



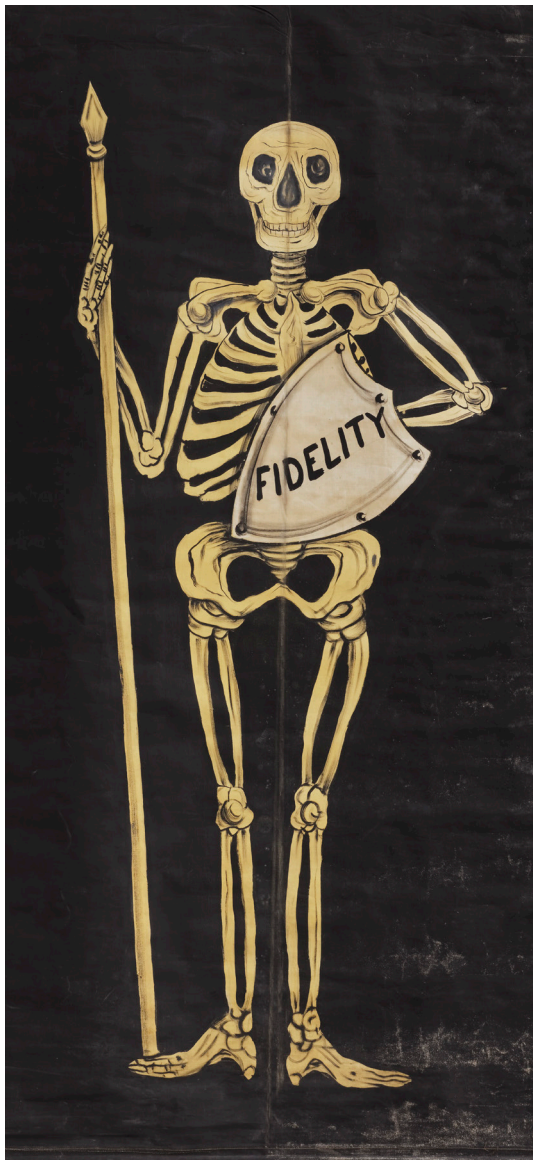
Mystery and Benevolence

Masonic and Odd
Fellows Folk Art

TRAVELING EXHIBITION SERVICE

IA&A

INTERNATIONAL
ARTS AND ARTISTS



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FRONT Artists unidentified, *Independent Order of Odd Fellows Heart in Hands Staffs* (detail), 1850–1900, Paint and gold leaf on wood, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Kendra and Allen Daniel, Photograph by José Andrés Ramírez
1 Artist Unidentified, *Masonic Knights Templar Shade*, 1875, Paint on canvas, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Kendra and Allen Daniel, Photograph by José Andrés Ramírez
2 Artist unidentified, *Independent Order of Odd Fellows Bow and Arrows Plaque for First Degree*, 1860–1900, Paint and gold leaf on wood, with metal, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Kendra and Allen Daniel, Photograph by José Andrés Ramírez
3 Artist Unidentified, *Independent Order of Odd Fellows Plaque*, 1850, Paint and gold leaf on wood, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Kendra and Allen Daniel, Photograph by José Andrés Ramírez
4 Artist unidentified, *Independent Order of Odd Fellows Sword with Scales*, 1850–1900, Paint and gold leaf on wood, with metal, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Kendra and Allen Daniel, Photograph by José Andrés Ramírez
5 The Ward-Stilson Company, *Independent Order of Odd Fellows Inner Guard Robe*, 1875–1925, Velvet, cotton, and metal, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Kendra and Allen Daniel, Photograph by José Andrés Ramírez

Mystical, evocative, and sometimes simply strange, the art of fraternal practice is rich in symbols that are oddly familiar yet strikingly uncommon. Through arcane and alluring artifacts, *Mystery and Benevolence* brings to light the histories of the Freemasons and the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows, two fraternal secret societies with deep roots in American history. The over eighty carvings, textiles, sculptures, and adornments that constitute this exhibition were used from the late eighteenth through mid-twentieth centuries, and retain their clandestine allure to this day.

Whether regarded as “secret societies” or “societies with secrets,” American fraternal groups arouse endless curiosity about their ceremonies, ritualized performances, and recitations. These practices, many borrowed and adapted from ancient Egypt and biblical Christianity, are kept hidden from outsiders, and lend an aura of exclusivity and brotherhood to its members. The “mystery and privilege” of these brotherhoods are also transmitted through secret systems of hand grips, gestures, and passwords that are thought to originate in the Middle Ages. Cryptic symbols, hieroglyphs, rituals, and vows of secrecy cloak fraternal orders in an opaque otherness that separates them from society while also binding their members in a system of shared belief.

EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

Number of Works

Approximately 80

Organized by

The American Folk Art Museum, New York

Requirements

Moderate security;
Approximately 3,000 square feet

Shipping

IA&A makes all arrangements; exhibitors pay outgoing shipping costs within the contiguous US

Booking Period

12 weeks

Tour

May 2022– May 2025

International Arts & Artists

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