

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM MATERIALS

LACMA's Permanent Collection

THESE CURRICULUM MATERIALS PRESENT WORKS OF ART FROM A VARIETY OF times and places, and include both functional and non-utilitarian objects. Most of the six artworks discussed here are related to places of dwelling, emphasizing items that are part of our daily life or surround us in our homes. Each one is part of the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

A decorative tile made in fifteenth-century Iran, a Korean jar made between two and three hundred years ago, a man's tunic from Peru, and a chair and a lamp created during the twentieth century highlight the ageless desire found throughout many different cultures to create beautiful objects for everyday life. A painting of two women flying over a city portrays the real and imaginary environments in which we live.

Each of these six objects is accompanied by background information. Suggested activities for looking, thinking, writing, and art making are included to assist students as they explore the artworks and to prompt them to make connections with their own lives. These materials were developed in alignment with Kindergarten California State Content Standards for Visual Arts and English Language Arts; they are designed for classroom use and intended to stimulate critical thinking, support creative expression, and promote meaningful experiences with works of art.

This curriculum was written by Lisa Vihos, edited by the LACMA Education Department, and designed by Jenifer Shell and Eunice Lee for *Art Programs with the Community: LACMA On-Site*.

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Tile

15TH CENTURY, GREATER IRAN

THIS COLORFUL TILE IS IN THE SHAPE OF A STAR. Within the star is an intertwining design of flowers, leaves, and geometric shapes. Here, the intricate vine weaves across the surface of the tile in a symmetrical arrangement that is punctuated by five flowers. One flower is directly in the center of the tile, focusing the design.

- *How many points does the star have? Find the line that divides the design into two symmetrical halves. Pick an element of the design on one side of the dividing line and find its matching component on the other side.*

This particular tile was made by fitting together small pieces of glazed ceramic tile like a puzzle to create the whole design. The pieces are held in place with mortar. This technique is called faience mosaic.

- *Find the places where you can see that individual small pieces were used to make the whole design. Look for breaks in the design where you can see the lines of mortar in between the ceramic pieces.*

This tile was made in Iran a little over five hundred years ago. At the time it was made, a powerful dynasty called the Timurids ruled the greater Iranian world. Their empire included modern-day Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, parts of the Caucasus (the area in between the Black and Caspian Seas), and western central Asia.

- *See if you can locate Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Caucasus on a globe or map of the world.*

At the time this tile was made, most buildings in this part of the world were made of tan-colored bricks. In order to enliven a structure's appearance and make it more beautiful, glazed tiles like this one were made in multiples to cover outer walls with colorful, repeating patterns and intricate designs.

- *What are some different shapes and colors that you see in the tile's design? What words would you use to describe this design?*

The Timurid rulers were well-known for constructing very large buildings, many of them religious institutions or royal residences. It is thought that this tile probably came from the outside wall of a religious monument from the Timurid period.

- *Imagine a large building covered in beautifully colored tiles like this one. What might it feel like to stand in front of such a building? If you could decorate a building in your own town or city with colorful tiles, what building would it be and what kinds of tiles would you use to decorate it?*

Islamic art features ornately decorated illuminated manuscripts, glass and ceramic vessels, inlaid metalwork, woven textiles and carpets, and architectural decoration (like this tile). Calligraphy (literally, beautiful writing) is one of the noblest forms of decoration because it is associated with the Koran, the holy book of Islam. It is very common to see Islamic art covered with calligraphy or with patterns made up of geometric or vegetal elements. These designs often give the impression of unending repetition, which is believed by some Muslims to be a reflection of the infinite nature of God.



TILE

GREATER IRAN, 15TH CENTURY

FITWARE, GLAZED, CUT TO SHAPE AND ASSEMBLED AS MOSAIC, 24¼ x 23½ x 2¾ IN.

THE MADINA COLLECTION OF ISLAMIC ART, GIFT OF CAMILLA CHANDLER FROST M.2002.1.19

PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Jar with Dragon and Clouds

LATE CHOSŎN PERIOD, CIRCA 1700–1800

KOREA, PROBABLY KWANGJU, SOUTH CHŎLLA PROVINCE

THIS CERAMIC JAR WAS MADE BETWEEN TWO AND three hundred years ago in Korea. Made of porcelain, which has a glassy, milk-white appearance when fired, the jar was probably used by the upper classes or court for ceremonial purposes.

- *Think of something that you use at home or school that is functional, but not especially beautiful. Now think of something that is both functional and beautiful at the same time. When you use something that is also beautiful, do you treat it differently than something that is just useful? Why or why not?*

Examine the wonderful depiction of a dragon journeying through the clouds, which wraps elegantly around the surface of the jar. The finely detailed dragon is composed of repeating patterns that render the textures of the scales on the face and body. Throughout East Asia, the dragon is considered to be a sign of good things to come and is a symbol of royalty and prosperity.

- *Describe the dragon's eyes, his scales, his teeth, and his nose. What is the dragon doing? What are some other symbols of good luck? If you were going to decorate a useful object with a good luck symbol, what would the object be and what symbol would you pick?*

The main ingredient of porcelain is kaolin, a white substance that was discovered in tenth-century China. The first to refine the use of porcelain clay, Chinese artists made very hard, nonporous vessels, which were not only good for storing liquids but beautiful to behold.

As Chinese porcelain wares became known to people in other countries through trade and travel, many people—including kings and queens throughout Asia and Europe—wanted their own artists to learn how to make such delicate-looking yet sturdy ceramic ware.

Porcelain wares do not have to be glazed to make them capable of holding liquids; for the most part, when they are glazed and decorated, it is strictly for aesthetic purposes. Porcelain vessels with underglaze designs painted in blue, like this jar, were first made in fifteenth-century Korea. The artist who painted this vessel used cobalt—a hard, metallic element found in the earth—to create the decoration. Cobalt's salts can be ground up, mixed with liquid, and used as a paint that gives a blue color to glass or ceramics.

At this time, local sources of cobalt were discovered; however, the cobalt native to Korea produced a muddy color. Korean artists, therefore, preferred to use cobalt imported from China. At first it was quite costly to import this cobalt, and only the royal household could afford the expensive porcelain. By the eighteenth century, however, Korea had entered a period of prosperity that allowed for the wares to be enjoyed by a broader range of Korean society.



JAR WITH DRAGON AND CLOUDS

KOREA, PROBABLY KWANGJU, SOUTH CHŎLLA PROVINCE, LATE CHOSŎN PERIOD, C. 1700–1800

WHEEL-THROWN PORCELAIN WITH BLUE PAINTED DECORATION UNDER CLEAR GLAZE

HEIGHT: 17½ IN.; DIAMETER: 13½ IN.

PURCHASED WITH MUSEUM FUNDS M.2000.15.98.

PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Table Lamp from the Susan Lawrence Dana House

1902–1904, FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

THIS LAMP WAS DESIGNED BY THE AMERICAN architect Frank Lloyd Wright about one hundred years ago. Although architects are usually thought of as individuals who create buildings rather than design lamps, Wright was a very special and innovative architect in twentieth-century America. He believed in complete design unity, meaning that he felt a building, its setting, and everything inside it should create one look; all these elements should go together. This lamp is another example of a useful object that has been thoughtfully made to be not only functional but also beautiful.

- *When you look at this lamp, can you get any ideas of what the house that it comes from might look like? Knowing that Wright liked to make everything look good together, what colors do you think you would find in the house? What kinds of shapes do you think you would see on the inside and outside of the house? Can you imagine what the roof might look like?*

Wright called his philosophy “organic design.” He felt that a structure should relate to its surrounding environment, and he wanted his buildings to complement and fit into the landscape around it. This style of building has come to be known as the Prairie style because of the way the low, long shapes of his buildings seem to echo the wide open spaces and the low horizon line of the Midwest prairie.

- *Think of some different kinds of landscapes and what types of houses would best fit in them. Imagine a house for the woods, the mountains, the beach, or a marsh. What about a house for a very cold place or a very hot one? Pick one house that you like the best and – matching Wright’s idea of organic design – think about what kind of furniture would go into this house.*

Frank Lloyd Wright was born in 1867 in Richland Center, a small town in Wisconsin. As a small child, his mother gave him a set of building blocks that helped him discover how all buildings are made of basic geometric shapes. Even late in his life, Wright remembered the simple wooden blocks that he had played with as a child and how they had influenced his thinking.

Wright was an inventive and inquisitive boy who was interested in music, reading, drawing, and building things from found materials. One of Wright’s first jobs as a young architect in the late 1880s was in Chicago working for Louis Sullivan. After leaving Sullivan’s firm, Wright began to develop his unique Prairie style. Between 1900 and 1909 Wright began to make his mark by building highly original home designs for wealthy, well-educated professionals who were willing to take a risk on this young architect with brilliant new ideas. During his seventy-two years in the profession, Frank Lloyd Wright designed 1,141 buildings, including houses, offices, churches, schools, and libraries. His ideas revolutionized modern American building design.



FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT
(UNITED STATES, 1867–1959)

MADE BY LINDEN GLASS COMPANY, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

TABLE LAMP FROM THE SUSAN LAWRENCE DANA HOUSE, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, 1902–1904
LEADED GLASS, BRONZE, BRASS, AND ZINC, BASE: 20 ½ x 12 x 8 7/8 IN.; SHADE DIAMETER: 29 IN.
GIFT OF MAX PALEVSKY M.2000.180.44A-B. PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Red-Blue Chair

1918, DESIGNED BY GERRIT RIETVELD
MADE BY GERARD VAN DE GROENKAN

THIS CHAIR WAS DESIGNED ALMOST ONE HUNDRED years ago in Holland by Dutch architect and cabinetmaker, Gerrit Rietveld. About forty years after he designed the chair, it was actually built by another person, Gerard Van de Groenekan.

- *Does this look like any chair you have ever seen before? What makes it similar or different to chairs that you have at home or school? Do you think it would be a comfortable place to sit?*

Notice the geometric forms that make up the chair and the harmonious relationship between them. Each element of the chair is treated as an individual part: the seat, back, arms, and legs of the chair are all shown to be separate and distinct from one another. The viewer is able to see exactly how the forms were put together.

- *What is the predominant shape that is repeated many times in this chair? How many rectangles are there? How many squares are there? Also notice the careful and deliberate use of color. Although the piece is called Red-Blue Chair, black and yellow are also important parts of the design. Notice how Rietveld placed certain colors in very specific places. Where does he use each color: red, blue, yellow, and black?*

This chair is an embodiment of the principles of a Dutch art movement called *de Stijl*, meaning “the style.” Founded in 1917, the movement included Dutch architects, artists, designers, and writers who sought to express new ideals of harmony and order through abstraction in all the arts. The artists of *de Stijl* were dedicated to designs that emphasized

straight lines, solid planes, right angles, and primary colors. They were especially interested in designs that clearly revealed the construction of the actual object.

One of the best-known artists of the *de Stijl* group is the abstract painter, Piet Mondrian. Find a reproduction of an abstract painting by Mondrian and compare it to *Red-Blue Chair*. Visit LACMA’s collections online, www.collectionsonline.lacma.org/, to find an image of Mondrian’s painting *Composition in Red, White, and Yellow* (1936). What similarities and differences do you notice between the chair and the painting?

Gerrit Rietveld was born in Utrecht in 1888. In 1911, while studying architecture, he started his own furniture factory. He joined the *de Stijl* movement in 1919, a year after he designed *Red-Blue Chair*. Like Frank Lloyd Wright, he believed there should be a unity between the architecture of a house and the furnishings within it. In 1924 Rietveld designed the Schröder House in Utrecht, the only example of a *de Stijl* building. The outside of the house exhibits a series of lines and planes that create a geometrical arrangement. Inside the house, there are sliding walls that can be moved in and out to change the configuration of the space.

- *Although Red-Blue Chair was not specifically designed for the Schröder house, imagine a house that would match the look of the chair. Describe what such a house would look like. Would you like living in such a house? Why or why not?*



GERRIT RIETVELD (HOLLAND, 1888–1964) , Gerard Van de Groenekan (1904–1994)
RED-BLUE CHAIR, 1918 PROTOTYPE, MANUFACTURED CIRCA 1950
PAINTED WOOD, 23 5/8 x 33 1/16 x 33 1/16 IN.
PURCHASED WITH FUNDS PROVIDED BY MERLE OBERON (M.86.258)
PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Messengers in the Wind

1931, RUFINO TAMAYO

MEXICAN ARTIST RUFINO TAMAYO PAINTED *Messengers in the Wind* about seventy-five years ago. It shows two women dressed in white flying through a nighttime sky. One woman holds a scroll of paper in her hand, as they soar over electrical wires, a bridge, a brick wall, and other elements that suggest a city. Tamayo has depicted the women as part of the elemental forces of nature by blending their dresses into the masses of turbulent clouds that gather in their wake.

- *What is a messenger? How can you tell that these women are messengers? How does the artist show us that they are messengers of the wind? What do you think the women would say if they could speak?*

Tamayo was a Zapotecan Indian born in 1899 in the state of Oaxaca. He briefly attended the National School of Fine Arts in Mexico City and in 1921 was appointed head of the Department of Ethnographic Drawing at the Archaeological Museum in Mexico City, which introduced him to Mexican folk art. Tamayo came to believe that folk art and pre-Columbian art were the truest expressions of Mexican culture.

Tamayo was based in New York from 1936 to 1948, after which he lived in Paris from 1948 to 1964. Although rooted in Mexican folk art traditions, Tamayo's art was also influenced by the geometric forms of cubism and the dreamlike content of surrealism.

- *Discuss whether or not this scene seems real or imaginary to you. What are the elements that seem real? What parts seem more like a dream?*

In the 1930s, other important Mexican artists such as Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siquieros were painting large public murals and easel paintings that commented on Mexican society and culture in a very politically charged way. Tamayo, however, was interested in a more universal approach to art. He believed that art should be more about the beauty and mystery of the world rather than about particular political ideas. He was bitterly criticized by the Mexican muralists for his neutral politics and for his art, which was apparently more concerned with color and texture than with social issues.

- *Describe the overall mood of this picture. Do you think it is exciting, scary, mysterious, or something else? Why do you think Tamayo painted this picture? What message do you think the women are delivering?*



RUFINO TAMAYO
(MEXICO, 1899–1991)

MESSENGERS IN THE WIND, 1931
OIL ON CANVAS, 31 X 34 IN.

THE BERNARD AND EDITH LEWIN COLLECTION OF MEXICAN ART AS1997.LWN.36
© ESTATE OF RUFINO TAMAYO. PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Man's Tunic

600–850, PERU, SOUTH COAST, WARI CULTURE

THIS PIECE OF CLOTHING WAS MADE MORE than one thousand years ago in the area that is present-day Peru. Made of bright colors and repeating patterns, the design on this tunic provides information about the person who wore it.

The geometric shapes and stylized design of this ancient textile embody a code that would have been understood by the male cleric or high government official wearing it. According to scholars, a fanged-human-feline is represented as a face in profile. The creature's black-and-white eye is enclosed in the repeating keyhole shape. The N-shape within a rectangle is the symbol for the cat's jaws and crossed fangs. Within this tunic the symbols are intentionally lengthened and shortened, forming a complex visual system.

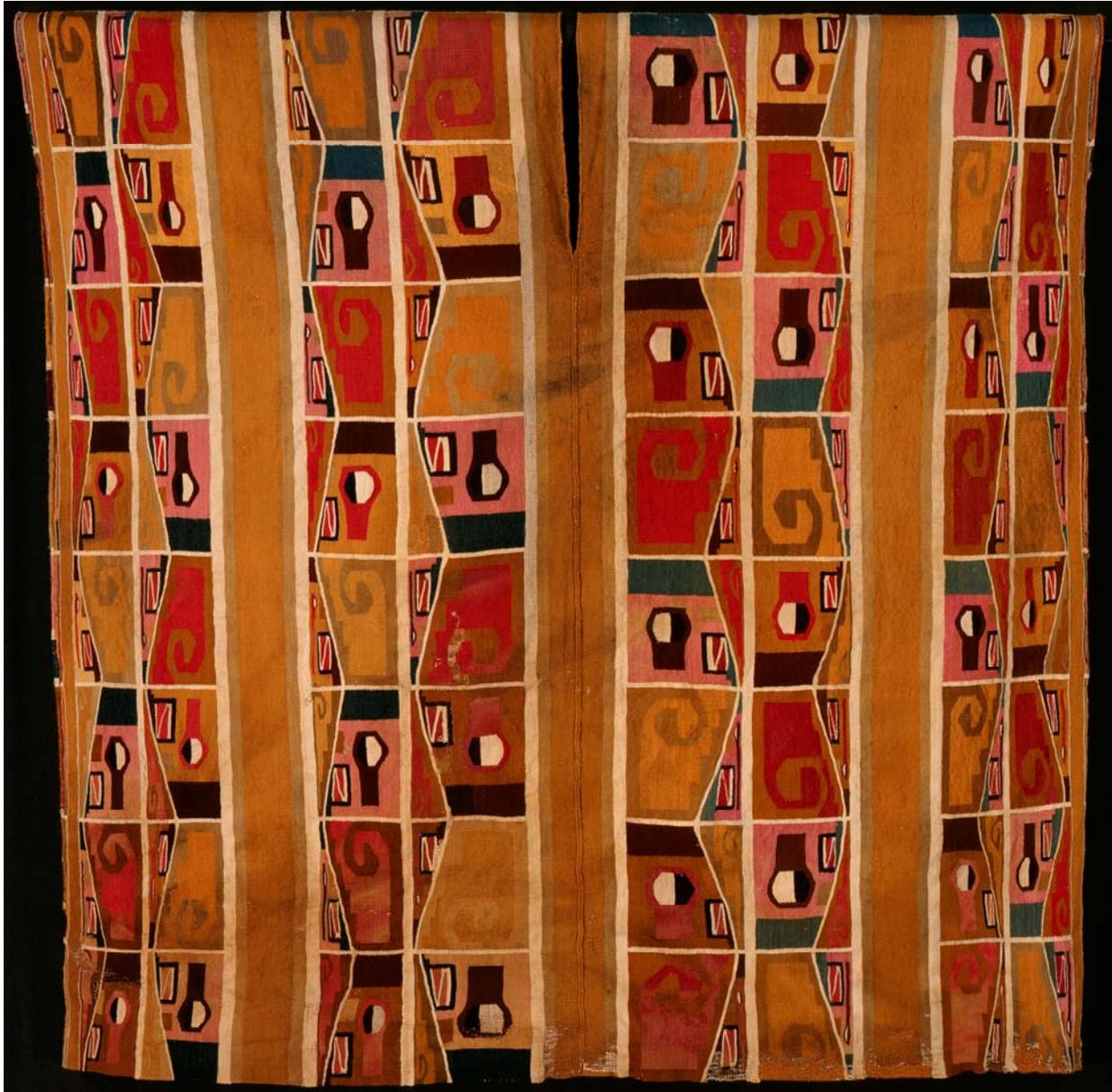
- *What colors and shapes do you see in this tunic? Where do specific colors and shapes repeat?*

The city of Wari was the center of an empire extending over most of present-day Peru from 600 to 850. Since no written language appears to have existed in the region, it is thought that much information was visually encoded into the culture's textiles. These textiles played important roles in religious and political ceremonies and were also used for tribute and taxation.

- *Some men and women wear uniforms that indicate the type of work they do. For example, fire fighters or police officers can be identified by their uniforms. In what ways does clothing communicate and identify today?*

Creating a textile such as this was an extremely labor-intensive endeavor; it could take up to 500 hours and between six to nine miles of thread to create a single tunic. Such textiles have survived for centuries because many were wrapped around mummies and concealed in sandy tombs on the dry, desert coast of Peru. They thus avoided the conditions that often destroy such fragile objects. The vibrant colors in this tunic were created from natural elements. The blue dye comes from the fermentation and oxidation of the indigo plant, while the bright pink was made from dried cochineal beetles.

- *Have students create an image conveying important symbols and ideas about themselves. Begin by having them list objects and images that represent important things in their lives: a favorite animal, a symbol from a book they enjoy, a special toy. Have students design shapes representing those objects. After they have a series of shapes, trace them onto different colored paper. Cut out the shapes and create a repeating pattern on a larger piece of paper.*



MAN'S TUNIC

PERU, SOUTH COAST, WARI, 600–850

CAMELID FIBER AND COTTON; INTERLOCKED TAPESTRY WEAVE, 40 X 39 1/2 IN.

PURCHASED WITH FUNDS PROVIDED BY CAMILLA CHANDLER FROST AND
ROBERT AND MARY LOOKER THROUGH THE 2000 COLLECTORS COMMITTEE (M.2000.59)

PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA