Joslyn Art Museum
Comprehensive Study Lesson Plan
Created by Josie Langbehn, Sue Oles & Laura Huntimer

ANCIENT GREEK ARTWORKS

Focus:  Attic Black-Figure Ovoid Neck-Amphora attributed to The Omaha Painter

Objectives – Students will:
• Discover the influence of Ancient Greek vases to our understanding of Greek history.
• Learn about functional art from Ancient Greece and identify contemporary examples.
• Create a fabric art rendering inspired by daily life and a mosaic inspired by mythology.

Common Core Standards available on online version at www.joslyn.org/education/teachers/thursdays-for-teachers

Resources: Check out the Teacher Support Materials online, and http://www.joslyn.org/education/teachers for additional resources

Suggested Materials: Greek artworks teaching poster, Joslyn Timeline, The New Yorker Greek vase cover image, Khan Academy “Making Greek Vases” video http://goo.gl/xOm0TO, art supplies, Ancient Greek vase images, crayons, and sandpaper

Vocabulary: amphora, BC, black-figure, commerce, functional art, Greek mythology terms, Greek vase shapes, obverse, red-figure, reverse, slip (in ceramics), symposium, trade market

Procedure:
• Engage: Time. Introduce the topic Ancient Greek Artworks. Show students the Joslyn Timeline to help them understand the age of The Omaha Painter's Attic Black-Figure Ovoid Neck-Amphora.

• Art Talk: Ancient Greek Daily Life & Mythology. Show students the The Omaha Painter’s vase explaining how the obverse (front) features a myth and the reverse (back) shows a daily life scene. Compare it to urban legends vs real stories. Talk about how to decode an Ancient Greek Vase.

• History: How do we use Ancient Greek vases to learn more about Greek history? Refer to Joslyn’s Greek Artworks teaching poster and additional information in Teacher Support Materials.

• Aesthetics: Black-Figure vs Red-Figure. Talk about the differences between these two styles. Red-figure produced a better work of art because it gave more clarity than black-figure which came first. To further explain the different, have students draw with a crayon vs pencil or use fine sandpaper vs paper.

• Production 1: Dance of the Sea. Have students create a fabric art rendering that will reflect the rich textures and flowing movement of the sea inspired by daily life. Refer to the workshop led by Amy Kunz at the March 2014 Thursdays for Teachers.

• Production 2: Mosaics were integrated in Ancient Greek and Roman homes. Guide students to create mosaics inspired by mythology. Refer to the workshop led by Cathy and Stacy Witt at the March 2014 Thursdays for Teachers.
REPRESENTATIONS ON GREEK VASES THAT SYMBOLIZE “FIRSTS” FOR WORLD CULTURE

Remind students that "Whenever you see a play, read a novel, root for your home team, raise your hand to vote, jingle coins in your pocket, laugh at a comedy, watch the Olympics, or solve a math puzzle, you are doing something with deep roots in ancient Greece."

• Musicians are commonly depicted on Greek vases. Music and dance was extremely important to Greek culture, both in theatre productions and in celebrations. The first piece of written music is on display at The Museum of Delphi.

• Celebrations of Dionysus (depicted on many vases), the God of the harvest and fertility, represent the beginnings of theatre as we know it today. The Greek chorus, the actor, the orchestra, proscenium, teatron, all came from the Greeks. Theatre became an important instructional tool. Many of the battle scenes depicted on vases would have been acted out in history plays. Women, children, prisoners, the entire population went to the theater to learn more about what was happening in their world; plays about wars, comedies and dramas about marriage and children, explorations of myths (stories about the Gods), were all common subject matter.

• Athletic competition, the honoring of athletes for their strength, beauty and power are common vase themes. The athletic stadium at Delphi is as large as a modern stadium with starting blocks for runners still in place.

Projects with students:
• Act out a Greek myth (Pandora, Perseus and the Medusa) using the Greek chorus (to give advice, express opinions, set mood, add movement, react as spectators). Let the students be creative in working together to create sound, movement and mood that support the story.

• Greek music and dance is very uplifting and fun. Do a simple Greek circle dancing ending with Opa! Discuss the energy, sense of individuality and passion for life that is still unique to Greek culture.

• Hold a mock “election”; discuss our democracy, and its roots in ancient Greece. How is a democracy supposed to work? Compare it to other forms of government.

• Provide as many photos of ancient Greek sites to students as possible. They are remarkable, and students are fascinated by them. The ancient Theatre of Epidaurus is perfectly intact and still packs in 20,000 people for modern theatre productions.

• Discuss the everyday uses for the vases...wine, water, receptacles for food, spices, thread and toys, oil, homage vases for funerals...what were their aesthetics? Are the vases beautiful, graceful? Notice how some of the artwork is meticulous, and some quite sloppy...some perfect, some rushed. Try to imagine the artist at work. Who were they?

• Create your own drawing for a Greek vase...use the ancient style of clothing and poise, but incorporate “modern” depictions that represent themes having roots in what the ancient Greeks gave us. Ex... ancient Greeks watching a movie and eating popcorn (early theatre evolved into film)...Ancient Greeks as modern bank tellers (the first coins were turtles on small bronze coins created on the island of Aegina). It was the first time that sheep, cotton, and jewelry stopped representing money and “coinage” began.
Other: Jug or Art. What is functional art? Have students think about and research contemporary things that would be considered functional art. What items, that we consider to be everyday objects, will be in a museum 100 years from now with a “do not touch” sign?

Close: Back to the Future. Students should consider what a future timeline would include. What images would be included? How would technology be represented?

Extensions:

- **Cultural Connections:** Greek vases were shipped to various locations filled with various products. Consider technology of the day including the vehicles that would do the transporting. The question is - then whose culture do these functional artworks belong to when shipped to and kept by another society?

- **Fine Arts:** Discuss how the Ancient Greek vases reflect what is going around and it would even act as a mirror to events. For example, the reverse of Attic Black-Figure Ovoid Neck-Amphora depicts an Ancient Greek symposium and then Greeks would use this vase at an actual symposium. Have students design a vase they would take to an event or something in their daily life; decorate it with images of what would happen at this event. Use The New Yorker Greek vase cover image for inspiration.

- **Language Arts:** In a similar spirit of the Fine Arts projects, give students an Ancient Greek vase and have them write a story. Have the vase images on display. When students read their writings to the class, they can decide if they want to share which vase they were assigned or if they want their classmates to guess.

- **Math:** Discuss the trade market and commerce from Ancient Greece. What systems were in place? How did the monetary system work? Why was the sea important?

- **Science:** Show students Khan Academy “Making Greek Vases” video [http://goo.gl/xOm0TO](http://goo.gl/xOm0TO). Talk about the science and chemical reactions that happen during this process. How has the clay-making process changed from ancient times?
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WORKSHOP – Art Talk – Decoding Ancient Living –
The Joslyn Art Museum’s Ancient Greek Vases

Presenter:
Amy Kunz

Amy has been a professional actor and theatre educator for the last 23 years. She was on staff ten years at the Omaha Theater Company for Young people as a full time actor and instructor. As Education Director for the Brigit Saint Brigit Theatre Company and a Nebraska Art’s Council "Artist in the Schools," she has conducted workshops throughout Omaha Schools and across the state. She was a co-instructor with Gretta Berghammer and ten creative Drama specialists at Northern Iowa University, providing training for teachers in the application of the Iowa Developmental Drama Curriculum Guide. Amy played principle roles for 8 years with The Nebraska Shakespeare Festival.

DEPICTIONS OF THE GODS AND THE ANCIENT GREEK VIEW OF HUMANITY

Scenes of Athena, Herakles and the Lion, Dionysus, Odysseus and the Sirens, and battles with the Amazons depict myths that answered questions about how the ancient Greek's world functioned.

The Greek Gods were human-like; they were capricious, jealous, easily angered, but also beautiful, generous and kind. The Greek God's were less a religion, than an inquiry into better understanding ourselves, and a striving for human balance and strength. They represented power, and the ability to find power in the human world.

Aristotle said, “We must be immortal as far as we can be.”

Points to explore with students:

• In Ancient Greece, a person was honored for individual worth – treated with respect just because they are themselves.
• A belief in freedom, deep respect for personal honor, love for action.
• Equal respect for mind AND body. Desirable to be an athlete and a poet.
  o Discuss roles of women in ancient Greece. This enlightenment does not extend to them. (They were confined to the home, not even allowed in the market place).
• Discuss the "groups" that form in modern schools..."jocks, brains, indie kids, goths, nerds, "popular" kids, loners, etc...What can we learn from the ancient Greeks about valuing the whole person, not separating ourselves?
• Bring pictures of the Greek Gods and discuss...who is Zeus? What are his powers? Have individual students act out being Athena, Apollo or Poseidon, and let the other student’s guess.
• How do the God's special powers answer questions for the Greeks about how their world functioned?
• As cross cultural symbols, most of the Greek Gods were adopted by, and re-named by the Romans.
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