulled sleigh but not bad.

<u>Production</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Image</u>
How was it made? <i>Lithography</i>	How was it transmitted/circulated/displayed? <i>All good book stores</i>	What visual effects are used? <i>Racist tropes</i>
What genre is it? <i>Children's book</i>	What relation does it have to other texts/works? <i>Interpretation of the Sinterklaas folk tale</i>	What is the composition?
Who made it? <i>Jan Schenkman</i>	How was it interpreted? <i>Moral story</i>	What do the visuals mean?
When was it made? <i>1850</i>	Who was the audience? <i>Children</i>	
Who was it made for? <i>Children's book publisher</i>	Why this audience? <i>Teach them to be good!</i>	
Why was it made? <i>Morality tale</i>		

American Civil War Santa

The Dutch Sinterklaas was the seed for American Santa. Here is one version of him, our second civil war Santa Claus.

- Can you describe this image?

<u>Production</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Image</u>
How was it made? <i>Lithography?</i>	How was it transmitted/circulated/displayed? <i>Circulated magazine</i>	What visual effects are used? <i>Perspective Framing</i>
What genre is it? <i>Illustration</i>	What relation does it have to other texts/works?	What is the composition? <i>Santa on a sleigh giving gifts to Union troops. (Copies of Harper's Weekly,</i>

		warm socks) In the far background soldiers chase an escaped hog, roast meat, play fairground games.
Who made it? Thomas Nast, staff illustrator for Harper's Weekly. Abolitionist, civil rights supporter. Pro-military	How was it interpreted? Domestic and sentimental Christmas as a 'Northern' celebration	What do the visuals mean? Puppet is Jefferson Davis, dangling from a noose Santa is wearing union stars and stripes - he is small and elflike! The folklore elements reference Nast's Bavarian origin.
When was it made? January 1863	Who was the audience? Harper's Weekly readers	
Who was it made for? Harper's Weekly - New York based political magazine	Why this audience?	
Why was it made? Sentimentality towards union troops, humorous critique of confederate president - Jefferson Davis		

This illustration is by Thomas Nast, one of the 'great' (inverted commas) political cartoonists. He was a bit of a boy wonder, joining Harper's Weekly at just 18 in 1859. I'd describe his style of work as sentimental and patriotic - Lincoln called him 'our best recruiting sergeant' and Roosevelt said he was 'our best Teacher'. He was a propagandist.

Nast was an abolitionist and supporter of civil rights, he abhorred the Ku Klux Klan and racism in general. But because he was a white man in the 1800s, he did hate Irish people so much that he still got cancelled in 2018 and his name was taken off the Nast Cartooning Award. (I'll probably do an episode on Nast in the future.)

Nast illustrated Santa many times. His drawings were inspired by the Clement Clark Moore poem.

Santa's appearance was also based on Nast's own, he was a jolly fellow.

- What does Santa represent here?

Coca-Cola Santa

We reach what I think is the pinnacle of Santa-ness. The most 'Santa': Coca-Cola's Santa. This Santa was drawn by illustrator Haddon Sundblom, from Michigan.

- Describe what you see.

<u>Production</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Image</u>
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How was it made? <i>Oil painting?</i>	How was it transmitted/circulated/displ ayed? <i>Ad in magazines</i>	What visual effects are used? <i>Framing - breaking frame</i>
What genre is it? <i>Advertising illustration</i>	What relation does it have to other texts/works? <i>Slogan: My hat's off to the pause that refreshes.</i>	What is the composition? <i>Santa drinking a tiny? Glass of coke. Hat off. Realistic but painterly.</i>
Who made it? <i>Haddon Sundblom</i>	How was it interpreted?	What do the visuals mean?
When was it made? <i>1931</i>	Who was the audience? <i>Potential coca cola buyers.</i>	
Who was it made for? <i>Coca-Cola</i>	Why this audience?	
Why was it made? <i>Christmas advert for drink</i>		

Haddon Hubbard 'Sunny' Sundblom, born 1899, was an American commercial artist of Swedish and Finnish descent. He worked in oil paints.

Sundblom was commissioned to paint a Christmas advert for Coca-Cola. He too was inspired by the Moore poem and must have seen Nast's works. He used his friend Lou Prentiss as a live model for original images, and later Sundblom also painted himself as Santa using a mirror.

The Coke ads debuted in 1931. They've been used many times since, long after Sundblom stopped creating work for Coke. Apparently, people became very attached to this rendition of Santa. One of the years when Sundblom used a mirror, letters arrived at Coke HQ asking why Santa's belt was on backwards.

Santa also got an assistant designed by Sundblom - meet Sprite! He's an elf or impish creature.

Review

- Look at drawings, what is similar to what we learnt about?
- Santa is propaganda

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