

*Discovering the Story:
A City and Its Culture*

ARTIFACT DETECTIVES

A Social Studies Lesson
for Grades 4-8



Mary Louise McLaughlin (1847-1939), The Cincinnati Pottery Club (1879-1890), Frederick Dallas Hamilton Road Pottery (1865-1882), United States (Cincinnati)
Ali Baba Vase, 1880
Gift of the Women's Art Museum Association, 1881.239



Maria Longworth Nichols Storer (The Rookwood Pottery Company)
Aladdin Vase, 1882
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James J. Gardner, 2002.94

The lesson *Artifact Detectives* is based on

Aladdin Vase

by Maria Longworth Nichols Storer

and

Ali Baba Vase

by Mary Louise McLaughlin

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and *Ali Baba Vase* by Mary Louise McLaughlin

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CONCEPT

In this lesson, students will closely examine the Museum's *Ali Baba Vase* and *Aladdin Vase* and in doing so review the definitions of art and artifact. Students will understand the difference between these terms and will be able to decide whether these objects are in fact works of art, artifacts or both. Students will work in collaborative teams to investigate and report on cultures whose artifacts are present at the Cincinnati Art Museum.

The teacher will facilitate students in hands-on applications and study through pre-videoconferencing classroom activities, a videoconference visit with Cincinnati Art Museum Staff, and post-videoconferencing lesson activities.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand and apply their knowledge of the terms *art* and *artifact*.
- Students will learn that historians use artifacts to gather information about people from the past.
- Students will work in collaborative teams to investigate and report on cultures whose artifacts are present at the Cincinnati Art Museum.

"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."

Pablo Picasso

Teacher Preparation

CLASS PERIODS REQUIRED

- 1 (30-50 min.) period for Pre-Lesson Activities
- 1 50-min. class period for Videoconference
- 1-3 (30-50 min.) periods for Post-Lesson Activities
- 1 to 2 (30-50 min.) periods for Art Enrichment Activity (optional)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Refer to [Background Information](#) for more on the *Ali Baba Vase* and the *Aladdin Vase* and the artists who created them. Background Information has been written for teachers to review before the lesson and then share with students.

VIDEO

Share the [ceramics video](#) with your students prior to the videoconference. The video depicts archival film from Rookwood Pottery and an interview with a Museum curator on the two vases. This video is an excellent resource that will help to prepare students for the videoconference.

Video Duration – approx. six and a half minutes.

"Art is idea. It is not enough to draw, paint, and sculpt. An artist should be able to think."

Gordon Woods

PRE- VIDEOCONFERENCE

VOCABULARY

Definitions can be found in the [Glossary](#) on the [Discovering the Story](#) Website.

Art
Artifact
Culture
Ceramics

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is art?
- What is an artifact?
- How do historians use artifacts?

MATERIALS

- Modeling Clay
- Paper
- Crayons
- Colored Pencils
- Print Reproductions of the Museum's [Ali Baba Vase](#) and [Aladdin Vase](#)
- Set of *Decision Cards* (index cards that read ART or ARTIFACT – one of each for each student)

PROCEDURE

Teacher will:

- Review *Guiding Questions* with students.
 - Art: The creation of beautiful or significant objects by an individual or group of individuals.
 - Artifact: An object produced or shaped by a person, especially a tool, weapon or ornament, that is of historical interest for future generations.
- Teacher may choose to display several objects that could be considered works of art or artifacts and ask students to decide which is which.*

- Display print reproductions of the Museum’s *Ali Baba Vase* and *Aladdin Vase*.
- Ask students if these vases are works of art or artifacts. Distribute *Decision Cards* to students. *Each student will receive an ART and ARTIFACT Decision Card.*
- Have each student place the *Decision Card* in front of the pictures of the vases. Students must decide if they think the vases are works of art or artifacts.
- Discuss the results with the students.
 - Why did they think the Museum vases were works of art?
 - Why did they think the Museum vases were artifacts?
 - Could the Museum vases be both works of art and artifacts?
- Review with students the Background Information and Video on the Museum’s vases. Ask students again whether they think the Museum vases are works of art or artifacts or both.
- Review with students that often works from a museum’s collection can be considered artifacts because they tell us how people lived during the late eighteenth century, but they are also works of art because they are beautiful and were created by an artist.
- Have students, individually or as a class, create a list of questions to ask the Museum staff about the vases during a scheduled videoconference. Email the questions to emily.holtrop@cincyart.org prior to the videoconference. If time allows, the videoconferencing instructor will answer student questions.

“Culture is something that evolves out of the simple, enduring elements of everyday life; elements most truthfully expressed in the folk arts and crafts of a nation.”

Thor Hansen

VIDEOCONFERENCE

OBJECTIVES

- Students will interact with the Cincinnati Art Museum staff through a sixty-minute [videoconference](#).
- Students will learn about Cincinnati history from 1850 to 1900.
- Students will use Museum objects to reinforce activities completed in preparation for this [videoconference](#).

CONCEPT

A [videoconference](#) conducted by the Cincinnati Art Museum staff extends student learning through emphasis on the viewing and discussion of art objects. During this [videoconference](#) with the Museum, students will explore Cincinnati art history and the methods and practices of many of the artists working in the city.

SCHEDULE

- **5 minutes** Introduction to CAM staff (*This is also buffer time in case of connection complications*)
- **10 minutes** Brief discussion of student pre-videoconferencing activities.
- **10 minutes** Museum staff will lead an interactive discussion with students on the history of Cincinnati from 1850-1900
- **20 minutes** Museum staff will lead students in an in-depth investigation of selected Museum objects.

Objects Include

- [Bedstead](#) by Benn Pitman, Adelaide Nourse Pitman, and Elizabeth Nourse
 - [Reception Dress](#) by Selina Cadwallader
 - [Aladdin Vase](#) by Maria Longworth Nichols Storer
 - [Ali Baba Vase](#) by M. Louise McLaughlin
 - [Vase and Dedication Medallion](#) by Tiffany & Co.
- **10 minutes** Questions and student sharing of art projects.
 - **5 minutes** Closing (*This is also buffer time in case of connection complications*)

POST- VIDEOCONFERENCE

MATERIALS

- Print Reproductions of the Museum's [*Ali Baba Vase*](#) and [*Aladdin Vase*](#)
- Print reproductions of the following Museum objects

Egypt

[*Beaker*](#)

Egypt--Predynastic period, Naqada I, 4500-3650 BC
Earthenware with smoke-blackened decoration
Museum purchase with funds provided by the Oliver Charitable Lead Trust Fund,
1999.61

[*Lotus Cup*](#)

Egypt--New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, 1550-1300 BC
Mold-made faience
Museum purchased with funds given in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Williams by
their children, 1948.87

Greece

[*Amphora: Herakles and Busiris*](#)

Greece (Attica)
Ca. 540 BC
Earthenware with slip-painted decoration in the black-figure technique
Museum purchase, 1959.1

[*Volute Krater*](#)

by the Niobid Painter--Greece (Attica)
Ca. 460-450 BC
Earthenware with slip-painted decoration in the red-figure technique
John J. Emery Endowment, 1987.4

China

[*Pair of Goblets*](#)

China (Shandong province)
Neolithic Longshan culture, ca. 2700-2100 BC
Burnished earthenware
Museum purchase with funds provided by the Oliver Charitable Lead Trust,
1996.449a,b

[*Guan Jar*](#)

China (Jiangxi province, Jingdezhen)
Ming dynasty, early 15th century
Porcelain painted in underglaze blue
John J. Emery Endowment and George M. ToeWater Endowment, 1987.147

Europe

William de Morgan (1839-1917)

England (Orange House, Chelsea or Merton Abbey, Surrey)
[Dish](#), 1880-88
Gift of Alfred Traber Goshorn, 1888.759

Rörstrand Porslins Fabriker (Rörstrand Porcelain Manufactory) (1726-)
Sweden
[Vase](#), 1904
Porcelain
Museum purchase with funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. William O. DeWitt Jr. 1997.33

PROCEDURE

Teacher will:

- Review with students what they learned during the videoconference with the Museum; students should be more aware of the history of not only the *Ali Baba Vase* and *Aladdin Vase*, but also the city of Cincinnati.
- Review with students the terms *art* and *artifact*. Were the objects they looked at during the videoconference works of art, artifacts or both? If both, what did each object tell us about the time it was created?
- Review with students that the study of artifacts can lead us to draw conclusions about the time period from which they were created. We know that the Museum vases were created in Cincinnati during the late nineteenth century and that the women who created them were inspired by Japanese motifs.
- Break class into four collaborative teams. Teams should represent Egypt, Greece, China and Europe.
- Tell students that each team is going to investigate a culture that created ceramic vessels that are now part of the collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum..
- Discuss with students that each of the objects they will examine can be considered both works of art and artifacts.
- Pass out to each team print reproductions of works listed in *Materials* list.
- Have each team research their objects and the culture that created them.
Students should consider the following questions:
 - How was this object created?
 - What can it tell us about the culture that created it?
 - Why did this culture create works in ceramic?
- Upon completion of research, each team will present findings to the class. Work will be assessed on full team involvement and on presentation of facts.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

- Students understood and applied their knowledge of the terms *art* and *artifact*.
- Students learned that historians use works of art and artifacts to gather information about cultures from the past.
- Students worked in collaborative teams to investigate and report on cultures whose artifacts are present at the Cincinnati Art Museum.

ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

NATIONAL STANDARDS: HISTORY

In post-lesson, students will investigate one of several cultures and time periods. Standards met are wholly dependent on which culture students investigate. Standards listed below pertain to the general knowledge gained in lesson.

Historical Understanding

Standard 2: Understands the historical perspective.

Grades 5-6

Benchmark 2: Understands that specific individuals had a great impact on history.

Benchmark 3: Understands that specific ideas had an impact on history.

Benchmark 5: Understands that specific decisions and events had an impact on history.

Grades 7-8

Benchmark 1: Understands that specific individuals and the values those individuals held had an impact on history.

Benchmark 6: Knows different types of primary and secondary sources and the motives, interests and bias expressed in them (e.g., eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, magazine articles, newspaper accounts, hearsay).

NATIONAL STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS

Grades 5-8

Standard 2: Knows how to use structures (e.g., sensory qualities, organizational principles, expressive features) and functions of art.

Benchmark 1: Knows some of the effects of various visual structures (e.g., design elements such as line, color, shape; principles such as repetition, rhythm, balance) and functions of art.

Benchmark 3: Knows how the qualities of structures and functions of art are used to improve communication of one's ideas.

Standard 4: Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Benchmark 1: Understands similarities and differences among the characteristics of artworks from various eras and cultures (e.g., materials; visual, spatial and temporal structures).

Benchmark 2: Understands the historical and cultural contexts of a variety of art objects.

Benchmark 3: Understands how factors of time and place (e.g., climate, resources, ideas, technology) influence visual, spatial, or temporal characteristics that give meaning or function to a work of art.

OHIO STANDARDS: SOCIAL STUDIES

In post-lesson, students will investigate one of several cultures and time periods. Standards met are wholly dependent on which culture students investigate. Standards listed below pertain to the general knowledge gained in lesson.

Social Studies Skills and Methods: Students collect, organize, evaluate and synthesize information from multiple sources to draw logical conclusions. Students communicate this information using appropriate social studies terminology in oral, written or multimedia form and apply what they have learned to societal issues in simulated or real-world settings.

Grades 3-5

Benchmark A: Obtains information from a variety of primary and secondary sources using the component parts of the source.

Benchmark B: Uses a variety of sources to organize information and draw inferences.

Benchmark D: Uses problem-solving skills to make decisions individually and in groups.

Grades 6-8

Benchmark A: Analyzes different perspectives on a topic obtained from a variety of sources.

Benchmark B: Organizes historical information in text or graphic format and analyzes the information to draw conclusions.

Benchmark D: Works effectively in a group.

OHIO STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS

Historical, Cultural and Social Contexts: Students understand the impact of visual art on the history, culture and society from which it emanates. They understand the cultural, social and political forces that, in turn, shape visual art communication and expression. Students identify the significant contributions of visual artists to cultural heritage. They analyze the historical, cultural, social and political contexts that influence the function and role of visual art in the lives of people.

Grades 5-8

Benchmark A: Compares and contrasts the distinctive characteristics of art forms from various cultural, historical and social contexts.

Benchmark C: Demonstrates knowledge of historical influences on contemporary works of art and makes predictions about influences on the future of visual art.

Benchmark D: Researches culturally or historically significant works of art and discusses their roles in society, history, culture or politics.