

Fish imagery in art 39: La Farge's *Fish*

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John La Farge (1835–1910) was an American painter of modest reputation who is best known for his murals and stained glass windows. He believed that, above all, a work of art should be decorative (Adams 1980), which may explain why his work is less appreciated today than it was when he was alive. He was innovative in that he admired Japanese prints, such as those of Ando Hiroshige, and was one of the first western artists to incorporate Japanese ideas of style and composition into his works. The Japanese influence is strongly seen in *Fish* with its 'unbalanced' composition (Adams 1980).



Fish (1865, 60 × 45 cm, oil on mahogany panel) was part of an unfinished commission La Farge had to create in a series of painted panels for a dining room. It portrays an Atlantic bonito, *Sarda sarda*. *Fish* is used courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University (bequest of Grenville L. Wintrop).