

INDIGENOUS AMERICAS

BIG IDEA 1: Artists manipulate materials and ideas to create an aesthetic object, act, or event.

1. **What is art and how is it made?**

- Materials (Environment/Geography)
- Art making techniques
- Why make art? (Function)

BIG IDEA 2: Art making is shaped by tradition and change.

1. **Why and how does art change?**

- What features/changes of a tradition do you see?
- Why was the art influential?

BIG IDEA 3: Interpretations of art are variable.

1. **How do we describe our thinking about art?**

- What are the **formal** qualities and content of the art?
- What is the **context** of the art? (**context = differing interpretations**)
- What **attributes** of a work can we attribute to other works of art? (similarities and differences?)



What is the **FUNCTION** of this art work?

CONTEXT

Art of the Indigenous Americas developed independently from northern Asia between 10,000 BCE and 1492 CE, marking the beginning of the European invasions. Regions and cultures are referred to as **INDIGENOUS AMERICAS** to signal the priority of First Nations cultural traditions over the colonizing and migrant peoples that have taken over the American continents for the last 500 years.

- Categorized by **geography** and **chronology** into designations of Ancient America (art created before 1550 CE south of the US/Mexico border) and Native North America (cultures north of the US/Mexico border - emphasis 1492 CE to present)

Artistic traditions exhibit overarching traits:

- content emphasizes unity with natural world
- spirituality/visionary shamanism
- value on animal-based media
- incorporation of trade materials
- stylistic focus on essence not appearance of subjects
- aesthetic objects with functional aspect
- art that is participatory and active

Cultural similarities of ancient Mesoamerica:

- similar calendars
- pyramidal stepped structures
- sites/buildings oriented in relation to sacred mountains/celestial phenomena

Cultural similarities of Ancient Central Andes:

- emphasis on surviving/interacting with the environment
- reciprocity (practice of exchange for mutual benefit)
- reverence for animal/plant world in practice of shamanistic religion
- influence of three distinct ecosystems: mountains, desert coast, rain forest (Amazon)
- environments influence materials
- necessity to interact with dissimilar environments put emphasis on trade in exotic materials
- asymmetrical dualism (opposing ideas - male/female, sun/moon)

ARTWORKS

South America

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| 153. Chavin de Huantar | Peru |
| - Lanzon Stela | |
| - Relief sculpture | |
| - Nose ornament | |
| 155. Yaxchilan Structure 40 | Mexico (Maya) |
| - Lintel 25, Structure 23, | |
| - Structure 33 | |
| 157. Templo Mayor | Mexico (Aztec) |
| - The Coyolxauhqui | |
| - Calendar Stone | |
| - Olmec-style mask | |
| 158. Ruler's feather headdress | Mexico (Aztec) |
| (Motecuhzoma II?) | |
| 159. City of Cusco | Peru (Inca) |
| - Curved Inka wall of Qorikancha | |
| - Walls at Saqsá Waman | |
| 160. Maize Cobs | Inka |
| 161. City of Machu Picchu | Peru (Inka) |
| - Observatory | Papua New Guinea |
| - Intihuatana Stone | |
| 162. All-T'oaqapu tunic | Inka |

North America

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 154. Mesa Verde cliff dwellings | Colorado (Anasazi) |
| 156. Great Serpent Mound | Ohio |
| 164. Transformation Mask | Canada |
| 163. Bandolier Bag | Eastern Woodlands |
| 165. Painted elk hide | Wyoming (Shoshone) |
| 166. Black-on-black ceramic vessel | New Mexico |

From Prehistoric: Camelid sacrum in the shape of a canine
Tlatilco female figurine

TIMELINE/CULTURES

1000 B.C.E. - 1980 C.E.

Mesoamerica - Olmec, Maya, Mexico (Aztec)
Andean South America - Chavin, Inca
Native North America

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Mesoamerica | earthwork |
| ashlar masonry | effigy mound |
| courses | pre-Columbian |