

Art of the Ancient Americas

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

- The indigenous Americas have among the oldest art traditions in the world.
- Mesoamerican art (from Mexico to Guatemala, Honduras and Belize) is characterized by architectural structures such as pyramids, a strong influence of astronomy and calendars on ritual objects, and great value placed on green objects, such as jade or feathers.
- Andean art (from Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador) relies on shamanistic rituals involving a special veneration of the natural world. North American Indians have undergone widespread persecution and cultural reshaping since the arrival of Europeans. Modern Native American maintain active cultural identities today.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

- Ancient America can be divided into many cultural and historical groupings both in North and South America.
- Art in these regions is often animal based (feathers, hides, etc.) and used in shamanistic rituals. Art carved from stone is also important.
- Pyramids began as earthworks and then grew too multi-level structures. Sites were often added to over many years.
- Sculpture relates to deeds of rulers and epic stories of the gods. Artists generally worked under a united vision in a workshop. The audience for art could be an entire city or an intimate religious circumstance. Most architecture is made of stone, using the post and lintel system and faced with painted sculpture. There are usually large plazas before the pyramids.

IDEAS AND CONCEPTS

- Mesoamericans have had an influence on the Spanish who occupied the area, both commercially and artistically.
- Mesoamerican objects were valued and treasured in Europe by connoisseurs and collectors. Increased recognition of their value today has led to a greater understanding of their contribution to the art world.
- Geography plays a key role in understanding Andean art. People of coastal plains often acted individually; those in the mountains united against the elements. The geographic diversity accounts for the differing materials used in the creation of works of art. Most Andean art seems to have been a workshop system whereby many collaborate on a single piece.
- Most common Andean findings have been in graves; a great many works were done for funerary purposes.
- Andean art has had an influence on modern European and Latin American artists.
- Many interdisciplinary sources are used to place together the major monuments of Native North Americans.
- Archeology, oral and written history, documents, and museum records form the basis of North American Indian research.
- There is no uniform naming structure for the original people of this area.
- In addition to traditional North American materials and techniques used in artwork (weaving, basketry, wood, bone, hides and ceramic), objects that have been traded with outsiders (beads, ribbons) have become part of the Indian artistic experience.
- Many motifs, such as animals and geometric designs, appear in North American art. Respect for nature, religion, and elders are dominant themes. Art was created mostly for groups, as the patrons were likely important tribal leaders. Artists worked in groups in an apprentice-type relationship.
- Native North American art has had a minimal impact on European and American styles. However, a revival movement has invigorated cultural traditions and opened them up to a wider market.

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Ashlar masonry | roof comb |
| Bandolier bag | teepee |
| Chacmool | Tlaloc |
| Coyolxauhqui | T'oqapu |
| Huitzilopochtli | transformation mask |
| kiva | |
| pueblo | |
| relief sculpture | |
| repose | |

RESOURCES

- Koriocancha
<https://www.peruforless.com/blog/cusco-treasures-koricancha-the-golden-temple-of-the-sun/>
- Templo Mayor
<https://smarthistory.org/unearthing-the-aztec-past-the-destruction-of-the-templo-mayor-2/>
- Macchu Picchu Face
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNswGIXyu9E>

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JOURNAL

Cliff Dwelling at Mesa Verde (3.1, 1.2, 1.4)
Macchu Picchu (3.1, 1.4, 3.5)

CONTEXT

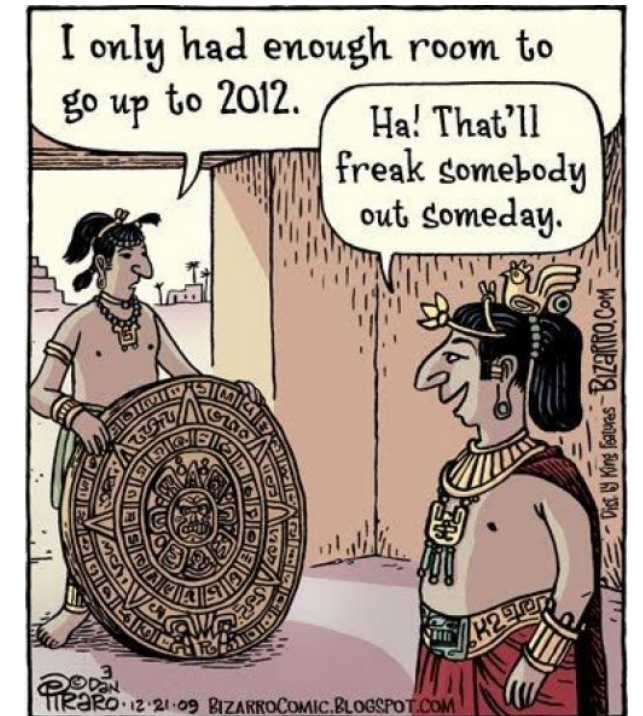
Humans are not native to the "New World"; Americans do not have an ancestry dating back millions of years, the way they do in Africa or Asia. People migrated from Asia to America over a span of perhaps 30,000 years, crossing over the Bering Strait when the frozen winters made the way walkable. Eventually people understood that the climate was good enough to raise crops, particularly in what is today Mexico and Central America, and the population boomed.

As in other parts of the world, local rivalries and jealousies have played their part in the ebb and flow of American civilizations. Some civilizations are intensely cultivated and technological, refining metal ore and developing a firm understanding of astronomy and literature. Others remained nomadic and limited their activities as hunter-gatherers. In any case, when the European colonizers arrived at the end of the fifteenth century, they encountered in some ways a very sophisticated society, but in others, one that did not even possess a functioning wheel and refined metals mostly for jewelry rather than for use.

Each succeeding civilization buried or destroyed the remains of the civilization before, so only the hardest ruins have survived the test of time. Most of what can be gleaned about pre-Columbian American society is ascertained by archaeologists working on elaborate burial grounds or digging through the ruins of once-great ancient cities.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Read Gardner's pages 509-537 & 1083-1101
- Complete homework packet
- Write journal
- Fill in flashcards
- Attend spring break review sessions



WORKS OF ART

- Tlaltilco Female Figurine 1200-900 BCE
- Yaxchilan. Chiapas, Mexico, Maya 725
- Chavin de Huantar, Peru, Chavin 900-200 BCE
- Great Serpent Mound, southern Ohio, Mississippian 1070
- Mesa Verde cliff dwellings. Montezuma County, Colorado. Ancestral Puebloan (Anasazi) 450-1300
- Templo Mayor (Main Temple). Tenochtitlan (modern Mexico City, Mexico). Mexica (Aztec) 1375-1520
- The Coyolxauhqui Stone, Olmec-style mask, & Calendar Stone 1375-1520
- Ruler's feather headdress (probably of Motecuhzoma II). Mexica (Aztec) 1428-1520
- City of Machu Picchu, Peru, Inka 1450-1540
- City of Cusco, including Qorikancha (Inka main temple), Santo Domingo (Spanish colonial convent), and walls at Sasqa Waman (Sacsyhuaman) 1440-1650
- Maize cobs, Inka 1440-1533
- T'oqapu tunic. Inka 1450-1540
- Costiogo AKA Cadzi Cody, Painted elk hide., Eastern Shoshone 1800
- Bandolier bag. Lenape (Delaware tribe, Eastern Woodlands) 1850
- Transformation mask. Kwakwaka'wakw, Northwest coast of Canada 19th cent.
- Maria and Julien Martinez, Black-on-black ceramic vessel, Puebloan, San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico 20th cent

HOMEWORK DUE: _____