Unit 2

LESSON 5: PAINTING HISTORY

Fineline Painted Vessels of the Moche, Pre-Columbian Peru

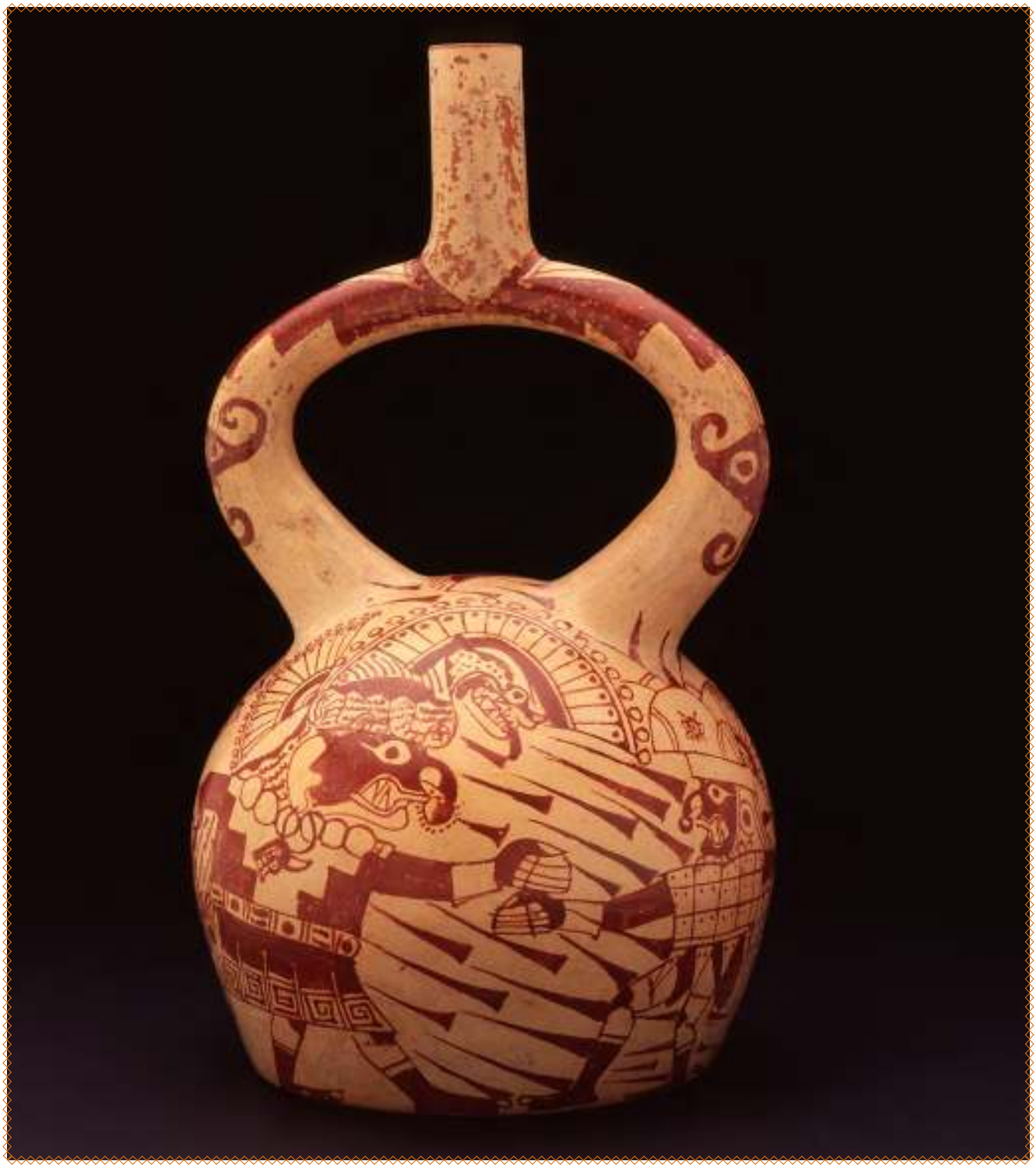


Fig. 2.1

Fineline painted vessel. Moche style, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. H: 16 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X86.3934.

Unit 2

LESSON 5: PAINTING HISTORY
Fineline Painted Vessels of the Moche, Pre-Columbian Peru

Lesson Summary and Objectives

The Moche peoples of ancient Peru (100–800 C.E.) portrayed complex scenes on fineline painted ceramic vessels, depicting everything from hunting and fishing to the ritual battles of supernaturals. Studying the painting on these vessels offers excellent opportunities for students to practice their skills of visual literacy as they gain a deeper understanding of the ancient Peruvian world. They will

- "Read" ceramic vessels for the details of Moche dress, environment, and secular and sacred practices.
- Express their understanding of the iconography through artmaking and writing-based lessons.
- Analyze Moche depictions of confrontation and war and probe their own opinions on the nature of conflict.
- Compare these with other depictions of war in art, as a means of understanding how the arts can comment on the crises and concerns of a community.

Background Information

The Moche lived along fertile river valleys on the north coast of Peru from 100–800 C.E. They built pyramids, temples, and palaces of sun-dried mud bricks and decorated them with colorful murals. Master metalworkers, they created extraordinary jewelry and ornaments of gold, silver, and copper. The Moche are most widely known, however, for their remarkable painted and modeled ceramics that today we can "read" for a vivid artistic record of their culture. From these works we know of their environs, the crops they grew; and the animals of land, sea, and sky that were important in their lives. Even though the Moche did not have a writing system, we can reconstruct many aspects of the civilization by studying the complex scenes depicted in fineline drawings on clay vessels.

The vessels were rendered with such a high degree of realism that researchers have been able to establish correlations between the painted scenes and the actual environment in which Moche artists lived. Even when stylized, the clothing, ornaments, and implements represented in the paintings are remarkably accurate depictions of equivalent objects that have been recovered from archaeological excavations.

Background Information (cont.)

Although Moche artists fashioned many forms of ceramic vessels including boxes, dippers, bowls, goblets, jars, and bottles with other types of spouts, it is the stirrup spout bottle that offers the most information. More than ninety percent of fineline painting occurs on this form. The four bottles displayed in the *Painting History* segment of the exhibition represent different phases in Moche ceramic history. (These and four additional works not on display in ***Intersections*** are illustrated on **Handout MOCHE CERAMIC VESSELS**). The painted iconography on Moche vessels became increasingly finer and more complex over time. In the earliest phases of Moche pottery painters frequently decorated the chambers of stirrup spout bottles with geometric designs. Human and animal figures then began to be depicted, typically painted with broad brushstrokes. In later phases new characters were introduced, narratives were illustrated, and more and more human activities predominated with greater interaction between the figures.

About the Artist

Because so many objects have been found, archaeologists have been able to discern that there were many Moche artists creating ceramic works. Centuries later it is even possible to identify many of the artists by their signature style. UCLA archaeologists and Andean scholars Christopher B. Donnan and Donna McClelland named them according to their distinctive style (such as the "Short-Leg Painter," the "Broken Spear Painter," and the "Snail Painter"), or after cities or museums with Moche collections (the "Munich Painter," the "Fowler Painter," the "London Painter," etc.). The works display a wide range of both artistic and technological expertise.

Warrior combat. Drawing by Donna McClelland. From Moche ceramic vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Private Collection

Curriculum Connections

(detail)
Moche fineline painted vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X88.800

1. Reading the Stirrup Spout Bottles

Activity

Have students form small groups (about four in a group) to study images of the stirrup spout bottles displayed in the *Painting History* section of the exhibition along with other selected works, and included here as **Handout MOCHE CERAMIC VESSELS**. From the brief discussion above, they should locate each bottle in the Moche timeline—early to late. What details do students notice? How do the bottles differ? How does the painting on the vessels change over time?

Activity

Guide students to read the visual "grammar" that informs Moche art. Use the fineline drawing in **Handout MOCHE VISUAL GRAMMAR** to help them decode Moche iconography, as explained below.

- Moche fineline painting usually contains a number of participants—animal, plant, human, supernatural, nonliving, or composites of several.
- High status is indicated by the most elaborately dressed figure being shown larger than those around him.
- The location of an event may be indicated by the presence of certain animals. The birds in the background of this scene and the sea urchin (far right) suggest a marine setting.
- Supernaturals are distinguished from humans by the fangs in their angular mouths.
- The capture of prisoners is shown by the victor grasping the hair of the opponent.
- Decapitation of the prisoner is indicated by the presence of a *tumi* knife in the captor's right hand.
- Particular individuals can be identified by their distinctive characteristics.

Following their study of the previous handout, distribute **Handout MOCHE VISUAL GRAMMAR, FURTHER STUDY** for practice with the rules of Moche visual grammar. Can they interpret the narratives using the coding explained above? (Teachers may refer to *Moche Fineline Painting* by Christopher B. Donnan and Donna McClelland for further information.)

2. The Many Animals of the Moche World

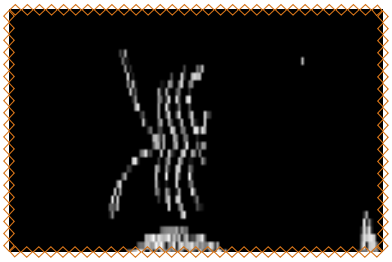
Activity

Animals are portrayed realistically on many Moche ceramics. Why is their portrayal significant to scholars? (Their presence gives clues to the environment in which the Moche lived, to the climate, and possibly to animals' interaction with and importance to people.) Many animals known to the Moche were included in the painted scenes on Moche ceramic vessels. **Handout THE WORLD OF MOCHE ANIMALS** reproduces some of these painted animals. Have students research and identify the animals of present day northern coastal Peru that might have served as inspiration for these drawings. The names of the animals included are listed at the bottom of the page. Students should write the letter of each animal on the grid next to its name at the bottom of the page. Are students certain the animals living in this region today would have existed in Moche times? What factors have contributed to their ongoing survival and/or extinction?

Activity

The Moche of Peru were the subject of the September 1993 edition of *Faces: A Magazine about People.* In that issue Moche scholar Donna McClelland wrote an article entitled "A Wonderful World of Animals" in which she introduced creatures depicted in Moche art. An adaptation of her story is given as part of **Handout GROWING UP AS A MOCHE CHILD.** Students will read the story in the handout, writing the correct animal name from the list on the left side of the page in each blank in the story. On the **Handout THE WORLD OF MOCHE ANIMALS** four blocks on the grid are left blank for students to draw in their own interpretation of the animal or place. (The same animals are illustrated in the handouts. The teacher's key applies to both handouts.)

To enhance this exercise, students can draw or locate drawings or photographs of the same animals in order to compare them to Moche depictions.



Activity

Using the rollout drawings provided, have students look at the many people surrounded by or depicted as anthropomorphic animals. In many other illustrations their clothing and headgear have animals incorporated into the design. Have students hypothesize why, for instance, one would wear a belt with a serpent's head at its end, why a warrior's headdress would feature a vicious feline as a component, and why people going off to hunt or to fight might have had an affinity toward specific animals.

Divide the class into groups of about twelve students each. These groups will compose collaborative poems after discussing the following introduction to the activity:

"With no written record, there are no known examples of Moche poetry. Each of you will contribute to a group poem. Consider yourself to be a Moche warrior or hunter. Compose a line that includes the name of an animal who will join you or become a part of your clothing, or who would become part of you. Include, also, the significance of your choice."

A combination of the contributed lines will form a collaborative poem under a heading or first line such as

> "I am a Moche warrior going off to battle."

And the poem might continue:

> "I will wear a headdress of swallow feathers and like the swallow, I will dart so swiftly that no one will catch me.
> When I creep as silently as the sleek jaguar my enemy will not know that I am approaching.
> The hard shell of a crab will serve as protection from the darts that will be thrown at me.
> On my banner a fox will lead our way as I will use its cunning to lead me.
> As a spider ensnares victims with his web, so I will envelop my enemy with my rope and lead him to his fate."

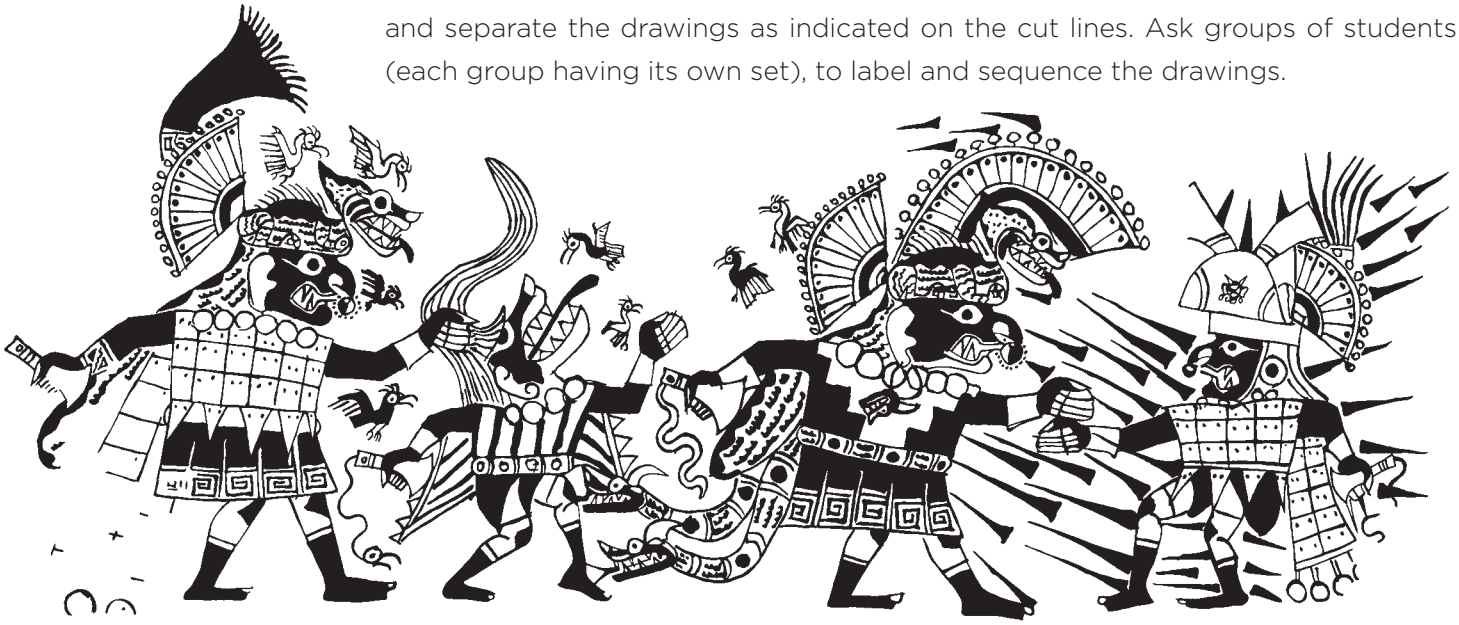
For an extension of this activity individual students can put the subject into contemporary terms and write about him- or herself and animals of influence.

3. Confrontation and Conflict among the Moche

A significant body of Moche art (more than sixty percent) deals with the ceremony and ritual of combat and the capture of prisoners. One-on-one contests were typical, with the apparent purpose being the taking of prisoners and their eventual sacrifice. Although the iconography includes seemingly mythical portrayals, we know that Moche artists were actually painting their history. As archaeologists investigate burial sites they find there is correlation between the burials and painted scenes on ceramics. Often people had been buried with masks, ornaments, and face and body paint just as figures were depicted on ceramics. As archaeologist and Moche scholar Christopher B. Donnan says in the video accompanying the exhibition, "...what we see in Moche art is real. The people actually dressed like that, they participated in those ceremonies exactly the way they are portrayed in the art."

Activity

To aid in understanding the actions depicted in the following drawings, teachers should read their short descriptions before presenting them to the students. You can duplicate **Handout MOCHE WARFARE** (eliminating the letters A, B, C, or D), and separate the drawings as indicated on the cut lines. Ask groups of students (each group having its own set), to label and sequence the drawings.



Combat with anthropomorphized sea urchin. Drawing by Donna McClelland. From Moche ceramic vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X86.4934

Activity (cont.)

- **Drawing A** What is depicted in this drawing? How would you describe the warriors?
  (Warriors are fighting one-on-one with their enemy. They are recognized by their face paint, jewelry, headdress, helmet, combat weapons, etc.)
- **Drawing B** What are the two figures on the far right doing? How did the artist depict the defeated enemies? What do all these actions mean?
  (Only rarely is it clear that one or more of the combatants were actually killed. Normally only the vanquishing of the enemy is shown. Defeating an enemy involved hitting the opponent on the head or upper body with the war club. Defeat is indicated by the enemy receiving such a blow, bleeding profusely from his nose, losing his headdress and possibly other parts of his attire, or by the victor grasping his hair, removing his nose ornament or weapon bundle, or slapping his face.)
- **Drawing C** What does this scene depict? Why do you think this? What do you think the jagged design at the base of the drawing represents?
  (The captives were led in a single-file procession to a place where they appear to have been formally arraigned before a high status individual. The jagged design represents the rugged terrain.)
- **Drawing D** What is shown in this drawing? How do you know this? Are the differences in the people's dress significant?
  (Following arraignment there was a ceremony is which the prisoners were sacrificed by having their throats cut and their blood consumed by priests and their attendants. Differences in the dress of the figures may denote rank and possibly membership in a different group.)

Sacrifice ceremony.
Drawing by Donna McClelland.
From Moche ceramic vessel,
north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E.
Museo Arquelógico
Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima

Activity

After students consider confrontation, conflict, and war among the Moche, they should discuss warring among other peoples, both historical and contemporary. The Moche fought one-on-one. How does this compare to warfare in the Middle Ages, for example, and to combat today? Let students discuss the possible feelings and values of those who were or are involved, both directly and indirectly. Face-to-face combat, for example, personalizes warfare as opposed to bombing from above or launching a missile from a great distance. Does this elicit a different set of feelings? Is life more valued in one situation over the other? Can students make any general statements as to the purposes of war? Are wars ever justified?

Warrior combat.
Drawing by Donna McClelland.
From Moche ceramic vessel,
north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E.
Museo Arquelógico
Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima

Activity

Students can investigate how artists in more recent times have portrayed war. Of particular interest and variety are Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* painting (1937) on the horrors of the Spanish Civil War, the early nineteenth-century prints of Francisco Goya such as *Desatres de la Guerra (The Disasters of War,* 1810–1820), the works done by "Special Artists" who sketched during the conflict on the actual battlefields of the Civil War, and the World War II cartoons of Bill Mauldin.

Useful Readings

Alva, Walter
1988 "Discovering the New World's Richest Unlooted Tomb." *National Geographic* 174 (4): 510–549.

Donnan, Christopher B.
1988 "Iconography of the Moche: Unraveling the Mystery of the Warrior Priest." *National Geographic* 174 (4): 551–555.
1993 *The Royal Tombs of Sipan*. Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

Donnan, Christopher B., and Donna McClelland
1999 *Moche Fineline Painting: Its Evolution and Its Artists*. Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

Quick, Betsy D., and Lyn Avins
1993 *Royal Tombs of Sipan: A Curriculum Resource Unit.* Los Angeles UCLA: Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

Photograph Captions

Handout MOCHE CERAMIC VESSELS

A. Moche fineline painted vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. H: 14.5 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X86.3854

B. Moche fineline painted vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. H: 26.6 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X88.800

C. Moche fineline painted vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. H: 23 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X86.3807

D. Moche fineline painted vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. H: 26.2 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X86.3922

E. Moche fineline painted vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. H: 23.1 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X86.3748

F. Moche fineline painted vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. H: 17.7 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X86.3737

Handout MOCHE VISUAL GRAMMAR

Moche fineline painted vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X86.3934. Drawing by Donna McClelland

Photograph Captions (continued)

Handout MOCHE VISUAL GRAMMAR

Moche fineline painted vessel, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Lucas Jr. X86.3934. Drawing by Donna McClelland

Handout MOCHE VISUAL GRAMMAR, FURTHER STUDY

Drawing by Donna McClelland. From Moche fineline painted vessels, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. Private Collection

Handout MOCHE WARFARE

Drawing by Donna McClelland. From Moche fineline painted vessels, north coast Peru. 100–800 C.E. Ceramic. Private Collection

Note to Teachers:

This lesson is part of the curricular materials developed to accompany the exhibition ***Intersections: World Arts, Local Lives***. Although this and companion lessons are self-contained, each will be enhanced when used in conjunction with others in this resource. Addressing several lessons within each unit will facilitate the incorporation of the study of world arts and cultures into your curriculum.

The lesson is based on works in the second section of the exhibition called Art and Knowledge. In this gallery works are introduced that served to communicate knowledge and a sense of history. See "Unit Two—Art and Knowledge" for an introductory statement on the unit, along with some provocative "Questions for Thought," and suggestions that will inspire the students to relate the unit to their own lives.

Images of objects to be shown to students may be printed as handouts (from within each lesson), viewed online at the ***Intersections*** web link http://collections.fowler.ucla.edu, or downloaded from the curriculum page on our website.

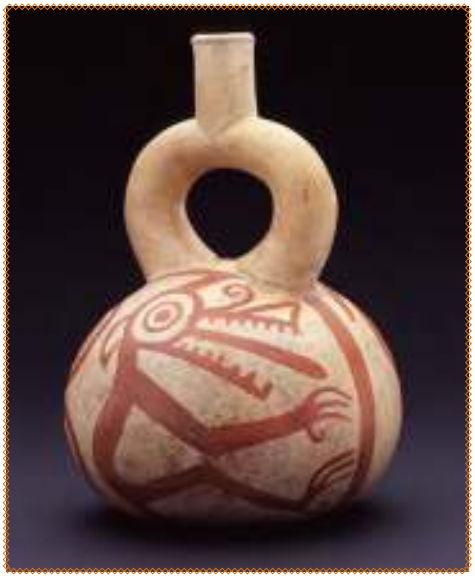
In this unit the topics and lessons are

Lesson 5: Painting History: Fineline Painted Vessels of the Moche, Pre-Columbian Peru
Lesson 6: Memory and Cosmology: Mother of the Band: The Natan Drum, Ghana
Lesson 7: Memory and Cosmology: Creator/ Ancestors: The Wawilak Sisters Bark Painting, Australia
Lesson 8: Memory and Cosmology: Cacao and a Ballplayer: Maya Ceramic Vessel, Mexico
Lesson 9: Proclaiming Heritage: Canoes, Carvings, and the Austronesian World
Lesson 10: Proclaiming Knowledge: Teaching about the Spirit World: Katsina Traditions, Southwest U.S.
Lesson 11: Proclaiming Knowledge: Education as Entertainment: Asian Puppetry, Burma

Unit 2

Handout: MOCHE CERAMIC VESSELS

A



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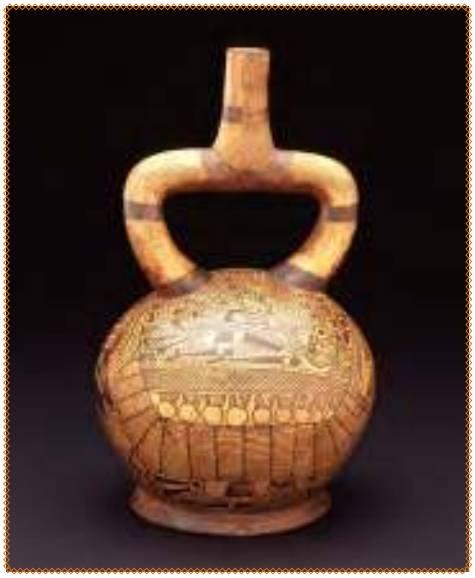

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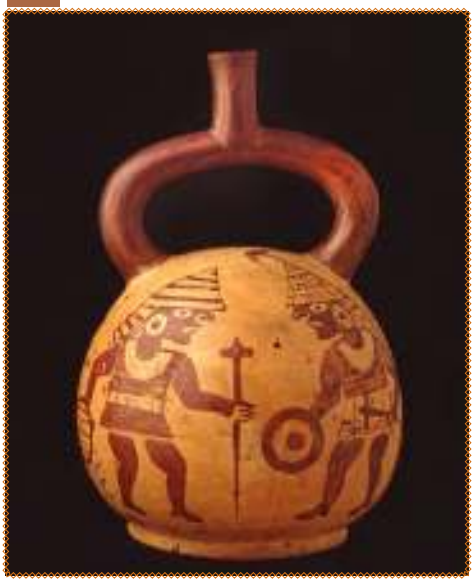

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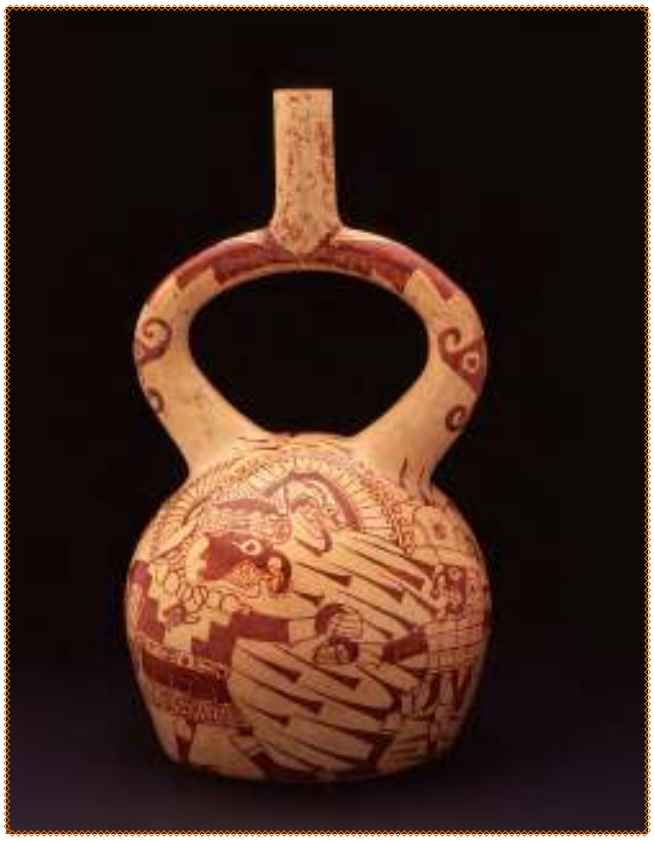
Unit 2

Handout: MOCHE VISUAL GRAMMAR



Handout: MOCHE VISUAL GRAMMAR, FURTHER STUDY

Unit 2

Handout: THE WORLD OF MOCHE ANIMALS

FOR THE STUDENT

Word Bank:

centipedes
dragonflies
Muscovy duck
bonitos
pelican
crayfish
lizards
llamas
crabs
sea lions
wildcat
condor
owl
rays
deer
fox

1._____

2._____

3. dragonfly

4._____

5._____

6. condor

7._____

8._____

9._____

10._____

11._____

12. owl

13. centipede

14._____

15._____

16._____

Handout: THE WORLD OF MOCHE ANIMALS

FOR THE TEACHER

Word Bank:

centipedes
dragonflies
Muscovy duck
bonitos
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crayfish
lizards
llamas
crabs
sea lions
wildcat
condor
owl
rays
deer
fox

1. bonito

2. wildcat

3. dragonfly

4. ray

5. llama

6. condor

7. Muscovy duck

8. pelican

9. lizard

10. crayfish

11. sea lion

12. owl

13. centipede

14. crab

15. fox

16. deer

Unit 2

Handout: GROWING UP AS A MOCHE CHILD

FOR THE STUDENT

Word Bank:

centipedes
dragonflies
Muscovy ducks
bonitos
pelican
crayfish
lizards
llamas
crabs
sea lions
wildcat
condor
owl
rays
deer
fox

The Moche occupied the dry coastal plains of northern Peru. They lived in lush river valleys with the barren desert on either side. The rivers flowed from the towering Andes in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west. Because some of these areas are drier than others or higher above sea level, a wide variety of animals lived in the region.

Imagine that you are a Moche girl or boy living a long time ago. If you lived on the coast near the sea you were able to eat a lot of fish and other marine life. That is because a cold ocean current that wells up in Antarctica flows north along the Peruvian coast. The current is rich in nutrients for the fish. You may have paddled a reed boat out into the ocean to catch _____, _____, or _____. As you walked along the beach to a rocky cove, some of the sounds you heard were from a group of barking _____ and the call of noisy sea birds as they were swooping and diving. A _____ is nesting on the sea rocks.

If you lived in the river valleys you saw corn, beans, squash, and peanuts growing. As _____ came out in the evening they helped protect the crops by searching for mice in the fields. There was more food to be found in the irrigation ditches where you caught tasty _____ for the next meal. The cool water felt good in the hot sun. _____ hovered near the water, and frogs hid to get out of the sun. The _____ _____ that your family raised as a food source paddled around in the water eating many insect pests.

High in the sky a giant _____ soared above you in the warm updrafts of air from the desert. _____ darted away to hide from the condor and a circling hawk. As you went out to hunt for a _____ or a ____, you might spy a _____ watching you from behind bushes. You must be extra careful of _____, for their bite can be very painful. You often saw _____, valued not only for food but also for their wool and for their ability to carry heavy loads.

Unit 2

Handout: GROWING UP AS A MOCHE CHILD

FOR THE TEACHER

Word Bank:

centipedes
dragonflies
Muscovy ducks
bonitos
pelican
crayfish
lizards
llamas
crabs
sea lions
wildcat
condor
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rays
deer
fox

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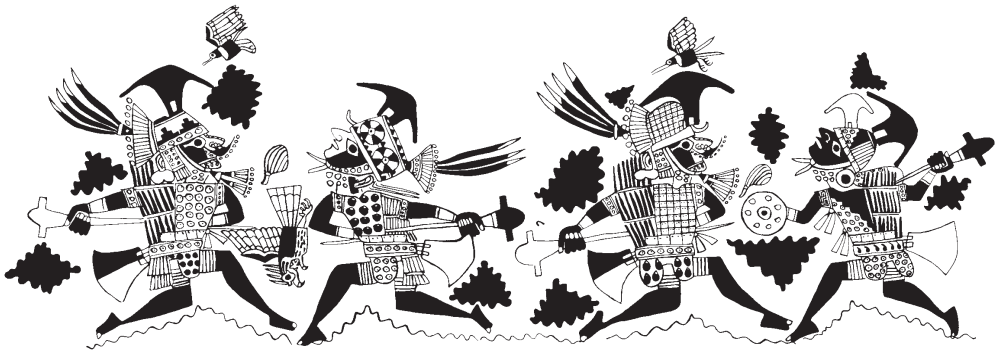
If you lived in the river valleys you saw corn, beans, squash, and peanuts growing. As owls came out in the evening they helped protect the crops by searching for mice in the fields. There was more food to be found in the irrigation ditches where you caught tasty crayfish for the next meal. The cool water felt good in the hot sun. Dragonflies hovered near the water, and frogs hid to get out of the sun. The Muscovy ducks that your family raised as a food source paddled around in the water eating many insect pests.

High in the sky a giant condor soared above you in the warm updrafts of air from the desert. Lizards darted away to hide from the condor and a circling hawk. As you went out to hunt for a deer or a fox, you might spy a wildcat watching you from behind bushes. You must be extra careful of centipedes, for their bite can be very painful. You often saw llamas, valued not only for food but also for their wool and for their ability to carry heavy loads.

Handout: MOCHE WARFARE

A



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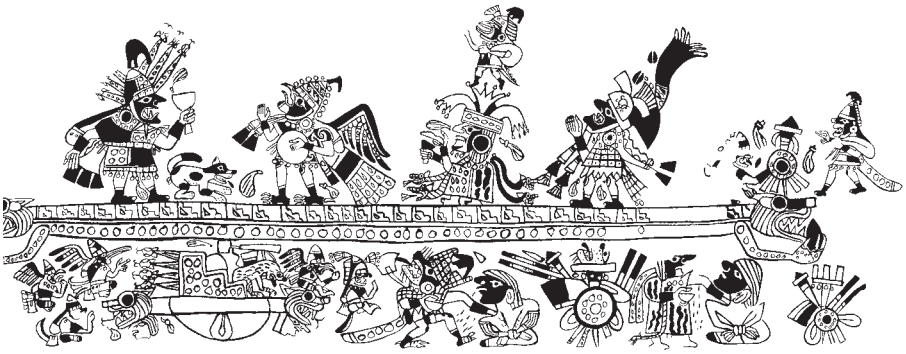


LESSON 6: MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY

Mother of the Band: The Ntan Drum, Ghana

Fig. 2.2

Osei Bonsu (Kumase, Ghana, 1900-1977). Ntan drum, Abofo, Ghana, 1935. Wood pigment, hide. H: 117 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Donald Suggs. X78.136.

Unit 2

LESSON 6: MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY
Mother of the Band: The Ntan Drum, Ghana

Lesson Summary and Objectives

Students study the iconography of a Ghanaian drum and investigate its meanings in terms of the history and cultural traditions of Ghana. As students "read" the drum, they come to understand the verbal/visual messages of the drum's iconography. Activities also include creative writing and problem solving as students work with the imagery on the drum. Students will

- Study the many images on a Ghanaian drum and investigate their multiple meanings.
- Explore Akan oral literature and proverbs through creative writing activities.
- Collect, document, and then use examples of proverbial language in conversation and creative writing.

Background Information

At social and festive gatherings in Ghana, as in many parts of the world, popular bands entertain their audiences with familiar music. Particularly popular in the 1930s and 1940s were Ntan bands, voluntary associations that provided music for national and community festivals and at weddings and funerals. Central to each group was a large drum embellished with a rich variety of images. These images (and the meanings implied) boasted of the band's talents, called attention to the natural environment and material culture of the people, and reminded listeners of community values and proper behavior. In the Ntan drum exhibited in *Memory and Cosmology*, the importance of the band is indicated by the elephant base that supports the drum, suggesting its important social role as supporter of the community's music.

Ntan drums functioned both as musical instruments and as objects to be read, with visual references to proverbial language. For the Asante and other Akan peoples, visual images illustrate proverbs or other verbal expressions such as praise names, jokes, insults, riddles, boasts, and even longer folktales. The repertoire of imagery includes flora and fauna, objects of daily use, and people involved in social, religious, and political interactions. When used as unique verbal/visual messages, these images define acceptable modes of behavior and underscore essential truths and values of society. This intersection of word and image is essential in Akan art and exemplifies an unbreakable link between art and thought.

About the Artist

The Ntan drum shown in the exhibition is one of many carved by famed Asante artist, Osei Bonsu (1900–1977). The artist's father was a drummer and a carver, and his son, Osei Bonsu, practiced both arts while still very young. By his teens, he was already carving works that had been commissioned by chiefs in the region. Along with his father and an older brother, Bonsu was employed as a research associate and carver by famed British anthropologist Captain R. S. Rattray, whom Bonsu accompanied on research trips among the Asante. Bonsu carved for the court, for popular drumming groups, for colonial administrators, and for tourists, while teaching for many years at a British colonial school and later at the University of Science and Technology. In 1975 he came to the United States for the Festival of American Folklife at the Smithsonian Institution.

Curriculum Connections

1. Hearing and Viewing—The Power of the Ntan Drum

At celebrations and other gatherings, Ntan drum groups provided the musical entertainment, and the imagery on the breasted drums suggested biting social commentary and proverbial wisdom. By "reading" the relief images on such drums we can discern clues to the history of Ghana; by interpreting these images we can also gain knowledge of some of the traditions and social mores of the Akan.

Activity

Have the students study **Handout NTAN DRUM ON ELEPHANT BASE** and **Handout NTAN DRUM WITH QUEEN IMAGE** (featuring another drum [and its drawing] in the Fowler Museum's collection), noting the many carved images on the bodies of the drums. In the classroom, these images can be called out verbally, listed on the board, or sketched by each individual student. A notable feature of an Ntan drum is its protruding female breasts, a reference to motherhood. Indeed some drums feature as many as eight breasts, emphasizing the idea of the drum as "the mother of the group."

Activity

As they study the images carved on the drums, what clues do students notice regarding Ghana's history? After noting the juxtaposition of images of Europeans and Africans on the drum, let students do some research about Ghana or you may give them the following relevant facts:

- Agriculture has been the main occupation for hundreds of years.
- People came to the area from many parts of Africa, each with their own lifeways. Many groups migrating from the north were Muslim.
- Around 1700, the Asante Kingdom rose to power, led by chief Osei Tutu, and his powerful priest Okomfo Anokye.
- Portuguese arrived in 1471, joined over the following 300 years by Europeans from other countries. They came to colonize and trade in gold, ivory, and slaves.
- Britain remained in control after other European forces left. They made the Gold Coast a crown colony in 1874.
- In 1957 the country became the first country in Africa to gain independence. Its name changed from the Gold Coast to Ghana.
- Kwame Nkrumah led the country, and was proclaimed "President for Life." During his tenure a Preventive Detention Act led to the arrest of many critics. A military coup brought the end to Nkrumah's government. Today, however, Nkrumah is held in great regard by most Ghanaians, who are respectful of his leadership in the independence movement.
- Subsequent coups led to repeated changes in government, including periods of democratic rule and military dictatorships. Today Ghana is one of the strongest and most stable democracies in the world.
- Ghana has been a producer of gold for many centuries and today boasts one of the largest and richest reserves of gold in the world.
- Traditions are ongoing and change over time; new traditions are always being invented.

LESSON 6: MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY

Mother of the Band: The Ntan Drum, Ghana

Ntan drum. Fante peoples, Ghana. Carved ca. 1920. Wood, hide, pigment. H: 94 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Clayre and Jay Haft. X85.321.

Activity

Let students speculate on the significance of some of the images, ask questions, and offer answers. For these activities, use **Handout NTAN DRUM WITH QUEEN IMAGE.**

- Younger students can locate (and count) birds, animals, and sea creatures depicted. Do the same with the various human figures carved on the drum, as well as implements students can identify (i.e., scissors, saw, coffee pot). These can be counted or classified by using a different colored pencil or crayon to indicate a category. Let them select an image from their chosen categories, and incorporate it in a drum or other musical instrument of their design. After students draw their instruments, post them for all to see.

- Older students will gather more subtle information as they survey the images and question their significance. The large figure on one drum is a representation of Queen Victoria with her crown, western-style dress, and jewelry. On her left, seated under an umbrella, is an Akan chief. He wears a crown, as does Victoria, but is dressed in traditional kente cloth. The Akan chief is significantly smaller than the British queen. (What might the carver be saying with the size difference?) Surrounding the queen are members of the British Colonial Native Authority Police wearing traditional uniforms and red fezzes, and carrying items associated with their authority: bugle, sword, musket, handcuffs, key, and the British flag. Traditional court officials around the chief carry an umbrella with bird finial, a sword, a horn, the linguist staff (symbol of his office), and a stool. They are dressed in shirts and shorts rather than indigenous dress but what they carry are Akan signs of office.

- The British flag also appears on a building that resembles a Christian church but, since churches rarely flew flags, this probably represents a coastal fort that was used as a prison. There are also many representations of European artifacts.

2. Proverbs and the Verbal/Visual Nexus

Many of the other motifs on the drums are drawn from the local animal world and announce much more than the animals' presence in the environment. They serve to remind the band members and their audiences of the vast store of oral literature that uses metaphors to impart wisdom.

Activity

Using the rollout drawings (**Handout NTAN DRUM ON ELEPHANT BASE** and **Handout NTAN DRUM WITH QUEEN IMAGE**), students will identify specific images and associate them with Akan proverbs. They may complete **Handout AKAN PROVERBIAL WISDOM** as follows:

- Before students begin the exercise, have them fold back each page on the dotted line between columns 4 and 5 to conceal the explanation of the expressions. Later they can compare their explanations with those in column 5.
- The first column provides verbal descriptions of some of the motifs seen on the drums.
- In the second column students will draw these motifs using the rollout drawings as a reference.
- Students should read the proverb or expression associated with each image in the third column and try to figure them out.
- In the fourth column, they will give their interpretation of the saying.
- Students may read explanations of the proverbs in the fifth column (drawn from published research by Doran H. Ross, as cited in the bibliography).

Activity

Begin a collection of proverbs already familiar to, or researched by students. Selecting from the list, students should represent the proverb with a motif as the Akan peoples do. Then develop a worksheet modeled after the one given for students' collected proverbs and distribute it to class members to solve. Students should be encouraged to use these proverbial expressions, as well as those of fellow class members, in their creative writing and oral speech.

Activity

Students may collect proverbs that compare animal behavior to that of humans, as do many of the Akan proverbs cited above.

LESSON 6: MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY
Mother of the Band: The Ntan Drum, Ghana

Useful Readings

Cole, Herbert M., and Doran H. Ross
1977 *The Arts of Ghana*. Los Angeles: UCLA Museum of Cultural History.

DjeDje, Jacqueline Cogdell, ed.
1999 *Turn Up the Volume: A Celebration of African Music.* Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

Ross, Doran H.
1984 "The Art of Osei Bonsu." *African Arts* 17 (2): 28–40, 90.
1988 "Queen Victoria for Twenty Pounds: The Iconography of a Breasted Drum from Southern Ghana." *Art Journal* 47 (2): 114-120

Photograph Captions

Handout NTAN DRUM ON ELEPHANT BASE

Osei Bonsu (Kumase, Ghana, 1900-1977). Ntan drum, Abofo, Ghana, 1935. Wood, pigment, hide. H: 117 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Donald Suggs. X78.136

Handout NTAN DRUM WITH QUEEN IMAGE

Ntan drum. Fante peoples, Ghana. Circa 1920. Wood, hide, pigment. H: 94 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Clayre and Jay Haft. X85.321

Unit 2

LESSON 6: MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY
Mother of the Band: The Ntan Drum, Ghana

Note to Teachers:

This lesson is part of the curricular materials developed to accompany the exhibition ***Intersections: World Arts, Local Lives***. Although this and companion lessons are self-contained, each will be enhanced when used in conjunction with others in this resource. Addressing several lessons within each unit will facilitate the incorporation of the study of world arts and cultures into your curriculum.

The lesson is based on works in the second section of the exhibition called Art and Knowledge. In this gallery works are introduced that served to communicate knowledge and a sense of history. See "Unit Two—Art and Knowledge" for an introductory statement on the unit, along with some provocative "Questions for Thought," and suggestions that will inspire the students to relate the unit to their own lives.

Images of objects to be shown to students may be printed as handouts (from within each lesson), viewed online at the ***Intersections*** web link http://collections.fowler.ucla.edu, or downloaded from the curriculum page on our website.

In this unit the topics and lessons are

Lesson 5: Painting History: Fineline Painted Vessels of the Moche, Pre-Columbian Peru

Lesson 6: Memory and Cosmology: Mother of the Band: The Ntan Drum, Ghana

Lesson 7: Memory and Cosmology: Creator/Ancestors: The Wawilak Sisters Bark Painting, Australia

Lesson 8: Memory and Cosmology: Cacao and a Ballplayer: Maya Ceramic Vessel, Mexico

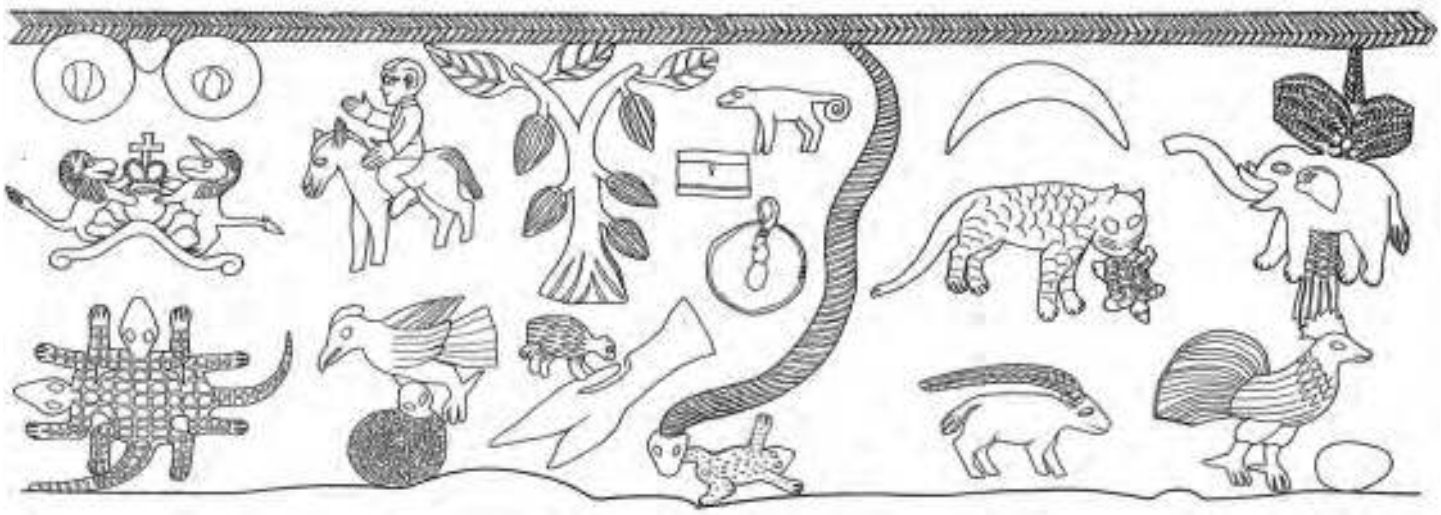
Lesson 9: Proclaiming Heritage: Canoes, Carvings, and the Austronesian World

Lesson 10: Proclaiming Knowledge: Teaching about the Spirit World: Katsina Traditions, Southwest U.S.

Lesson 11: Proclaiming Knowledge: Education as Entertainment: Asian Puppetry, Burma

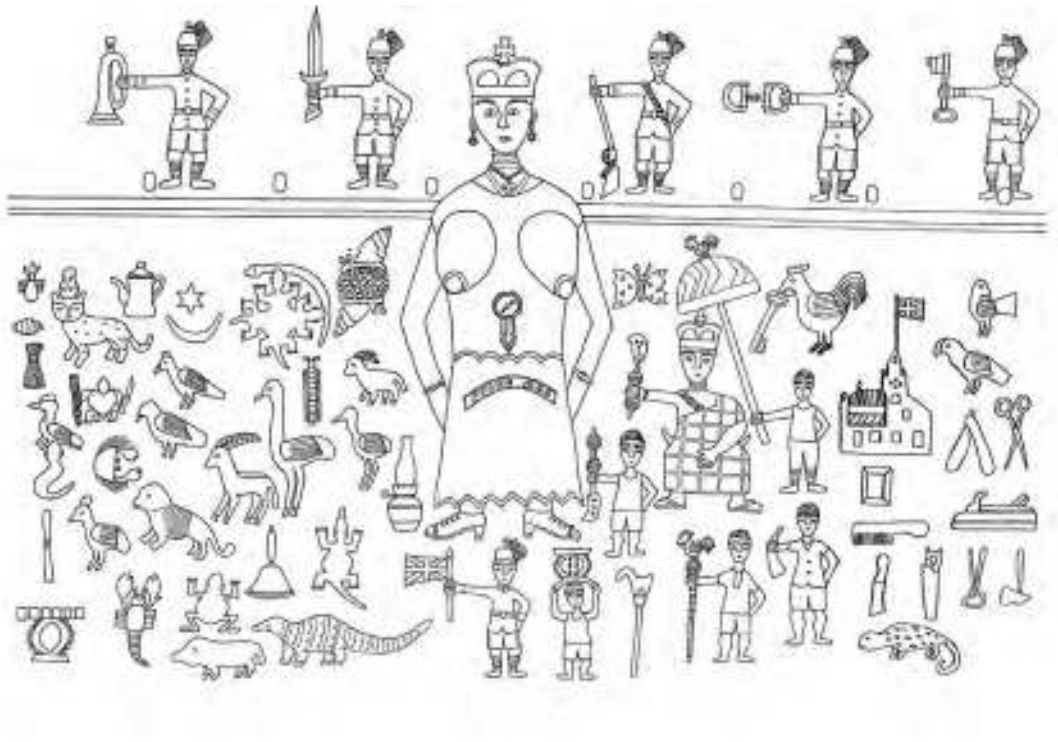
Unit 2

Handout:
NTAN DRUM ON ELEPHANT BASE



Unit 2

Handout:
NTAN DRUM WITH QUEEN IMAGE



Handout: AKAN PROVERBIAL WISDOM

Motif	Student's Drawing	Akan Proverb	Student's Explanation	Scholarly Explanation
Star and moon		"Although the moon is brightest, the star is more constant."		The Akan peoples value permanence over changing fortune, reliability over what is flashy but undependable.
Two crocodiles with separate heads, tails, and legs, but a common body		"Bellies mixed, crocodiles mixed say: 'let a bit wash down your throat, let a bit wash down my throat, and all will meet in one stomach.'"		A reference to two brothers who are said to "share the same stomach." Whatever one eats benefits the other—self-interests should be sacrificed for the common good.
Hornbill in the grasp of a snake		"By waiting patiently at one spot on the ground, the puff adder was able to catch the hornbill for lunch."		With ingenuity and patience, one can do the impossible.
Sankofa bird with its head facing backward		"Pick it up if it falls behind."		This Sankofa bird, with its head turned back, reminds us that mistakes can always be corrected and we can learn from the past to improve the future.
Chameleon and chest		"The chameleon's ability to change colors affects the clothes he is wearing, not those in his box."		There are some things a person cannot change.

Handout: AKAN PROVERBIAL WISDOM

Motif	Student's Drawing	Akan Proverb	Student's Explanation	Scholarly Explanation
Bird with a long neck		"Even if a bird has a long neck, he uses it to eat on his side of the river and not on the other."		This image and proverb warn against impinging on another's domain. Land rights are a major economic and political concern in Akan life.
Frog		"The length of a frog can only be determined after its death."		The frog's length is a metaphor for the achievements of an individual, which are often fully appreciated only after death.
Antelope with long horns		"Had I known is always at last."		This proverb and image is a reminder of the futility of hindsight.
Elephant with palm tree on its back		"Only the elephant can uproot the palm tree."		This expression and image asserts the superiority of the animal world over that of the plant and the superiority of one chief over its rivals.
Butterfly		"If the butterfly does not like to drink, why is it always found on the path to palm wine?"		The Akan use the insect as a comparison to a person who denies that he drinks, but is always found in bars. Fun is being made of a person who says one thing and does another.

Unit 2

LESSON 7: MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY

Creator/Ancestors: The Wawilak Sisters Bark Painting, Australia

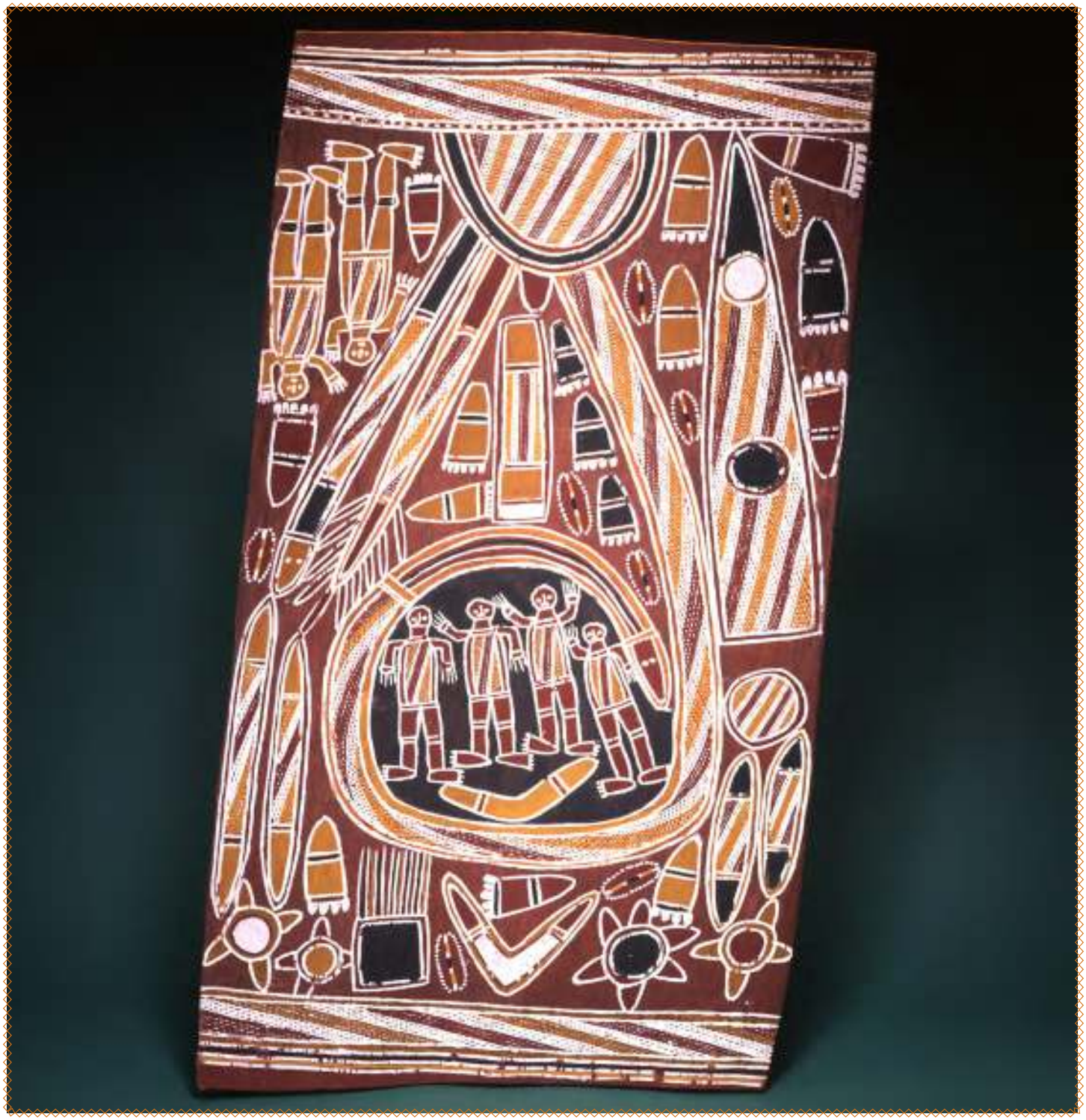


Fig. 2.3

Dawidi (Milingimbi, Arnhem Land, Northern Australia, 1921-1970). *The Wawilak Sisters*, 1960s. Bark, pigment. H: 94 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Museum Purchase. X67.7.

Unit 2

LESSON 7: MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY

Creator/Ancestors: The Wawilak Sisters Bark Painting, Australia

Lesson Summary and Objectives

Study of a bark painting produced in the 1960s introduces students to Aboriginal peoples of Australia and to their histories as revealed through art. The students will investigate and interpret Australian creation stories and use the featured bark painting to explore the changing roles of the arts in Australia, especially as related to issues of women, commerce, and ritual. Students will

- Explore the history of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia through a study of their creation stories.
- Consider the changing roles of women, commerce, and ritual through the lens of bark paintings and then create their own "bark" paintings as documents of their lives.
- Discuss and study areas of conflict between immigrants and native peoples of a country.
- Compare and consider the many non-written ways that cultures transmit a sense of history and belief.
- Express points of view about the experiences of European migration into Australia, considering multiple perspectives.

Background Information

Visual works of art often act as "story starters." They remind the viewer of the traditional stories that have been retold over the generations and they stimulate the telling and retelling of these stories in the present.

Before 1930 the Aboriginal peoples of Arnhem Land in northern Australia painted designs only on the interiors of bark dwellings and on men's bodies. The designs were sacred symbols that linked a clan's origin stories to the rights of its members to use particular lands.

In the 1930s Christian missions were established and missionaries encouraged the production of indigenous art forms, which were then sold or given to Australian museums. In the 1950s this effort expanded considerably with missions acting as art dealers, paying cash for paintings, and creating professional "artists" where none had previously existed. Paintings for the first time were labeled as to their authenticity and an international art market for the paintings grew. Painters were encouraged to create designs that "had a story" and would appeal aesthetically to non-Aboriginal buyers. They ultimately retained control over what they chose to paint, however, and more importantly, how much (if any) of the sacred knowledge associated with the designs they chose to reveal.

LESSON 7: MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY

Creator/Ancestors: The Wawilak Sisters Bark Painting, Australia

About the Artist

Dawidi Djulwarak (1921–1970) produced this bark painting in the 1960s. Like many other Aboriginal painters, he was encouraged in his art endeavors by Christian missionaries who then acted as dealers to sell the artist's work. They authenticated the paintings, labeling them with the artist's bio and sometimes with information about the stories told. In earlier periods, art was typically executed by groups of painters and no one person could designate himself (artists were typically men) as the creator of the artwork. This bark painting was purchased by the Fowler Museum in 1967.

Curriculum Connections

1. The Dreamtime

The Aboriginal peoples of Australia tell of a time when the Ancestor Spirits formed the land, the waters, the sky, and all they contained. The Spirits came to Earth and gave names to all these geographical features and to all the creatures formed therein. This was the time during which all things were created—a time before time.

As they traveled across the land, Ancestor Spirits created stars, rivers, creeks, forests, hills, and other landscapes. At the end of this time—the Dreamtime—the Spirits changed into these features and into all the creatures they named. Still powerful, the Spirits are present today in these forms and, as in ages past, creation stories of the ancestors are told. They tell of the continent's many animals and of ancestral beings like the Wawilak Sisters who helped create and name the universe, established the rainy and dry seasons, and gave the people their law.

Activity

Writing creation stories can take many forms and students will appreciate the diversity as they research creation stories of a wide variety of peoples. Although most were communicated orally, they are now also in written form. Compare stories of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. In their readings students should look for different explanations for the origin of specific animals and/or natural phenomena.

Activity

Students should look at pictures and learn characteristics of Australia's wide variety of animals—many unique to the continent. They will use the information to tell tales of how the creatures came to be. The kangaroo, wallaby, koala bear, bandicoot, bush-tailed opossum, duck-billed platypus, emu, echidna, kookaburra, crocodile and various spiders, lizards, snakes, and sea creatures would all be fair subjects.

Activity

Indigenous peoples of Australia also transmit their stories in songs and dances, and by painting on the ground, rock walls, canvas, their bodies, and like our example, pieces of bark. Can students interpret a story in one of these media?

The drawing of the Wawilak sisters in *Memory and Cosmology* **(fig. 2.3)** was painted on bark. To make this and similar works, Aboriginal artists took sheets of bark from trees and removed thin layers that they cured by fire and flattened with weights for many days. The paints they used were basic earth pigments of red, black, yellow, and white, and these were mixed with fixatives (egg yolk, honey, bees' wax and flower extracts). They made brushes from strips of bark or green twigs that were then whittled or chewed into shape to make the bristles.

To make simulated bark paintings, students may use crumpled brown wrapping paper, softened by dipping in water, to imitate bark. Students may choose to use animals in their stories and should notice that Aboriginal artists often use crosshatching and linear designs to fill the simply outlined animal shapes. Sometimes the skeleton or a baby animal is drawn inside the animal outline.

Activity

Retelling history assures Aboriginal peoples that their ancient past has ties to today and their cultural heritage will be made known to future generations. Consider paintings, song, and dance as you compare the efficacy of these arts with the means by which our students may learn of and transmit their history.

Which of the arts do students consider to be most effective as mnemonic devices? Have them recall if they have ever been helped to learn something through a song or a rhyming game. What is meant by the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words?" Do they agree? Discuss what criteria should be met to make an oral

presentation successful. Do the same for a written narrative and for visual and performing art presentations.

2. Land Rights

While naming the land, Ancestor Spirits established relationships among individuals and groups, and granted humans the rights to both the land and the bark paintings that told the stories of the relationships. Indeed, paintings have helped establish Aboriginal claims to land and sacred sites, and have been officially recognized as evidence in land claim suits. Since the people were nomadic their territorial boundaries were not spelled out. Landforms and natural boundaries—including rivers, hills, and rock formations—served as property boundaries. The names of these features, as well as the knowledge of which territory belonged to which person or group, was information that parents expressed to their children, and group elders communicated to the younger generation, thus perpetuating the creation stories and the rights to sacred sites. It is important to remember that the original settlers comprised hundreds of different groups and though they shared much, each had beliefs, traditions, and Dreamtime stories specific to them.

Students can imagine how people new to an area would see a hill as an ordinary hill and a lake merely as a body of water. To Aboriginal peoples these and other geographic features were sacred and have meaningful histories belonging to groups with special knowledge of them. These sacred sites and boundaries were threatened as the region was colonized by Europeans who had their own interests, such as the need to procure grazing lands, the search for mineral rights, and the access to connecting roads.

Activity

Talk with the students about the meaning of "sacred" and what they, or others they know, would regard as sacred. Religious objects and buildings will probably be addressed in their discussion. Then have them consider likely responses to the planned destruction of a cathedral to make way for a new movie complex, the cutting down of a "sacred" tree to give access to a desired superhighway or a needed school, or moving a burial ground for a planned shopping center.

LESSON 7: MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY

Creator/Ancestors: The Wawilak Sisters Bark Painting, Australia

Activity

Native Americans and other groups on this and other continents have encountered similar conflicts. Locally, ancient burial grounds have been discovered to be in the way of construction of new schools, museum buildings, and commercial centers. Students can look up information about local events and document the methods used to address the conflicts and the resolutions. Native Americans in and around Los Angeles have fought to retain the sites as part of their cultural history.

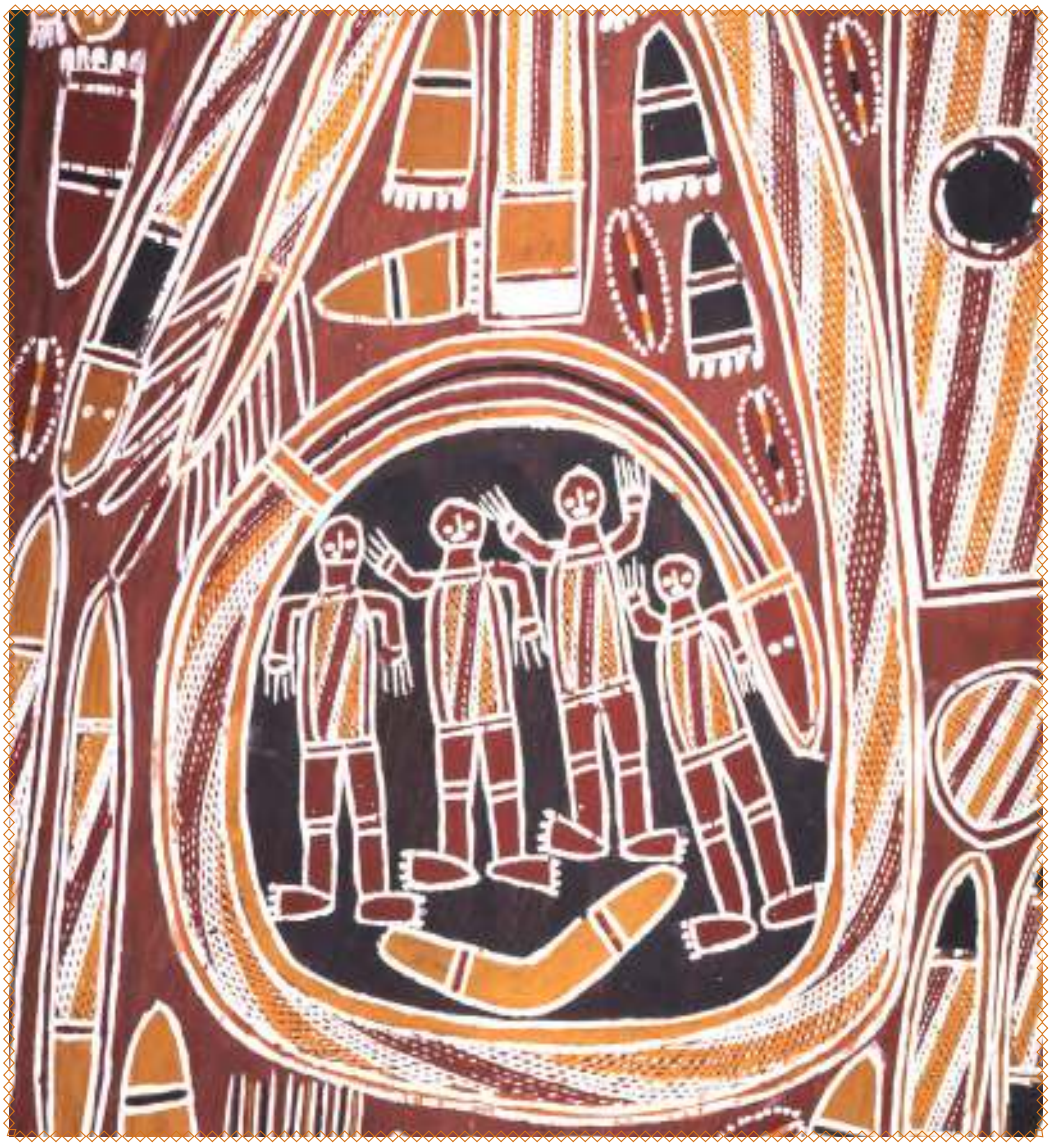


Fig. 2.3 (detail)
Dawidi
(Milingimbi, Arnhem Land, Northern Australia, 1921–1970).
The Wawilak Sisters, 1960s.
Bark, pigment. H: 94 cm.
Fowler Museum at UCLA.
Museum Purchase. X67.7.

3. Changing Roles

Using the brief chronology included here students may discuss the changing roles of the arts in Australia, focusing especially on issues related to women, commerce, and ritual. The history of Europeans in Australia has, of course, impacted the original inhabitants, their lifestyles, traditions, and art. A few pertinent dates are listed in **Handout CHANGING ROLES**.

Activity

Over the period covered in the chronology spelled out in the handout, there were many changes. The following should provide points of discussion among your students.

- **The Role of Women**

  Women traditionally were not allowed to paint on bark paintings, but when, in the 1960s, large orders were placed by businesses catering to tourists, women were encouraged to help meet the widespread demand. Students may investigate the changing roles of women brought about by commercialism and other human-influenced factors such as conflicts and wars, as well as by naturally occurring events.

- **The Role of Commerce**

  Several aspects of the interest in bark paintings merit consideration. Although artworks were a commodity, they were also the means by which the Australian population at large learned about their Aboriginal neighbors, who were often the subject of ridicule and misunderstanding. As the works appeared in museums and galleries the public became better informed of Aboriginal traditions. This was particularly so as stories were written to accompany the paintings. Problems arose when commerce demanded more information for accompanying stories and the artists felt pressure to reveal restricted knowledge. (Ultimately the artists did retain control over what they chose to paint, and more importantly, how much, if any, of the sacred knowledge associated with the designs they would reveal.)

  Have students or their families ever brought back a souvenir from a vacation that led them to learn more about the people who produced it, the techniques or traditions associated with its manufacture or use, or the local geography under which the raw material became available? If possible, have them bring in the object and tell the class stories associated with it.

• The Role of Art

Aboriginal peoples use art as a way to communicate. Their drawings and paintings usually tell a story—a dreaming—important in their lives, and explain why things happen the way they do. With groups of symbols, paintings become an artful map of the Dreamtime and of today, filled with information about ancestral beings, animal life, and landscape features such as water holes, kangaroo tracks, and edible plants. With these symbols, painters make song maps telling the stories of ancestors and the paths they took on their travels. Today's painters, as they tell their stories, also address land rights, the need for environmental protection, and both historic and current political and social issues. The lessons taught via the painted stories are complete with morals.

A group of painters often work collaboratively, painting on large canvases flat on the ground, and as they paint, the images they create appear on canvas as in former times they evolved in sand. While working, painters may listen to stories and sing songs related to the Dreamings.

Let students use their own drawings to show their travels. With symbols that they devise for specific buildings, trees, and other local highlights, they can describe the route from their home to school, or from any familiar location (or room of their home) to another. They should be mindful of landmarks and incidental sites they pass, directions their footprints travel, and anything else one might encounter en route. This teaching tool could be accompanied by a story indicating the importance or significance of any of the locations, such as experiences or people they encounter there, etc.

• The Role of Ritual

Rituals are integral to Aboriginal culture but history has not served to perpetuate many practices. Recount (or have students investigate) some aspects of Australia's history including those listed in the handout that would have affected Aboriginal ritual life.

Aboriginal ritual events, as in the past, offer opportunities for trade, entertainment, socializing, and the transmission of sacred knowledge to the young, especially during the stages of young men's initiations. Older generations transmit values and knowledge through art, songs, dances,

and rituals, thereby connecting the ancient past to living present. Such practices and events take place in remote Aboriginal lands, but also in the larger cities and towns. One of the most important, the Djungguwan, tells the story of the Wawilak sisters. In 2002 it was held for the first time in twenty-five years.

Other peoples throughout the world perpetuate their heritage with tradition-based activities. Students can compare these, including in their study Native American pow-wows still held locally, Hopi Katsinam dances, and Haida potlatch ceremonies, the latter two addressed in the ***Intersections: World Arts, Local Lives*** exhibition.

4. Points of View

Activity

Have students research and write a point-of-view essay about a person's experience coming to Australia from Europe. They should assume the role of a member of government, a settler coming for economic reasons, a missionary coming to teach and "convert the natives," or a convict being banished to this land. Their thoughts can be recorded in the form of a letter to a relative or friend back home. At the same time students should also consider the points of view of Aboriginal peoples whose lifeways were radically altered by encounters with colonizing Europeans.

Unit 2

LESSON 7: MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY
Creator/Ancestors: The Wawilak Sisters Bark Painting, Australia

Useful Readings

Caruana, Wally
2003 *Aboriginal Art.* London: Thames & Hudson.

Finley, Carol
1999 *Aboriginal Art of Australia*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company.

Morphy, Howard
1991 *Ancestral Connections*: *Art and an Aboriginal System of Knowledge*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Note to Teachers:

This lesson is part of the curricular materials developed to accompany the exhibition ***Intersections: World Arts, Local Lives***. Although this and companion lessons are self-contained, each will be enhanced when used in conjunction with others in this resource. Addressing several lessons within each unit will facilitate the incorporation of the study of world arts and cultures into your curriculum.

The lesson is based on works in the second section of the exhibition called *Art and Knowledge.* In this gallery works are introduced that served to make things happen. See "Unit Two—Art and Knowledge" for an introductory statement on the unit, along with some provocative "Questions for Thought," and suggestions that will inspire the students to relate the unit to their own lives.

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In this unit the topics and lessons are

Lesson 5: Painting History: Fineline Painted Vessels of the Moche, Pre-Columbian Peru
Lesson 6: Memory and Cosmology: Mother of the Band: The Natan Drum, Ghana
Lesson 7: Memory and Cosmology: Creator/ Ancestors: The Wawilak Sisters Bark Painting, Australia
Lesson 8: Memory and Cosmology: Cacao and a Ballplayer: Maya Ceramic Vessel, Mexico
Lesson 9: Proclaiming Heritage: Canoes, Carvings, and the Austronesian World
Lesson 10: Proclaiming Knowledge: Teaching about the Spirit World: Katsina Traditions, Southwest U.S.
Lesson 11: Proclaiming Knowledge: Education as Entertainment: Asian Puppetry, Burma

Unit 2

Handout: CHANGING ROLES

1788: Australia replaced the newly independent American colonies as the site for settling British convicts ousted from England. Sydney was founded as a penal colony.

1797: Merino sheep were brought into Australia, requiring large areas of land for grazing.

1838: One of the early Christian missions was established with the aim of "domesticating" Aboriginal children.

1851: The discovery of gold brought more Europeans. They further established many sheep farms and built railroads.

1901: Australia became an independent nation within the British Empire. Aboriginal peoples were denied citizenship and were taken from ancestral homes to remote settlements. Forced assimilation suppressed Aboriginal customs.

1934: A local "arts and craft" industry was created at newly established missions to supply museums and collectors.

1950: The national government sponsored a large immigration program to strengthen the nation's economy.

1950s and 60s: Atomic tests were conducted in desert areas of the continent.

1967: Aboriginal people were given the right to vote.

1960s: Resettlement programs to assimilate Aboriginal groups into the mainstream continued to be sponsored by the government.

1993: The Native Title Act was passed to acknowledge Aboriginal rights over land and water.

Today: The struggle continues for a treaty with non-Aboriginal Australians and for compensation to Aboriginal peoples for the loss of land and livelihood.