

ART OF THE AMERICAS

ON VIEW: September 16, 2017 – February 18, 2018

EXHIBITION RESOURCE GUIDE

Art of the Americas: Pre-Columbian Art from Mingei's Permanent Collection is the most comprehensive presentation to date of the museum's extensive holdings of objects used by people from the ancient cultures of Mexico, Central America and South America. The Museum has actively collected in this area for several decades.

Objects featured in this exhibition straddle cultural boundaries—from the Colima and Maya civilizations in Mexico to the Moche civilization in Peru—as well as numerous ancient traditions and cultures from Western Mexico.

Some objects were made for ritual use, such as figurines, vessels and sculptures depicting gods, shamans, animals, marine life and floral motifs. Other objects were for domestic use, including jars, bowls, spindle whorls, ocarinas (wind instruments) and roller stamps used for decorating cloth, as well as adornments such as beads and ear plugs. A collection of textile fragments is also presented.

MIN
GEI
INTERNATIONAL
MUSEUM

EXHIBITION THEMES

Objects of Use

Items created for everyday use, celebrations, burials, rituals and spiritual ceremonies. As art objects, these items communicate the aesthetic values of the people who created and used them, while also serving a specific purpose.

Myth, Narrative and Symbolism

Figurative sculptures and vessels illustrate traditional stories easily understood and interpreted by those using and viewing them.

Agriculture, Trade and Celebration

Many objects are representative of specific culinary traditions, dishes and ingredients. These items are reflective of celebration, trade and agriculture, such as the cacao vessel and tamale plate.

Geography

The Pre-Columbian cultures featured in this exhibition span approximately 3,000 years. Some cultures are contemporary to one another, while others are thousands of years apart. There is also geographical overlap, with at times more than one culture residing in the same region at different points in time.

STUDENTS WILL EXPLORE

- Design and decoration as communicators of cultural traditions, stories and values
- Cultural influence and appropriation
- The impact and influences of trade
- Complex symbolism and iconography
- Regional needs and resources



Stirrup-spout Seal Bottle
300-400 A.D.
North Coast Peru, Moche
Unknown Artist
Slip painted Terracotta
Collection of Mingei International
Museum, 2000-05-031

Cacao Vessel
680-720 A.D.
Guatemala, Maya
Resist painted clay
Collection of Mingei
International Museum,
2002-69-008

Polychrome Chip and Dip Vessel
700-1100 A.D.
Panama, Coclé
Unknown Artist
Slip painted terracotta
Collection of Mingei International Museum, 2000-
05-031



Stone Sculpture
c. 1440-1520 A.D.
Mexico, Aztec
Unknown Artist
Basalt
Collection of Mingei International
Museum, 1999-41-069

IN PREPARATION FOR YOUR VISIT

Schedule a Museum visit and Docent-led tour through the Education Department. Mingei offers free admission for all K-12th grade and college groups and transportation reimbursements for Title 1 schools.

Email: sfoley@mingei.org

Call: 619-704-7495

Complete an online tour request form: www.mingei.org/education/museum-tour-request

Review the information in this hand-out with your students; build their knowledge, excitement and confidence before they arrive.

Discuss museum etiquette and review the Tour Guidelines document that will be sent to you when your tour is confirmed.

Explain to students that a Museum Docent will guide them through the exhibition. Explain that a Docent is a knowledgeable Museum-trained volunteer who will share valuable information with them.

Explain that Mingei International is a museum of folk art, craft and design that shows work from all over the world, and that “*mingei*” is a Japanese word that means “art of the people.”