



▲ **FIGURE 12.1** This complex sculpture, composed of curved forms and intricate patterns, is only 12¹/₄" tall. Observe closely the precise detail and craft that went into the making of this elegant art object. Describe the type of balance that organizes this object.

Kashmir or Northern Pakistan. *Crowned Buddha Shakyamuni*. Eighth century. Brass with inlays of copper, silver, and zinc. Height: 31.1 cm (12¹/₄"). Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection. Asia Society: New York.

Art Traditions from Around the World

Art is more than just objects and images. It is a visual story of a people and their culture. It reveals their feelings, views, and beliefs. In a sense, art history mirrors the history of the world. It is a window on the past and the many cultures that enrich our lives.

In this chapter, you will:

- Describe general characteristics in artworks from a variety of cultures.
- Compare and contrast historical styles, identifying trends and themes.
- Describe art traditions from cultures around the world.

Focus on Art History

Figure 12.1 is an ancient object of worship from Kashmir or Northern Pakistan. The subject is Buddha Shakyamuni, spiritual leader of the Shakya clan of Buddhism. His hands are positioned in the gesture of teaching as he sits peacefully on a lotus flower rising above the water on a thick stem. To the right and left of the base are small female and male figures. Art historians believe that these figures represent the donors of the sculpture.

Compare and Contrast. Compare the Buddha Shakyamuni to a religious sculpture from another culture and time (Figure 13.5, page 354.) What similarities and differences can you find in the style and theme of the two works?

Vocabulary

Paleolithic period
Neolithic period
megaliths
cuneiform
ziggurats
pharaohs
dynasty

Art of Earliest Times

The artworks produced many thousands of years ago tell us a great deal about the earliest cultures and civilizations of our world. These ancient people left no written records. What we know of them has been learned from the objects and the art that they left behind.

Prehistoric Art

Prehistoric means before history, or before written records were kept. The objects made by people during this period are all that remain to tell us about the people who lived long ago.

Figure 12.2 is one of many cave paintings left by cave dwellers in Europe during the Paleolithic period. The **Paleolithic** (pay-lee-oh-lith-ik) **period**, or *Old Stone Age*, began about two million years ago, and ended with the close of the last ice age about 13,000 B.C. It was a time when people began using stone tools. In these cave paintings, the colors are so bright and the animals so realistic that, for a long time, scholars refused to believe they had been created by prehistoric people.

To this day no one knows the purpose of the paintings. Found deep inside caves, far from the entrances and living areas, they probably were not created for decoration. Some scholars believe the paintings were part of a hunting ritual. A shaman, or medicine man, may have created the image of the animal, believing that it would help hunters capture the animal. The paintings may also have been visual prayers for animals to appear during the next hunt. According to another theory, cave dwellers created the paintings to celebrate a successful hunt.

► **FIGURE 12.2** An amateur archaeologist excavated in this low-roofed cave for four years. One day his daughter, who was small enough to stand up straight in the cave and look up, discovered these paintings of sleeping, galloping, and crouching animals.

*The Hall of the Bulls. c. 15,000 B.C.
Altamira Caves, Spain.*



Prehistoric Builders

Eventually prehistoric people moved out of caves and began constructing their own shelters. Small communities developed, and some hunters gave up their nomadic life and settled down, becoming farmers. After some time, small tribal groups grew into organized villages surrounded by cultivated fields and domesticated animals.

During the Neolithic period, people built structures of stone. The **Neolithic** (nee-uh-lith-ik) **period**, or *New Stone Age*, is a prehistoric period stretching roughly from 7000 B.C. to 2000 B.C. During this time, humans developed agriculture, and stone tools were refined. Ancient structures from this period, called megaliths, have been found throughout Europe, Asia, and even North America. **Megaliths** (meg-uh-liths) are *large monuments created from huge stone slabs*. As early as 4000 B.C., circular arrangements of huge, rough-hewn stones were created in Western Europe. The most famous of these is Stonehenge in England. Built around 2000 B.C., it consists of a series of four concentric rings. Builders used an ancient building method that we now call *post-and-lintel construction*. Upright slabs, called posts, support horizontal slabs, called lintels. More than half of the original stones still stand. The tallest measures 17 feet and weighs more than 50 tons. Scholars are uncertain how prehistoric people, working with primitive tools, were able to cut these huge stones, transport them many miles, and then raise them into position. The purpose of Stonehenge has also baffled scholars for many centuries. In the past, people believed a great magician created it. Today, Stonehenge is thought to have served as a kind of observatory, enabling people to practice a type of astronomy and serve as an accurate calendar.

As prehistoric peoples learned to herd animals and grow crops, they also learned to live in harmony with their surroundings. This peaceful balance was upset by population growth. Small tribes began to fight over grazing land and soil suitable for growing crops. They were forced to band together into more organized groups for protection and also to be able to produce more food. By around 3000 B.C. four major civilizations had developed at different points on the globe. The ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China emerged at this time.

Ancient River Valleys

The ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China, are referred to as river valley civilizations. Each of these civilizations was ruled by a monarchy, practiced a religion based on nature, and achieved great skill in art and architecture.

Mesopotamia

The area of Mesopotamia included the cultures of many people within an extensive region. The region was the fertile crescent of land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in the Middle East. The people lived in city-states, and each city was ruled by a monarch. Today, this land is shared by Syria and Iraq.

The Sumerians were the first dominant group in the area. They were the first people to have a system of writing (using symbols to represent spoken language). **Cuneiform** (kyoo-nee-uh-form) was *the Sumerian writing system made up of wedge-shaped characters*. These characters stood for concepts and ideas. Because paper was not yet developed, clay tablets were used. Some of these still exist.

► **FIGURE 12.3** This figure was placed in the temple to represent the worshiper. The wide eyes, hands folded in prayer, and attention to detail are typical of Sumerian sculpture.

Statua di Donna. c. 2700–2600 B.C.
Marble. The Iraq Museum,
Baghdad, Iraq.



Sumerian artists depicted figures in a lifelike and realistic way. Look at **Figure 12.3**. This small sculpture shows precise details of dress and facial features. Sumerians also built structures known as **ziggurats** (**zig-uh-rats**), or *stepped mountains made of brick-covered earth* (**Figure 12.4**). These temples had exterior staircases. A temple honoring the god of the city was placed at the top. Does it resemble other buildings that you have seen?

In time, the Sumerian civilization merged with that of Akkad, its northern neighbor, giving rise to the civilization of Babylonia (around 750 B.C.). Babylonian art and architecture resembled Sumerian to a great extent. Another Mesopotamian civilization, called Assyria, emerged after the decline of Babylonia. A distinct Assyrian artistic style began to emerge around 1500 B.C. Assyrian artists created precise, detailed stone reliefs, which they painted using many colors. They depicted royal events, hunts, wars, and animals, especially horses and lions. Human figures were given less emphasis, although they were still depicted in a realistic and detailed way.



◄ **FIGURE 12.4** A temple honoring the god of the city was placed at the top of the ziggurat. This structure was built in 2100 B.C. What other art and architecture was being created throughout the world at that time?

Ziggurat, Ur, Iraq. c. 2100 B.C.

Egypt

The culture of ancient Egypt developed along the banks of the Nile River more than 3,000 years before the birth of Christ. Religion influenced every part of Egyptian life. The **pharaohs**, or *Egyptian rulers, were worshiped as gods and held complete authority over the kingdom*. Egyptians believed in life after death and preserved the bodies of the pharaohs in preparation for the afterlife. The famous pyramids were built as the tombs of the pharaohs.

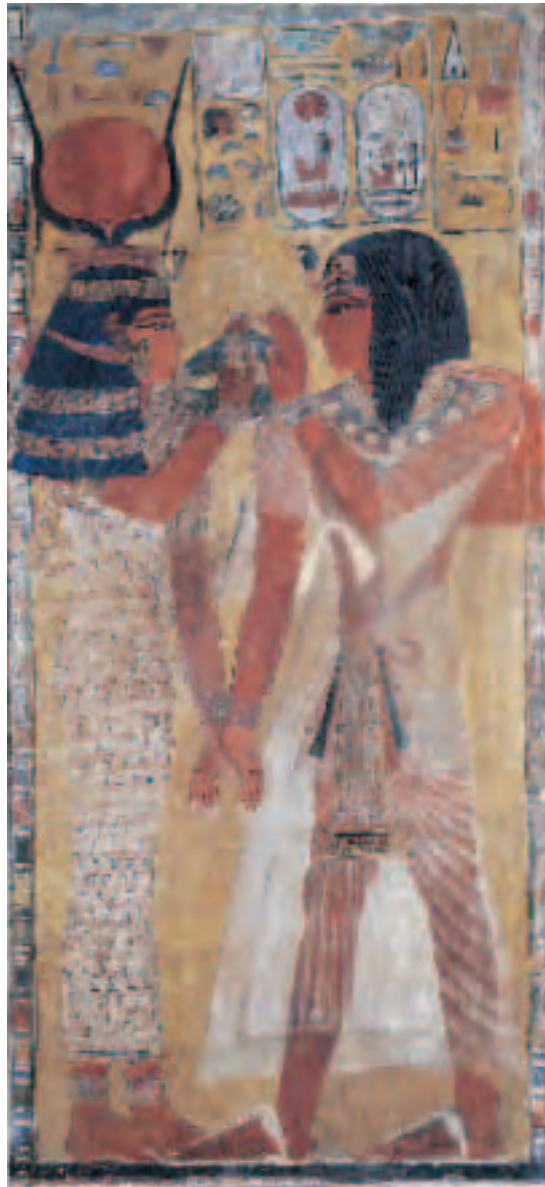
Egyptian artists decorated temples and tombs according to very strict rules set forth by the priests. The rules required that each part of the body be shown from the most visible angle. Look at **Figure 12.5**. The heads, arms, legs, and feet are shown in profile. The shoulders and eyes, however, are shown from a frontal view.

The paintings found on the walls inside the tombs reveal a great deal about life in Egypt. Scenes from the life of the person buried in the tomb were intended to remind the spirit of life on earth.

India

In the Indus River Valley, the ancient civilization of India arose. Only in recent times have historians realized the age of Indian culture. For many centuries, no one knew that a civilization had flourished on the banks of the Indus River in northwest India. Then in 1865, railroad workers uncovered a hill of crumbling, fired-clay bricks near the city of Harappa (in present-day Pakistan). The bricks were found to be thousands of years old, dating back to 2500 B.C.

In 1922, a second city was discovered in the same area. Called Mohenjo-Daro (moh-hen-joh dahr-oh), meaning “Hill of the Dead” (**Figure 12.6**), the city was



◀ **FIGURE 12.5** What symbols or features make these figures seem important? Observe the shapes in the boxes along the top border. These are hieroglyphs, an early form of picture writing. They give information about the painted scene.

Egyptian. *The Goddess Hathor Places the Magic Collar on Sethos I.* Thebes, Nineteenth Dynasty. c. 1303–1290 B.C. Painted bas-relief. 226.5 cm (89 1/8"). The Louvre, Paris, France.



▲ **FIGURE 12.6** Experts believe the city of Mohenjo-Daro was abandoned because the climate changed. The ancient Indians built with fire-baked bricks, which meant they had ready access to timber. The area is a desert today.

Mohenjo-Daro, India. c. 2500 B.C.

once home to about 35,000 people. Architectural remains indicate that it served as a major commercial center. Wide, open streets divided the city into large blocks. The city featured multi-storied houses made from fired brick and wood, and elaborate, sophisticated drainage systems.

At this archeological site, workers discovered a number of small relief carvings in soapstone (**Figure 12.7**). These carvings are the earliest known examples of Indian art. As you can see, several unusual lines and shapes are incised above the animals. These are characters from the ancient Harappan system of writing.

Over 70 cities, towns, and villages have been discovered in the Indus valley, as well as evidence of an organized kingdom with a central government that existed about 4,500 years ago.

China

The Yellow River valley became the site of the ancient Chinese civilization, a civilization that retains many of its ancient traditions today. Beginning 4,000 years ago, it is the oldest continuous culture in the history of the world.

As their civilization developed, the Chinese gained skill and knowledge in many different areas. They invented paper, porcelain (a type of ceramic), and



▲ **FIGURE 12.7** The designs on these seals “belonged” to their owners. Seals were pressed into soft clay to secure a container or document.

Soapstone seals from Mohenjo-Daro (Indus Valley culture). Karachi Museum, Karachi, Pakistan.

woodblock printing as well as the compass and gunpowder. Until modern times, emperors ruled China. Its historical periods were divided into dynasties, which were named after ruling families. A **dynasty** is a period of time during which a single family provided a succession of rulers. Bronze vessels found in ancient graves reveal that Chinese artisans cast bronze as early as the first imperial Chinese dynasty, the Shang dynasty, which began in 1766 B.C. The ritual wine vessel shown in **Figure 12.8** is an example of the intricate work done at that time. Abstract motifs and spirals cover the vessel. Experts believe the spirals stand for clouds, rain, or water. Such images reveal an ancient Chinese regard for nature. Many early bronze vessels show extraordinary technical mastery—evidence of the centuries of development required before such artworks could be created.



◀ **FIGURE 12.8** This vessel was used in a ceremony to ensure harmony with the spirits of deceased ancestors. Notice the large eyes and beak of an owl on the lower part of the vessel. Can you find other animals in the designs that cover this container?

Ancient China. *Ritual Wine Container*. Shang dynasty. Thirteenth century B.C. Bronze. 30.1 × 12.2 × 12.5 cm (11⁷/₈ × 4³/₄ × 4⁷/₈"). Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of Arthur M. Sackler, s1987.23a-b.

Activity

Analyzing Ancient Art

Selecting and Analyzing

Exhibitions. Research exhibitions of ancient art online or at art museums in your community. Select early artworks from the cultures listed in this lesson. Analyze the exhibitions to form conclusions about formal qualities, or how these cultures used the elements and principles of art. Also, form conclusions about historical and cultural contexts. What was the role or significance of the artworks or art objects in these ancient cultures?



Check Your Understanding

1. For what purpose might cave paintings have been created?
2. What is a ziggurat?
3. Why and for whom were the pyramids built?
4. Define the word *dynasty*.
5. Describe general characteristics of artworks from the Paleolithic period, Ancient Egypt, and Ancient China.

Art of Asia and the Middle East

Vocabulary

stupas
scroll
pagoda
woodblock printing
mosques

The cultures of India, China, Japan, and the Middle East have all produced exciting art forms, some very different from European art. The art of Asia and the Middle East reflects different philosophies and religious beliefs from those in Western art.

India

The art of India has been strongly influenced by the Hindu and Buddhist religions. Hinduism is one of the world's oldest religions. It began in ancient India around 2000 B.C. It is not one religion but a group of many related sects. Buddhism began as a Hindu reform movement, and had a strong influence over the country from the third century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. Among the earliest, and most important, examples of modern Indian architecture are **stupas** (**stooop**-uhs), which are *beehive-shaped domed places of worship*. These were built by Buddhist architects to house relics of Buddha, their religion's founder. Each stupa was reached through four gates covered with relief sculptures (**Figure 12.9**).

After the fifth century, Hinduism rose again in popularity because it was encouraged by the monarchs of the period. Hindu temples and sculptures of the Hindu gods were created. Hinduism combined several different beliefs and practices that developed over a long period of time. In Hinduism there are three primary processes in life and in the universe: creation, preservation, and destruction. The three main Hindu gods reflect this belief system.



► **FIGURE 12.9** Domes such as this were often erected over holy places, burial mounds, and holy relics. What is the purpose of preserving such things?

Great Stupa. Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, India.
c. first century B.C.

They are Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Siva, the Destroyer (**Figure 12.10**). In Hinduism, both humans and animals are believed to have souls that undergo reincarnation. Reincarnation is a purification process in which the soul lives in many bodies in many lifetimes until it becomes one with Brahma, the great soul.

India exported its religions to the rest of Asia. In Cambodia many temples were built of stone in the Indian style. The temple at Angkor Wat (**Figure 12.11**) was originally a Hindu temple built between A.D. 1113 and 1150. Dedicated to Vishnu by its builder, it represents the Hindu view of the universe.

► **FIGURE 12.10** The Hindu god Siva is called the Destroyer. This sculpture is rich in symbolism. Notice what the figure is standing on. The objects he holds are a drum that symbolizes creation and a flame that symbolizes destruction. How is destruction related to creation?

Unknown, India, Tamil Nadu. *Siva as Lord of the Dance*. c. 950. Copper alloy. 76.2 × 57.1 × 17.8 cm (30 × 22½ × 7"). Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, given anonymously.



◄ **FIGURE 12.11** The layout of this temple was designed to create a solar calendar by which the summer and winter solstices and the spring and fall equinoxes could be fixed. Why was this important in an agricultural society?

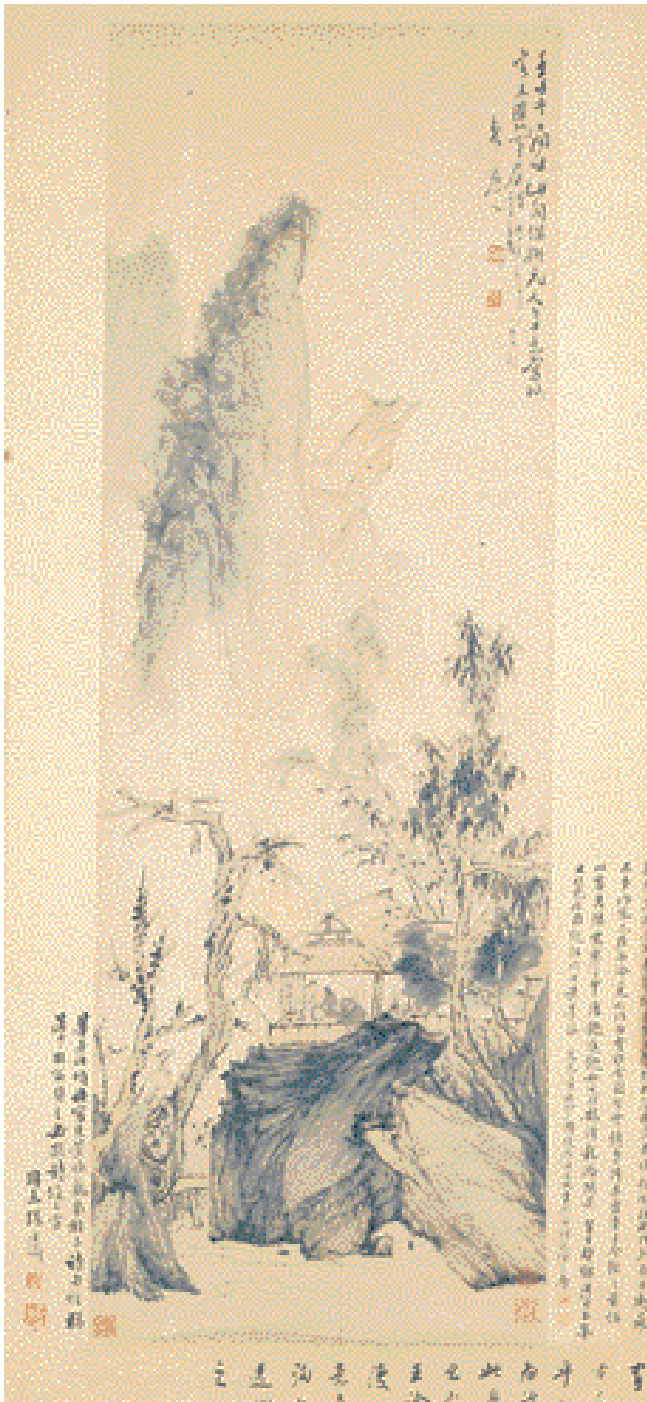
Southeast Asia. Temple at Angkor Wat, Cambodia. 1113–50.

China

China adopted Buddhism during the Han Dynasty, which lasted from 206 B.C. to A.D. 220. Buddhism was easily adopted in China because, like other Chinese religions, it stressed the harmony of human beings with nature. An important part of Buddhism is meditation, focusing one's thoughts on a single object or idea. Chinese artists found that long periods of meditation enabled them to perceive the beauty of an object or a scene with greater clarity. This enabled them to more effectively

capture the beauty of the subject in their paintings. Chinese art of the last 2,000 years has been greatly influenced by Buddhism and meditation.

The Chinese were the first people to consider “picture painting” a valuable endeavor. This was because many artists were also scholars who wrote poems in beautiful writing (called calligraphy) using brushes that could make thick and thin lines. They used these same brushes and line techniques to paint pictures.



▲ **FIGURE 12.12** Notice how small the people are in relation to the landscape. The hut blends in with the natural setting. The calligraphy bordering the drawing is an important part of the picture. Notice how it echoes the shapes of the leaves. How might the calligraphy be part of the “conversation”?

Hua Yen. *Conversation in Autumn*. 1762. Ink and color on paper. 115.3 × 39.7 cm (45% × 15%). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio. The John L. Severance Fund.

They painted fans, pages of books, and scrolls (**Figure 12.12**). A **scroll** is a long roll of parchment or silk. Some were hung on walls, while others were meant to be unrolled a little at a time and read like a book.

The earliest Chinese paintings were filled with images illustrating the beliefs that people should live together peacefully and be respectful of their elders. With the influence of a new religion, Buddhism, the focus of painting began to shift away from humans and toward nature. By around A.D. 1100, the landscape was the main theme of Chinese painting.

The Chinese also produced sculpture for religious purposes and to honor the dead. During the Sung (**soong**) Dynasty (A.D. 960–1279), artists first produced ceramic objects of porcelain made from a fine-grained white clay called kaolin (**kay**-uh-luhn). Work in porcelain reached its highest point during the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1368–1644). Today, collectors especially prize porcelain from this dynasty (see Figure 5.4, page 99).

Japan

In A.D. 552 the ruler of a kingdom in nearby Korea sent the Emperor of Japan a gift. The gift was a bronze figure of the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. Along with the sculpture came priests to spread Buddhist teachings. Eventually many of the people of Japan accepted this new religion. They also learned about new styles of art. For the next 250 years, Japanese art would show strong traces of Korean, Chinese, and other Asian styles.

The first important Japanese art objects of “modern times” were started in A.D. 594. These were magnificent Buddhist temples that were built throughout the country. Since the islands of Japan are made of volcanic rock, the Japanese could not use stone to build their temples. Instead, they

made them from wood. In the process, they elevated the architecture of wooden structures to new levels.

Japanese temples are intricately assembled and richly decorated. They are carefully fitted together with special joints. Because Japan suffers frequent earthquakes and violent storms, the buildings had to be durable. One of the most interesting features of early Japanese temples was the **pagoda** (puh-gohd-uh). This is *a tower several stories high with roofs curving slightly upward at the edges* (**Figure 12.13**).

The Japanese also created monumental sculptures, often of the Buddha. Such a sculpture can be seen in **Figure 12.14**, the Great Buddha at Kamakura. It was cast in bronze in A.D. 1252. It is situated outdoors in a grove of trees, which seems an appropriate setting for this contemplative Buddha.



▲ **FIGURE 12.13** This pagoda stands as the oldest wooden structure in the world. Its purpose is to preserve relics.

Pagoda from the Temple Complex at Horyuji, near Nara, Japan. c. A.D. 616.



◀ **FIGURE 12.14** The Great Buddha was once housed in a temple, but the temple was destroyed by a tidal wave. What effect does its current location have on this artwork?

Great Buddha. 1252. Bronze. Height: 10.68 m (35'). Kamakura, Japan.

MEET THE ARTIST

KATSUSHIKA HOKUSAI



Japanese, 1760–1849

Attributed to Hokusai. *Portrait of Hokusai as an Old Man*. Honolulu Academy of Arts, Honolulu, Hawaii.

► **FIGURE 12.15** The gust of wind blows away the papers and clothing of the human figures. Mount Fuji stands white and stable, unmoved by the wind or the human drama.

Katsushika Hokusai. *Ejiri in Suruga Province*, from *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*. 24.6 × 37.9 cm (9²/₃ × 15"). Honolulu Academy of Arts, Honolulu, Hawaii. James A. Michener Collection, 1991.

Hokusai was an artist who changed his name as often as he changed residences. At the age of 37, he began to call himself Hokusai, the name he is known by today. He often combined it with other names. The most unusual one was Gakyojin Hokusai: A Man Mad About Painting, Hokusai.

In eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Japan, printmakers specialized in one area of the printing process. They were designers, woodcarvers, or printers. Artisans did not usually cross from one skill to another. Hokusai, however, mastered all the skills. In 1831, he published the landscape series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, using the Zen Hokusai Iitsu name. In 1833, three major print series were published: *A Tour of Japanese Waterfalls*; *Imagery of the Poets*; and his *Nature* series, which included flowers, birds, and insects. In 1834, *Rare Views of Famous Bridges*, a series of 11 prints, was published.

Hokusai had endless energy, a tremendous ego, a restless imagination, and extraordinary talent. In fact, he produced most of his masterpieces after the age of 70. On his deathbed he begged for ten more years of life so that he could become a true artist.



In A.D. 784, Japan entered its golden age of art. During this period, Japanese artists developed a painting style called *Yamato-e* (yah-mah-toh-ay), or “pictures in the Japanese manner.” Paintings done in this style were the first examples of pure Japanese art, meaning that they did not show the influence of other Asian cultures. *Yamato-e* screen paintings were often made in sections and were used to brighten the dimly lit interiors of temples and homes as a temporary wall to divide a room.

Another new Japanese style of art was called *Ukiyo-e* (oo-kee-yoh-ay), meaning “pictures of the floating world,” which depict different aspects of the pleasures of life. The demand for artworks in this new style was great. To meet this demand, artists turned to a new technique, **woodblock printing**. This is *making prints by carving images in blocks of wood*. Using this technique, artists could produce many inexpensive prints of one image (**Figure 12.15**).



◀ **FIGURE 12.16**
This building was designed to be in harmony with the surrounding garden and pools. Notice the balance and symmetry of all the elements. What feeling does the building evoke?

Taj Mahal, garden and pools. 1632–43. Agra, India.

Art of Islam

In A.D. 570, an event took place that had a major effect on both the religious beliefs and the art of the Middle East and much of Asia. Muhammad was born in Mecca. He grew up and became a merchant, following the tradition of his family. However, he believed he received personal revelations that challenged him to change the religion of his people, the Arabs, who worshiped many idols. Muhammad taught that there was only one god, called Allah. After his death, his teachings were assembled into the Koran, a holy scripture. Islam was the name given to the religious faith of people who followed Muhammad. Worshipers are called Muslims.

Islamic art (art of the Muslim world) was characterized by the use of ornate line, shape, and pattern. The interior of **mosques**, *Muslim places of worship*, were decorated with calligraphy, geometric patterns, and stylized plants and flowers. Art depicting people or animals was not permitted in mosques. Such art was prohibited early in the history of the Islamic religion and was meant to prevent Muslims from worshipping images when they should instead be worshipping the idea of Allah.

Book illustrators, however, were not limited by the same restrictions. They depicted people and animals in everyday scenes. They filled their illustrations with beautiful decorative patterns.

The religion of Islam, and its influence on art, also spread to the East. Muslims conquered Delhi in India and converted many Indians to Islam. **Figure 12.16** shows a famous building, the Taj Mahal, which was built by an Indian Muslim leader as a memorial to his wife. The building is an outstanding example of Islamic architecture and is considered one of the most beautiful structures in the world. The building emphasizes formal balance and harmony with its surroundings. Its cool marble walls and placid lake evoke a response of serenity and tranquility in those who visit.



Check Your Understanding

1. What is a stupa?
2. What medium did the Chinese often paint on that could be hung on walls or read like a book?
3. Compare and contrast the historical styles in Figure 12.12 on page 328 and Figure 12.15 on page 330. Identify the general trends in art.

Vocabulary

griots

The Art of Africa

Throughout Africa, in both the past and the present—even within the context of modern nation-states—the visual arts are well integrated with other art forms, including music, dance, and drama. The art of Africa was an integral part of the daily lives and religious rituals of the people.

The Role of Art in African Cultures

The huge continent of Africa has a population of millions that is sub-divided into about 1,000 cultural groups. The peoples of Africa have long-established, highly developed cultures that have been producing sophisticated art forms for centuries. The arts are as varied as the peoples.

Everything is made with great care, whether for rituals or everyday use. Art addresses not only the concerns of the living, their ancestors, and those yet to be born, but also those of the spirits of nature. A great deal of African art emphasizes important events of life and forces of nature that influence the lives of individuals and communities.

Dominant themes in African art include birth and death; the roles of men, women, and children; coming of age; sickness and healing; the importance of food and water; and the human relationship with nature. Artworks are often linked to celebrations and rituals, both nonreligious and sacred. Westerners are fascinated with objects from these cultures and have put them in museums. It is important to understand the original context in which these objects were made and used.



► **FIGURE 12.17** The vertical lines on the face of this figure probably represent ornamental scars made to indicate ancestry and to enhance physical beauty. How did the artist use the principles of art in creating this portrait of a king?

Portrait of a King. Ife, Nigeria. Copper alloy. Eleventh–fifteenth century. H: 36.2 cm (14¹/₄"). Museum of Mankind, London, England.

Ancient Ife

For the Yoruba (**yaw**-ruh-buh) people of Nigeria, the city of Ife (**ee**-feh) is the place where life and civilization began. Yoruba cities developed between the years A.D. 800 and 1000. By A.D. 1100, artists of Ife had developed a highly refined, lifelike sculptural style to create portraits of the first Yoruba kings and queens. The display of royal portraits, with their composed, balanced facial features, added a sense of stability in periods of political transition between rulers, or following the death of a ruler (**Figure 12.17**).

According to Yoruba beliefs, the world consists of two realms: the real world that can be seen and touched; and the supernatural world of ancestors, gods and goddesses, and spirits. Works of art created for the real, or visible, world tend to be realistic, whereas works of art created for the supernatural, or invisible, world tend to be more abstract.

As memorial portraits of Yoruba royalty, these sculptures celebrate the lives and accomplishments of individuals. Like Yoruba poems, which record family history and personal deeds, these refined works of art encourage living generations to strive for perfection. They encourage the living to match or surpass the cultural accomplishments of previous generations.

The Empire of Mali

Works of art made centuries ago in Ife and elsewhere in West Africa document the rise of city-states throughout the region. The terra-cotta sculptures of cavalymen and foot soldiers from the Inland Niger Delta, near the ancient city of Jenne, date back to the early thirteenth century, when the empire of Mali was founded by a powerful military leader and king named Sundiata.

These figures reveal proud profiles, with jutting chins and heads held high atop sturdy necks. Their bodies appear straight and tall whether shown standing or seated upright on stallions (**Figure 12.18**). The figures represent members of the well-outfitted and well-organized army described in an epic that recounts Sundiata's life history.



▲ **FIGURE 12.18** Because wet clay is soft, artists can easily add texture to the overall forms of clay sculptures. How many different kinds of texture can you identify in this work?

Inland Delta Region, Mali. Equestrian figure. c. thirteenth century. Ceramic. 70.5 cm (27 7/8"). National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Museum purchase, 86-12-2.

► **FIGURE 12.19** This solid iron figure shows the strong vertical lines that characterize Mali sculpture.

Bamana peoples, Mali. Bamana iron figure. Iron, string, cowrie shells. Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana. Gift of Ernst Anspach.



► **FIGURE 12.20** Notice that the proportions of these figures are expressive rather than realistic.

Seated Man and Woman. Dogon people, Mali. Wood. 76.2 cm (30"). Photograph © 1993 by the Barnes Foundation, Merion Station, Pennsylvania.



The strength of Sundiata's great cavalry and army of foot soldiers enabled him to gain political power. Under his leadership, the empire of Mali became one of the largest and wealthiest kingdoms the world has ever known. The epic story of the rise of Sundiata is passed on by **griots** (**gree-oh**), *oral historians who are also musicians and performers*, throughout West Africa to this day.

The city of Jenne is the oldest city in sub-Saharan Africa. In the art and architecture from this city there is an emphasis on vertical elements (**Figure 12.19**). This can be seen in the corner pinnacles of house facades, which are made tall and straight.

The sculpture shown in **Figure 12.20**, made by the Dogon (**doh-gahn**) people of Mali, conveys a sense of harmony and balance. As images of the first man and woman described in Dogon myths of creation, this sculpture serves as an inspiration to living generations. These figures are seated on a stool with a circular support that symbolizes the link between the earth below and the spirit world above. Carved from a single piece of wood, the interlocking forms effectively convey Dogon ideas regarding the interdependence of men and women and their complementary social roles.

The Kingdom of Benin

The Benin (**buh**-neen) kingdom, situated in what is now southern Nigeria, was a society of many class levels, with an oral tradition that goes back seven or eight centuries. The kingdom reached the peak of its power in the sixteenth century. Like earlier artists in nearby Ife, Benin artists excelled in creating metal sculptures using a copper alloy possessing many of the same qualities as bronze.

Among the most ambitious of the Benin castings are the high-relief sculptures that once covered the walls and pillars of the royal palace. One of these contains the figure of the *oba* (**oh**-bah), or king, flanked by two chiefs bearing shields, sword bearers, and palace attendants (**Figure 12.21**).

Here four social ranks are depicted. The king, or *oba* is placed in the center and is the largest figure. The two chiefs are almost as large as the king. Two sword bearers, one a child, are even smaller. Three tiny figures, one supporting the king's foot and two in the top corners, represent the least powerful members of the court.

The *oba* wears a patterned wrapper, or waist cloth, a six-ringed necklace, and sits side-saddle on a horse. In Benin culture, horses are symbols of political power.

The Asante Kingdom

The Akan people lived in central and coastal Ghana. In the first half of the eighteenth century, these people joined together to form a powerful



◀ **FIGURE 12.21** In Benin art the most politically powerful person is represented as the largest figure. This representation reflects the central organization of the kingdom. Less powerful individuals are smaller.

Kingdom of Benin, Edo people, Nigeria. *Mounted King with Attendants*. c. sixteenth–seventeenth century. Brass. 49.5 × 41.9 × 11.3 cm (19½ × 16½ × 4½"). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection. Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1965. (1978.412.309)



▲ **FIGURE 12.22** Works of art made using the lost-wax casting technique often show finely textured details. What elements of art are especially important in this work?

Akan people, Asante Kingdom, Ghana. *Necklace*. Nineteenth century. Gold. 2.5 × 40 cm (1 × 15³/₄"). Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia. The Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund.

confederation of states that included many cultural groups. The largest of these groups was the Asante (ah-sahn-tee).

Gold was the measure of wealth for the Asante and their kings, who tightly controlled its use. Items fashioned from the precious metal were made to be worn by these kings as a sign of their divine authority and absolute power.

Asante necklaces, bracelets, and anklets were crafted by stringing cast-gold beads with gold nuggets, glass and stone beads, and other items. In **Figure 12.22**, a pendant in the form of a land crab is used. This necklace was probably designed for a queen mother, because the land crab was widely recognized by the Asante as a symbol for a person of this rank.

The work of goldsmiths in Kumase, the Asante capital, was regulated by the king. He allowed people to commission works of art from these highly skilled craftsmen. Items obtained through the king's court included gold ornaments, staffs, and swords.



► **FIGURE 12.23** Weavers of Kente cloth have invented many different patterns. These patterns often have names that are immediately recognized by members of Akan societies. What elements of art have been used to create the patterns on this cloth?

Asante people, Ghana. Man's cloth (Kente cloth). Rayon. L: 314 cm (123⁷/₈"), W: 217 cm (85⁷/₈"). UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, Los Angeles, California. Anonymous gift.

The Asante king also controlled the use of special cloth. During the 1600s, weavers created the first *Kente* (**ken-tee**) *cloth*, a brilliantly colored and patterned fabric that became the royal cloth. Kente cloth is woven in narrow strips that are then stitched together to form large pieces with complex patterns (**Figure 12.23**). By the 1720s, Asante weavers were unraveling imported silk fabrics and reweaving them into cloths featuring their own unique designs. Silk cloths woven with special symbolic patterns were reserved exclusively for kings.

The Bwa People

Although wood is the most common material used to carve face masks and headdresses, African masks were constructed in different ways using a wide variety of materials. For example, the Bwa people of Burkina Faso made masks of leaves, plant fibers, porcupine quills, and feathers. Leaf masks were made at the end of the dry season, before the rains that marked the beginning of the next agricultural cycle. The Bwa people considered leaf masks the most ancient mask form and closely associated them with nature (**Figure 12.24**).

The Bwa people also produced wooden masks that were used during village ceremonies or harvest festivals. The music of flutes, drums, and gongs accompanied the dancers wearing these masks, which took different forms—animal, human, and abstract. All were painted with black, white, and red geometric patterns. Plank masks were among the most abstract of all mask forms made by the Bwa people (**Figure 12.25**, page 338).



▲ **FIGURE 12.24** African masks are generally more than just a face covering. Imagine wearing a leaf mask like this one. How would you feel?

Bwa people, Burkina Faso, village of Boni. Detail of a leaf mask. 1985.



▲ **FIGURE 12.25** Though large and cumbersome, plank masks are made of lightweight wood. To help steady the mask, the performer holds a stick between his teeth. This stick projects through rim holes at the back of the mask. What elements of art are emphasized in these masks?

Bwa people, Burkina Faso, village of Pa. Plank masks entering performance area, harvest celebration.

Activity

Constructing a Mask

Demonstrating Effective Use of Media and Tools in Design.

What happens when you cover your face with a mask? Can you hide your identity from others? Design your own mask using thin cardboard, construction paper, paint, or other media and tools. In choosing your design and materials, think about what you want your mask to represent.



Check Your Understanding

1. What beliefs are reflected in the terra-cotta and bronze sculptures of the Yoruba people?
2. What are griots?
3. How do artists of the Benin kingdom signify the importance of figures in their artworks?
4. What is Kente cloth, and what is it used for?
5. Describe general characteristics of sculptures from the Ife, Dogon, and Edo cultures of Africa.

Art of the Americas

Vocabulary

pre-Columbian
totem poles

Many archaeologists believe that the first visitors to North America were groups of Asian hunters who crossed an ancient land bridge across the Bering Strait. They began to arrive in what is now Alaska between 20,000 and 40,000 years ago. Gradually these people spread out to cover all parts of North and South America. In this lesson, you will study the contributions of Native peoples of the Americas.

Art of Mesoamerica and South America

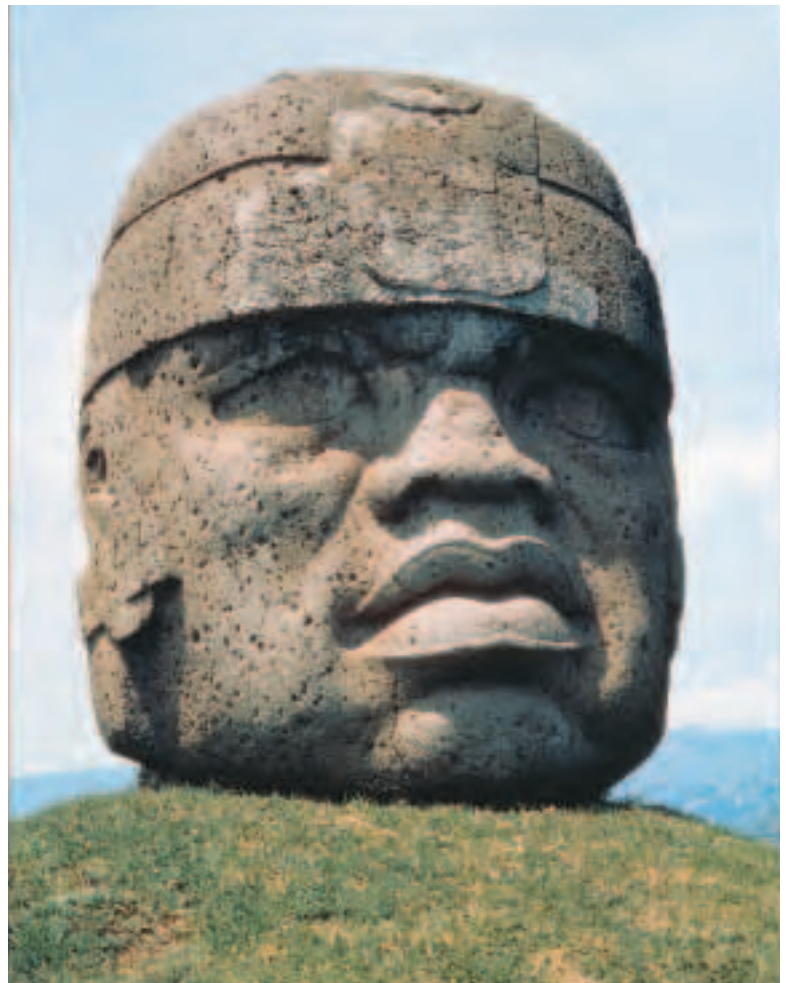
The term **pre-Columbian** refers to *the time period before the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas in 1492*. Art historians use the term to refer to the art of the Indian civilizations of early Mexico, Central America, and South America. However, archaeologists are discovering that many of these pre-Columbian civilizations were highly sophisticated and created magnificent works of art and architecture.

Olmec Culture

Olmec (**ol-mek**) culture is often called the “mother culture” of Mexico because the artifacts found in the region are the most ancient. The Olmec civilization dates from 1200 B.C. to A.D. 500. The artifacts left by the Olmec had an influence on all the civilizations that were to follow. They carved altars, pillars, sarcophagi (**sahr-kah-fuh-guy**) (stone coffins), and statues. Among the most interesting of the Olmec creations are four huge human heads carved from volcanic rock (**Figure 12.26**). These were discovered at La Venta, a center for religious ceremonies. These sculptures weigh up to 40 tons and stand 8 feet tall. Notice the childlike features on this giant face. The full lips, which seem almost to be pouting, are typical of the Olmec style.

► **FIGURE 12.26** This monumental sculpture depicts a simple, stylized face. The stone was quarried and transported over many miles of swampland before reaching its destination. What does this indicate about the technology of the Olmec people?

Olmec. Colossal Head. 1200 B.C.–A.D. 500. Basalt. 243.8 cm (8') high. Anthropology Museum, Veracruz, Mexico.



Mayan Culture

By around A.D. 800 the Mayan (**my-uhn**) empire covered the Yucatán peninsula, modern Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. The Maya were gifted mathematicians. They had the most accurate calendar of any people in history and had developed the most advanced hieroglyphic writing in Mesoamerica. They were also great builders. The Maya erected huge temples and cities with tools of wood, stone, and bone. In the late 1800s, scientists discovered an ancient city in northern Guatemala. This Mayan city, Tikal (**tih-kahl**), is known to have covered an area of 50 square miles. The city is thought to have been home to some 55,000 people (**Figure 12.27**).

The surviving works of Mayan civilization range from the smallest objects to great temples covered with relief carvings. Among the smallest artworks of the Maya are many beautifully designed clay figures only a few inches high. However, most of the Mayan sculpture that has survived consists of relief carvings on buildings and monuments. In the early stages of the Mayan civilization, these carvings were mostly simple and realistic. In some later temples, a more complex, geometric style came to be the rule.

Aztec Culture

The largest of the cultures of ancient Mexico and Central America was the Aztec. This civilization emerged sometime between A.D. 1200 and 1325. The Aztecs were a warlike people. Like other pre-Columbian peoples, they were very religious. When their god told them to leave their comfortable homeland and settle where they saw an eagle perched on a cactus, they obeyed. There, they built a magnificent city, which they called Tenochtitlán (**tay-noch-teet-lahn**). A collection of tiny islands, this Aztec city was connected by a network of canals. In the fifteenth century, the Aztecs embarked on an aggressive military campaign to force other groups in Mexico to pay them tribute. They reached the height of their power and domination less than a century before the arrival of the Spanish. By the time Spanish conquerors arrived in 1519, their island city covered over 25 square miles. Today we know the city, which is no longer surrounded by water, as Mexico City.

The Aztecs adopted many of the ways of making art from the people they conquered. They created a type of painted book called a codex. Such painted books told the stories of mythological or historical events. Like Mayan art, Aztec art was greatly influenced by religion.

► **FIGURE 12.27**
The Mayan city Tikal included temples and other stone and stucco structures. The pyramids here are 230 feet high.

Maya. Great Plaza of Tikal, general view. A.D. 150–700. Tikal, Guatemala. Vanni/Art Resource, New York.





◀ **FIGURE 12.28**
Machu-Picchu
was built on a
mountainside to
discourage would-
be attackers. The
city has withstood
five centuries of
earthquakes.

Machu-Picchu, Peru.

The Aztecs also built temples and shrines, some carved directly into the mountains. Highly stylized and elaborately ornamented sculptures depicted gods and religious symbols in bold, dramatic style.

Inca Empire

The Inca civilization flourished between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, and their empire stretched more than 2,500 miles from north to south. It included present-day Peru plus parts of Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia. In acquiring such a large territory, the Inca Empire absorbed many cultural and religious influences from neighboring groups and from civilizations that had flourished before it. Although governing such an immense territory required a vast administration and bureaucracy, the Incas managed to govern without the benefit of a written language. They made calculations and kept records using pieces of knotted string of different colors, called *quipu* (**kee-poo**). The Incas' ability with numbers is reflected in their art. Inca artifacts were made with great mathematical precision.

The Incas were masters of shaping and fitting stone. They were also highly skilled urban planners. Proof of both talents can be found in the walled city of Machu-Picchu (**mahch-oo peek-choo**) (**Figure 12.28**). The stones of its buildings were so carefully matched that a knife blade cannot be slipped between any two.

Native American Art

When Christopher Columbus reached North America in 1492, he thought his ship had landed on the east coast of India. He referred to the natives he found living there as Indians. Today these first settlers are called Native Americans.

Some groups became hunters while others turned to growing crops as a way to survive. Artifacts found in these regions show that all of these people created art of some kind. These works have given us insight into the cultures of these peoples. Native American art and traditions are still being practiced today by these cultural groups.

The Arctic Region

The Inuit (**in-yuh-wuht**) people inhabited present-day Canada and Alaska from the earliest times. Although they are often called Eskimos, they refer to themselves as the Inuit.

Inuit society is loosely organized into family groups that rely on hunting and fishing for survival. The images created by Inuit artists reveal the importance attached to the animals they relied on for food—seal, walrus, fish, whale, and caribou. Other animals such as the fox, wolf, and bear were also represented in their art. The human figure was shown in the masks and dolls that they created.

Figures are also found on the engravings done on walrus ivory. In these engravings, Inuit artists used a kind of pictorial writing that described various activities and events associated with

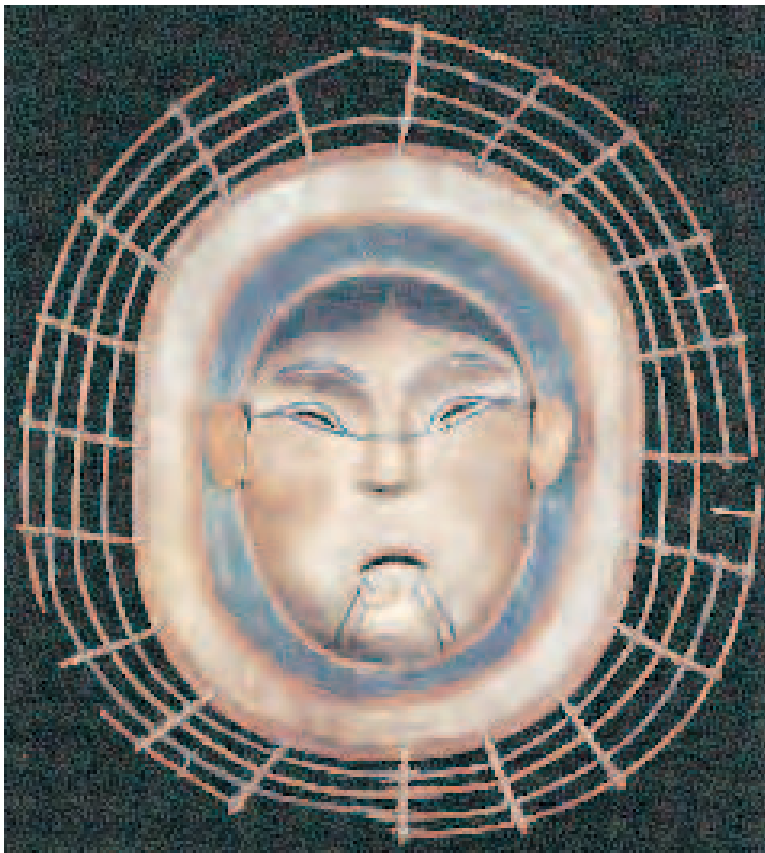
everyday life. In one such engraving on an ivory pipestem, a series of lively drawings record the activities associated with the daily quest for food. Since the surface of this pipestem is less than one inch wide, the engraving takes the form of tiny, decorative circles and miniature figures. Despite their small size, the artist still managed to present an easy-to-read account of the hunt. To accent the engraved lines used in works like this, artists filled them in with color or made them dark with soot.

Frequently, Inuit art was created to serve the religious needs of the people. The mask representing a moon goddess in **Figure 12.29** is an example. An Inuit shaman, or medicine man, wore such a mask during ceremonial dances. While dancing, he would go into a trance and act as a messenger between the world of the living and the mysterious world of spirits.

The Northwest Coast Region

The Northwest Coast Region refers to an area rich in natural resources that runs from southern Alaska to northern California. Native cultural groups in this region, including the Haida (**high-duh**), Tlingit, and the Kwakiutl (**kwa-kee-yoo-tul**), developed a complex culture in which art played a prominent role.

Like other people, the Kwakiutl held annual rituals to initiate new members, reinforce the status of old members, and



◀ **FIGURE 12.29** A mask of this kind was worn only by a shaman during ceremonial dances. How do you think the purpose of this mask is reflected in its design? What feelings do you think the mask evoked in viewers?

Inuit. Mask of Moon Goddess. Lower Yukon or Northwest Bering Sea. Before 1900. 64.1 cm (25 1/4") high. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, The University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, California.

demonstrate their magical powers. Ceremonial masks and dramatic costumes were created for these rituals. Look at the Secret Society Mask pictured in Figure 10.27 on page 273. It is composed of several hinged pieces that moved. This movement was intended to add surprise and drama to the ritual. Often after a Kwakiutl ceremony, or to celebrate another important event, people gathered to enjoy a *potlatch*. This event enabled the members of one clan to honor those of another, while adding to their own prestige.

Native Americans of the Northwest Coast lived in large family groups. Each family group traced descent from a mythological animal or human-animal, from which they took their name. In order to symbolize their association with this mythic ancestor, they carved totem poles. **Totem poles** are *tall posts carved and painted with a series of animal symbols associated with a particular family or clan* (Figure 12.30).

The Southwest Region

The Native American groups of the southwestern United States include the Pueblo (**pweb-loh**) and the Navajo (**nav-uh-hoh**). Early Spanish explorers used the term *pueblo*, meaning village, to describe groups of people living in large, highly organized settlements. Ancient Pueblo dwellings were built with adobe, or sun-dried clay, walls.

The Pueblo were especially skillful in creating painted pottery. Each community developed its own distinctive shapes and painted designs. In the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico, for example, Pueblo potters used black outlines and geometric shapes to create bold designs over a cream-colored base (Figure 12.31).



◀ **FIGURE 12.30** Totem poles are similar to a European family's coat of arms and were erected in front of a dwelling as a means of identification and a sign of prestige.

Haida totem pole. Prince of Wales Island. c. 1870. Originally 16.2 m (53') high. Taylor Museum of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado.



▶ **FIGURE 12.31** The materials and techniques used in this water jar identify it as a Pueblo work. What elements of art can you identify in this design?

Water jar. Santo Domingo Pueblo, New Mexico. 1910. Ceramic. 24.1 cm (9½") high × 24.45 cm (9⅝") diameter. Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado.

The Navajo, another Southwestern cultural group, learned the art of weaving from the Pueblo. Male Pueblo weavers taught the Navajo weavers, who were women, to make cloth with looms at the beginning of the eighteenth century. As Spanish and Mexican settlers moved into the Southwest, they introduced new designs and patterns, which the Navajo adopted. By the first half of the nineteenth century, the Navajo were using European dyes and Spanish wool to create weavings that matched the work produced by the best looms in Europe. A blanket once owned by the Civil War general Philip Sheridan (**Figure 12.32**) exhibits many of the qualities associated with the finest Navajo weavings. These include the closeness of the weave, rich, vibrant colors, and bold design.



Great Plains Region

The Native Americans of the Great Plains followed the huge herds of bison that roamed the broad grasslands of central North America. The different cultural groups of the Plains—including Blackfeet, Crow, Cheyenne (*shy-ann*), and Sioux (*soo*)—were highly skilled in the preparation of skins used for clothing, footwear, shields, and various kinds of containers. These were then painted or embroidered with porcupine quills and, later, glass beads.

Because they were nomadic hunters, they created the *tepee* (*tee-pee*). This was a portable shelter made of buffalo hide stretched over poles that were lashed together in an upright position. The hides were covered with designs symbolizing the forces of nature and telling stories of heroic events. At its base, a tepee could range anywhere from 12 to 30 feet in diameter. A large tepee contained about as much space as a standard living room of today.

These artisans also created ceremonial headdresses for chieftains, which were worn during ritual dances. The elaborate headdress shown in **Figure 12.33** was created with natural materials found in the surrounding environment.

◀ **FIGURE 12.32** This saddle blanket, created for everyday use, is now on display in a museum. How are the principles of harmony and variety used in this design? How is rhythm suggested?

Saddle blanket. Navajo weaving. c. 1890. Wool. 129.5 × 83.8 cm (51 × 33"). Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado.



◀ **FIGURE 12.33** This feather bonnet was created for a ceremonial dance. Does the use of natural materials seem to fit with the function?

Northwestern Plains people. *Feather Bonnet*. c. 1890. Rooster hackles, wood rods, porcupine hair, ermine skins, horsehair, buckskin, glass beads. 83.8 × 68.6 cm (33 × 27"). Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming. Chandler-Pohrt Collection.

Woodlands Region

The Woodlands made up the largest cultural group of Native Americans east of the Mississippi River. The Woodlands people combined hunting and gathering with simple farming. The Iroquois (**ear-uh-kwoi**), made up of six different Woodlands groups, combined to form the highly organized Iroquois nation.

Expert wood carvers, the Iroquois created wooden masks that were usually painted and decorated with horse hair. The best known masks were created for a society of healers known as the False Faces because of the masks they wore. These False Face masks were thought to be sacred and represented the spirits who gave healers the magic they needed to treat illnesses. Because they were considered to be so powerful, these masks were hidden away when not in use so they would not cause accidental injuries. The masks were considered sacred and were not intended to be seen by nonbelievers.

Activity

Sketching an Event

Applying Your Skills. Native Americans of the Great Plains painted tales of their battles on skins. Look through a newspaper or magazine for coverage of an important event in your city or in the world. On a sheet of paper, sketch the story behind the event.



Check Your Understanding

1. What does the term *pre-Columbian* refer to?
2. Which culture created huge heads carved from volcanic rock?
3. Which culture created the walled city of Machu-Picchu?
4. What were totem poles used for?

Art Criticism *in Action*



▲ **FIGURE 12.34**

Jessie Oonark. *Untitled*. c. 1973. Duffle wool, felt, embroidery floss, and thread. 186 × 181 cm (73¹/₄ × 71¹/₄"). National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Gift of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1989.

Critiquing the Artwork

► 1 **DESCRIBE** *What do you see?*

This is a clue collecting step.

- What media were used to create this work? What is the size of the work?
- What objects and figures are shown in the work?

► 2 **ANALYZE** *How is this work organized?*

In this step you will form conclusions about the formal qualities in this artwork.

- What pattern emerges in the use of colors chosen for this work?
- What kind of balance has the artist used to organize the hanging?
- Describe the use of proportion.
- How has the artist used harmony and variety to unify this large work?

► 3 **INTERPRET** *What is the artist trying to communicate?*

Combine the clues you have collected to form a creative interpretation of the work.

- Do the people in this work appear to be inhabitants of a large, modern city? If not, how would you describe them? Explain your reaction.
- Why do you think the artist used proportion as she did?
- The artist left this work untitled. Give it a title that fits your interpretation.

► 4 **JUDGE** *What do you think of the work?*

Now, you are ready to make an aesthetic judgment of the work.

- Do you think this is a successful work of art? Why or why not? Use one or more of the aesthetic theories to defend your decision.

Meet the **ARTIST**

Jessie Oonark
(1906–1986)



Jessie Oonark was born northwest of Hudson Bay to an Inuit family. She was taught traditional Inuit beliefs and essential skills: childcare, preparing skins, and making clothing. After becoming a widow at age 40, Oonark fell on hard times. The next 19 years were filled with many hardships. After being rescued from near-starvation, she was taken to a hospital at Baker Lake. It was there that she discovered art. Her works are mostly wall hangings and prints based on memories of her earlier life. Her use of bold, flat areas of color makes her style unique.

SAVING AFRICA'S ART

Africa's treasures are prized by collectors all over the world, but this popularity isn't all good news.

For at least 2,000 years, various cultures in Africa have been creating sculptures, busts, and masks from ivory, terra-cotta, soapstone, and metals. The continent's rich artistic output has long influenced Western artists including Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and Georges Braque.

African art is prized by collectors and museums for its intrinsic beauty and artistic merit. In fact, the art has become so valued that thieves have been stealing grave markers, pottery, masks, and sculptures. Some of these items are being dug up from ancient burial sites in villages in East and West Africa. Other works are stolen from African museums. All are sold illegally to collectors in Europe and the United States. The pricetag for the illegal African art trade: about \$45 million each year.

Fighting Back

Now Africans are fighting back. "These objects of art are the relics of our history—why must we lose them?" asks Omotoso Eluyemi, director general of Nigeria's National Commission for Museums and Monuments. His group is in charge of maintaining Nigeria's museums and landmarks.

Nigeria and other African countries, including Benin, Mali, and Kenya, are cutting down on the looting of an important part of Africa's heritage. Now art dealers from around the world are asking questions if someone is selling a piece of ancient African art. Villagers and police are on the lookout for thieves who are digging up art treasures. Governments are using the Internet to track down missing pieces of art. This has helped reduce the looting. That's good news for the many Africans who want to hold on to their art and cultural history.

A sixteenth-century bust of Queen Idia is one of the most famous images in African art.

SHERIDEN/AAA COLLECTION



TIME to Connect

Look at a map of Africa, choose one nation, and research a traditional art form, dance form, type of music, or storytelling tradition. Use your school's media center or the Internet for background information.

- Write a report reflecting the cultural importance of the art form to the tribe or the nation as a whole. Be sure to include the origins of the form, symbolism (if any), and how the form has evolved over time.
- Share your report with the class. Are there any similarities or differences in the traditional forms of music, art, dance, and storytelling from nation to nation? How can you explain these similarities or differences?

Building Vocabulary

On a separate sheet of paper, write the term that best matches each definition given below.

1. Large monuments created from huge stone slabs.
2. The Sumerian writing system made up of wedge-shaped characters.
3. Stepped mountains made of brick-covered earth.
4. Egyptian rulers who were worshiped as gods and held complete authority over the kingdom.
5. A period of time during which a single family provided a succession of rulers.
6. Beehive-shaped domed places of worship.
7. A tower several stories high with roofs curving slightly upward at the edges.
8. Muslim places of worship.
9. Tall posts carved and painted with a series of animal symbols associated with a particular family or clan.

Reviewing Art Facts

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

10. During what time period did people begin to build structures of stone?
11. Describe the rules that Egyptian artists were required to follow when painting or sculpting a relief figure.
12. What influenced the style of Chinese “picture painting”?
13. What art technique did Japanese artists perfect to meet the demand for artworks?
14. Describe the differences between the art used in Islamic mosques and the art used in Islamic book illustration.
15. What do the images created by Inuit artists reveal about what they valued as a culture?

Thinking Critically About Art

16. **Explain.** For what reasons did people of African and Native American cultures create art? How does this differ from more recent European or American art that you find in a museum?
17. **Analyze.** Visit art museums online or in your community. Select and analyze exhibitions of non-Western cultures to form conclusions about formal qualities, historical and cultural contexts, intents, and meanings.
18. **Historical/Cultural Heritage.** Review the Meet the Artist feature on page 330. Compare Hokusai’s print in Figure 12.15 to Figure 4.32 on page 92 by Hiroshige. Hiroshige was inspired by the work of Hokusai. By examining both works, determine one of the general trends in art during this historical time period.



Understanding and appreciating the arts from many cultural traditions enriches the

work of all artists. Art directors for film and television often do extensive research into the cultural artifacts and art of the time period and people being depicted in movies and shows. Visit art.glencoe.com to compare and contrast career opportunities in art.

Linking to the Performing Arts

Explore the classical and folk traditions of Korean music and dance on page 424 of the Performing Arts Handbook.

