

Day 28 – At Sea – Art on the Amsterdam – 24 Oct. 09: The day started with overcast sky and a calm sea as we sailed towards Cairns, Australia. The temperature was pleasant and there wasn't much wind across the deck so we went down to the Lower Promenade Deck and hiked around for 2 miles.

This afternoon we attended a presentation by Captain Wallace Cray on the subject of early navigators of the 1700s who charted the coastline of Australia in the search for commercial trade, especially spices. They were not successful in finding spices, which were abundant in the islands to the north but they led the way to eventual settlement of Australia by European people. Captain Cray is the special navigator-pilot on board who is familiar with the hazards of the Great Barrier Reef and he is on board to assist Captain Eversen and the other officers in passing through the reef on our way to Cairns. He said that one thing he wanted to do this afternoon was correct the notion that the great navigator, Captain Cook, discovered Australia. He said that Dutch sailors discovered and documented the location of Australia over 100 years before Captain Cook sailed this way.

Art on the Amsterdam: One of the features of Holland America Lines is that they make an effort to tastefully decorate the cruise ships with high quality art. While the artwork can almost go unnoticed much of the time its presence contributes to the ambience and feeling of satisfaction from living in an elegant space for a time. Today, as a way to recognize some of the artwork we made an effort to go around the Amsterdam public places and photograph some of the pieces that appeal to us. The following is a collection of those works of art with some minimal explanation.

This striking marble sculpture on the right is located on Deck 4 and was created in the 1800s representing an imperial Roman woman. It is an amazing combination of different colored marble.



The bronze bust on the left, near the Front Office on Deck 4, represents Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

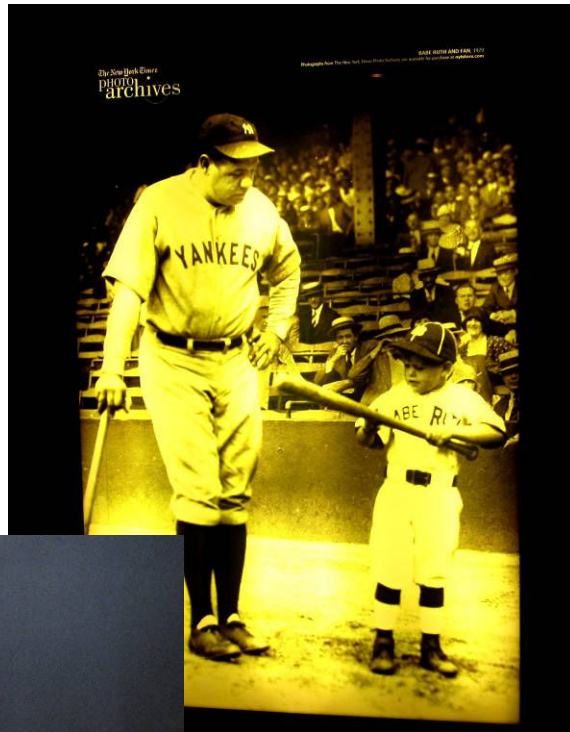
There is a large open space called the Atrium near the ship's front office and it extends through Decks Nos. 3, 4, and 5. The Atrium contains a huge complex clock called an Astrolabium which has artistic displays on the four faces for the Zodiac, World Time, Planetarium and Celestial Mechanics. The view shown below is looking down from Deck 5 to Decks 4 and 3. Note the rotating model of the earth with orbiting moon in the upper right corner of the picture. The intricate workings of the Astrolabium can be viewed through its glass walls.



Much less intricate but perhaps more beautiful is one of our favorite pieces which is this large inlaid marble table, shown below, that is located in the library.



Also in the library is this charming New York Times archive picture of Babe Ruth listening to one of his young fans.



Nearby is this fantasy ship model in a glass enclosure.

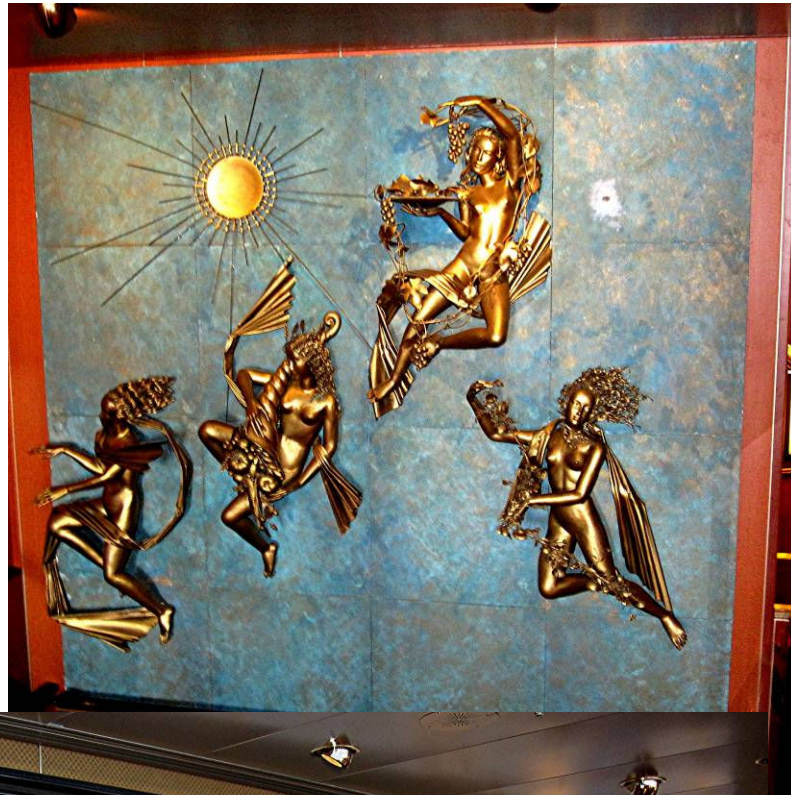


Also appropriately located in the library is this sculpture of a young girl reading a book.



In the stairwell on Deck 8 is this scene, shown on the right, of maidens dancing. This artwork caught the discerning eye of our grandson several years ago while working on a HAL Club photography project for kids.

In the Explorer's Lounge you can find this example of fine art, shown below.



Nearby, in a glass enclosure are a couple of Chinese porcelain warriors, shown below.



This inlaid marble dance floor in the Explorer's Lounge is a rare beauty.



A wall mural made of carpet material adorns the Explorer's Lounge area where Cruise and Port specialists have desks where they can answer questions for passengers.



In the Queens Lounge the light fixtures, like these shown here, seem to get all the attention.



Up on the Lido Pool Deck the bronze Alaskan Bears can be seen browsing around the pool or playing with a stick.



Surrounded by these and other examples of good art, we never get tired of simply walking around our cruise ship “home” while traveling between the ports of call.

When we return to our room from dinner each night we find the room has been cleaned and made nice and tidy by our stewards, Rurie and Jay. As part of the customer relations aspect of cruising, sometimes little gifts are left on the bed pillow in the evening. These are called "Pillow Gifts". Tonight we found a pillow gift in the form of a nice tote bag for travel and an umbrella. The bag had a subdued brown color and the logo for this Grand Australia, New Zealand & South Pacific Voyage. Here is a picture of Barbara with our Pillow Gifts.



We can't claim to have exerted ourselves much today but when bedtime came we were ready for it. We cruise most of tomorrow in the Coral Sea as we cross the Great Barrier Reef and then in the evening we will dock in Cairns, Australia.