Chapter Eighteen: The Ancient World

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

• The Earliest Art
• Sumerian Culture
• Egyptian Culture
• Aegean Culture
• Greek Culture
• Roman Culture
• Developments in Asia

Works in Progress:
Drawing in Ancient Egypt

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This Chapter Will:
• survey the early developments of Prehistoric, Sumerian, Egyptian, Aegean, Greek, Roman and Asian art
• identify visual characteristics of objects and images in the Ancient world
• discuss the significance of Ancient art to broader cultural developments

KEY TERMS

Paleolithic
Neolithic
Ziggurat
Ka
Civilization
ostraka
acropolis
Hellenism
Contrapposto
verism
stupa
nirvana
LECTURE AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. The Art of History
Preface Part V of the textbook with a definition of art history and the methodology used by art historians. Discuss traditional methods such as formal stylistic analysis as well as other multidisciplinary methods of interpretation such as a sociological, psychological, feminist, semiotics, and deconstruction as alternative methods of analysis. Stress to students how art history is ultimately connected to, and a reflection of broader cultural developments and an understanding of the economic, social and cultural structures of society are necessary for an appreciation of the visual records that were left by ancient societies. Emphasize that archeologists, anthropologists, art historians, and others are constantly revising the history of the world as more information and objects are found. Recent archeological discoveries, such as the Valley of the Golden Mummies in 1996, for example, revealed ancient Egyptian tombs containing thousands of mummies, consequently expanding our knowledge of ancient Egypt.

2. The Earliest Art
When discussing Paleolithic images of large hunted animals found in cave paintings at Chauvet and Lascaux (figs. 587 and 588), explain the psychologically based theory connected with the function of these images. The theory proposes that Paleolithic peoples believed that they possessed the images they created. The psychological implication is that Paleolithic peoples believed that they had the ability to take control of the spirit of an animal if they physically drew an image of that animal. This theory is also used to explain the purpose of fertility objects such as the Venus of Willendorf (fig. 586). Prehistoric peoples believed this domination would empower them as they prepared to face the reality of the hunt, essential to their existence. At Lascaux Cave, scholars believe that evidence of small pockmarks on painted images suggests that the prehistoric peoples believed they were psychologically “killing” the animal with weapons before the actual hunt.

3. The Stone Ages
Distinguish between the terms Paleolithic and Neolithic—Old Stone Age and New Stone Age—by pointing out how the difference in lifestyle (Paleolithic peoples were hunters/gatherers and Neolithic peoples were farmers/herdsmen) is reflected in subject matter, media, and symbolism. Emphasize the often portability of Paleolithic art to the permanence of Neolithic villages (fig. 598). The gradual shift from a nomadic lifestyle to an organized, agriculturally-based society with domesticated animals is not only evidence of Neolithic peoples interest in acquiring a sense of order and control in their lives, but also constitutes the beginnings of civilization.

4. From Prehistory to Civilization
Differentiate between Prehistory (Paleolithic and Neolithic) and the characteristics of a civilization. Illustrate the differences with a discussion of the complex societal structure of Sumerian culture. Elaborate with a discussion of organized religion with the Worshippers and Deities from the Abu Temple from Tell Asmar, Iraq (fig. 600). Discuss the significant contributions of the Sumerians to civilization, such as the wheel, the plow...
and the development of the first form of writing, cuneiform, that was used to write the first novel, the epic of *Gilgamesh*.

5. Ancient Figures
Compare the figurative sculptures of all ancient civilizations presented in this chapter. How did sculpture reflect the respective societies? What are the stylistic characteristics of each one?

6. Egyptian Civilization
Discuss the rigorous aesthetic, political, and religious organization of ancient Egyptian culture. Elaborate on the interrelationship between the Pharaohs and the pantheon of Egyptian deities with attention to the Palette of King Narmer (fig. 601) and King Khafre (fig. 602). Explain the disruption of this system under the rule of Emperor Akhenaten and his wife, Queen Nefertiti (fig. 603).

Compare the civilization of ancient Egypt to those in the Aegean region with a discussion of the *Toreador Fresco* from Crete (fig. 608) and the *Warrior Vase* (fig. 609).

7. Art and the Olympics
Illustrate the progression of Classical Greek sculpture from *Statue of a Victorious Athlete* (fig. 612) to *Nike of Samothrace* (fig. 613) and provide a base of understanding with a brief history of the Olympics. The first Olympic games were held in 776 B.C.E. and began as a religious festival in ancient Greece. They were held every 4 years and continued for 1000 years. Compared to the variety of events included in contemporary Olympics, the first one consisted of only one event—a stadium length foot race. Later Olympiads included longer races and chariots races. Prizes included a simple olive tree branch, cut from a gold-handled knife from a wild olive tree. The ancient Greeks believed the vitality of the sacred tree was transmitted to the recipient through the branch. Winners were considered in favor with the gods and often honored with a sculpted reminder of his victory. Students are always interested in the fact that the Nike tennis shoe symbol (the stylized wing) was directly inspired by the wings from the statue of *Nike of Samothrace*, who stood as a symbol of victory.

8. Greek and Roman Art
Compare and contrast Greek and Roman art with an emphasis on the achievements from each culture. Stress the significance of engineering, development of the arch and dome and monuments to the achievements of the ancient Romans with an analysis of *The Roman Pantheon* (fig. 499), the painted representation of the *Roman Forum by Bechetti* (fig. 620), and the *Column of Trajan* (fig. 619).

9. Asian Art
Discuss the developments in Asia during the Shang dynasty in China. Focus on the *Flying Horse* (fig. 621) and the *Ritual Disc with Dragon Motif* (fig. 622) to elaborate on the medium of bronze casting as a major Asian contribution.
9. Religion and Art
Discuss how religion often shaped the visual records left by ancient culture with a discussion of *The Great Stupa* in Sanchi, India (fig. 623). Point out how this structure reflects the religious practices of Buddhism.

**CRITICAL THINKING: More Opportunities to Think About Art**
Several artworks are detailed in the Critical Thinking and Works in Progress features found in this chapter. In addition, diverse opportunities for studying these works are located on the Companion Website and Companion CD-ROM.

1. Works in Progress: Drawing in Ancient Egypt
The *Works in Progress* section of this chapter focuses on Drawing in Ancient Egypt. Ask students if they consider drawing to be a legitimate fine art medium. Refer to the previous chapter on drawing to review drawing’s history. Point out that it was not until the Renaissance in the 16th century that drawing was given any consideration. Show *Acrobatic Dancer, Ramsside* (fig. 606) to discuss the significance of drawing as a major form of art in the ancient world. Discuss the materials used for ancient drawing such as papyri, ostraka, and even stelae, and temple inscriptions. Visit the website The Institute of Egyptian Art & Archaeology at www.memphis.edu/egypt/ to study and view more of the art and culture of ancient Egypt.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**
*Direct students to their Student Study Guide when assigning Writing Assignments as the following assignments are written as instruction for the student and are contained in the guide as they are here.*

1. Prehistoric Letter
Have students adopt the persona of a Lascaux cave artist and write a letter to *The New York Times* explaining his/her actions, process, or theory of cave painting.

2. Painting by Number Instruction Manuals.
Have students write a step-by-step explanation of the ancient Egyptian drawing process.

3. Mesopotamian Civilizations
In an essay, have students discuss the early civilizations in the Mesopotamian region. Have students provide a summary of each group (Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persian) that lived in this region along with their major contributions.

4. Archeological Discoveries
Assign students to write a magazine article that reports on their recent discovery of a major work or works art from Ancient Greek or Roman or Asian civilizations. Their article about their archeological discovery must completely change what we believe about one of these civilizations.
HANDS-ON PROJECTS
Direct students to their Student Study Guide when assigning Hands-On Projects as the following assignments are written as instruction for the student and are contained in the guide as they are here. For additional project ideas, remember to investigate the Hands-On Projects found on the Companion Website.

1. Good Luck Charm
Have students research the Venus of Willendorf (fig. 595) and create their own amulet. Remind them that the shape of the amulet dictates the desired outcome. For example, an airplane might indicate success as a pilot, or the safety of a frequent flyer.

2. A Royal Palette
Using the Egyptian canon of ideal proportions evident on The Palette of King Narmer (fig. 601) as inspiration, instruct students to form a palette from polymer clay, then, using an enamel paint pen, embellish the palette with their own personal achievements, and history. Organize a presentation of the artworks to the class (or school) with explanations about each student’s design.

3. My Hero
Since of the time of ancient Greece artists have been inspired to create portraits of heroes and heroines. Statues and monuments in city parks and plazas remind us of those who have shaped our history as do painted portraits of heroes and heroines that hang in many museums and public buildings. In this project, have students consider the meaning of "hero," see a few portraits of heroes and heroines, and then create a portrait of their own personal hero or heroine.

RESOURCES

A World of Art Companion Website:
Remember to direct students to A World of Art companion website (www.prenhall.com/sayre) to help further their understanding of the materials discussed in this chapter with ideas for completing hands-on projects and exercises. Self-testing materials are also available and offer students the opportunity to evaluate their understanding of the chapter materials in a variety of formats. In addition, links to websites featuring contemporary artists, and museum and gallery exhibitions related to this chapter will enhance discussion and comprehension. Links for this chapter include:

ANCIENT ARTISTS: The Work of Praxiteles and Lysippos can be found at this site, which is located at the University of Colorado and features a broad selection of images by Praxiteles, Lysippos and many other Greek and Aegean sculptors. Students must click Up at the bottom of the page to see other periods of Greek sculpture.
GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS: The Smithsonian Institution: The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Museum Guide Exhibits Asian art from ancient times to the present with its "Visit the Museum Online."

GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS: The Institute of Egyptian Art & Archaeology, founded in 1984, is a component of the Department of Art of The University of Memphis in Tennessee, and is a Tennessee Center of Excellence. It is dedicated to the study of the art and culture of ancient Egypt through teaching, research, exhibition, and community education. As part of its teaching and research, the Institute conducts an epigraphic survey in the Great Hypostyle Hall of Karnak Temple in Luxor, Egypt. This is a great site with exceptional shots of Giza and Luxor.

GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS: Dilos Holiday World, is a tourist agency in Greece that also has an exceptional artist's reconstruction of the Palace of Knossos, as well as links to the Iraklion (Heraklion) Museum.

Other Suggested Websites:

The Lascaux Homepage provides a complete view of the Lascaux Cave and the Hall of the Bulls at www.culture.fr/culture/arcnat/lascaux/en/

The Institute of Egyptian Art and Archeology site exhibits the gallery of fake ancient Egyptian objects at www.memst.edu/egypt/main.html

The Brooklyn Museum maintains one of the finest collections of Egyptian art in the world. Visit them at www.brooklynart.org/

The Ancient Greek World is on view at The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology site at www.museum.upenn.edu/Greek_World/Intro.html

Suggested Videos:

Videos and other resources are available for purchase through any of the distributors listed in the Resources section of this manual.

Beyond Survival: The Roots of Art
The Caves of Altamira
On the Rocks: Prehistoric Art of France and Spain
Sister Wendy's Story of Painting: Prehistoric to Medieval, 1997
Lost World of the Etruscans
King Tut: Tomb of Treasure, 1978
Art of the Western World: The Classical Ideal Greek to Gothic
Ancient Greece: The Traditions of Greek Culture
Art in Ancient Greece
Art and Science: Greek Fire
Light of the Gods: Greek Art
Seven Wonders of the Ancient World
Roman City
Ancient Rome: Story of an Empire, 1998
Life, Times and Wonders of Rome and Pompeii
Ancient Mysteries: Pompeii—Buried Alive, 1998