

Modern Mythos

Stories of our time

Developed by the Canadian Clay & Glass
Gallery with Kitchener Waterloo Collegiate



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Intro

What does 'Modern
Mythos: Stories of our
time' mean?

Mythos:

- a myth or mythology.
- (in literature) a traditional or recurrent narrative theme or plot structure.
- a set of beliefs or assumptions about something.

History:

from Greek historia "a learning or knowing by inquiry; an account of one's inquiries; knowledge, account, historical account, record, narrative,"

[Source: Etymology Online](#)

This project invites you to look at history as a form of storytelling.

- *Past:* What stories do we tell ourselves about the past?
- *Present:* What stories define our time?
- *Future:* How do you think we'll be remembered?

What you will be doing:

Create a clay plate in the style of an ancient civilization - but with a modern message

[See examples from a pilot project](#)

Steps for your project:

1. Explore why artists use old designs in new work.
2. Pick an ancient civilization and collect design inspiration.
3. Think of a contemporary message for your plate.
4. Make a clay plate!

Artists who use art
history to tell a modern
message

[Go to teacher's notes](#)

Questions for discussion

As you look at artworks in the next few slides, think about:

- What civilizations did the artist get inspired by? How can you tell?
- Why did they pick that specific civilization? What ideas / concepts / ideologies does that civilization represent to the artist?
- What is the artist trying to say about their present day?
- Why do you think they chose to reference history in a contemporary work?

[Go to Teacher's notes](#)



'British Lakes'
ceramic by Paul
Scott



'The Cockle Pickers
Tea Service' by Paul
Scott. 2007.

<https://artuk.org/discover/stories/seven-questions-with-paul-scott>

Q: Can you tell us about one of your most powerful pieces, which is about the death of at least 21 Chinese [cockle pickers who drowned at Morecambe Bay in 2004](#)?

A: I was asked to do a piece about the anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade and I remembered those Chinese workers who drowned in Morecambe Bay – these people were modern-day slaves. My intention in creating that tea service was to commemorate the Chinese cockle pickers and make a reference to the original slave trade in which millions of enslaved Africans were taken across the Atlantic.





Roberto Lugo

'Put Yourself In The Picture', 2022

mixed media



10 minute video: (3:08)

<https://www.pbs.org/video/roberto-lugo-village-potter-m7aue6/>



“In his artwork, Lugo integrates graffiti-style painting techniques onto hand-thrown ceramic pieces. Most notably, he places prominent African Americans, hip-hop imagery, and contemporary political commentaries on classic ceramic forms such as teapots, kraters, and urns. Oftentimes, his human faces are obscured with floral motifs and typical Greek ceramic imagery and colors. In many of his early teapots, Lugo replaced the spouts with firearm barrels. A self-described “ghetto potter,” he uses traditional ceramic materials and shapes to critique inequality, gang violence, poverty, racism, and injustice while also celebrating African American and Puerto Rican culture.”

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/latinx/roberto-lugo>

Roberto Lugo, *Ghetto Krater*, 2018, glaze on terracotta





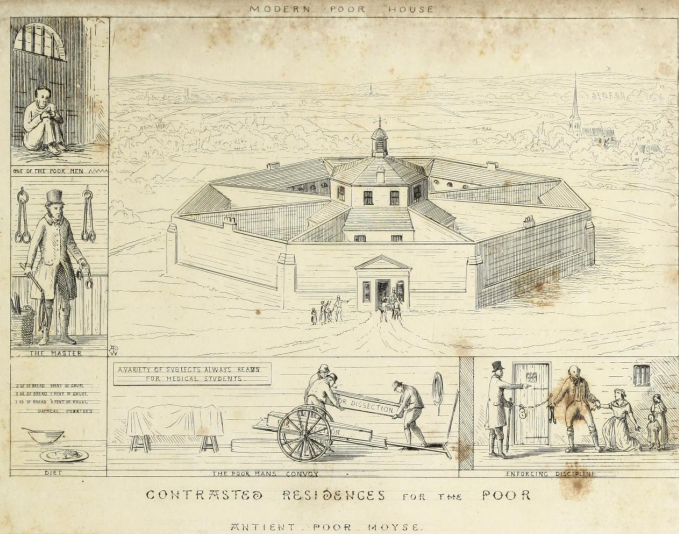
<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O8058/waste-not-want-not-bread-plate-aw-pugin/>

Bread Plate

1850

Designed by A. W. Pugin

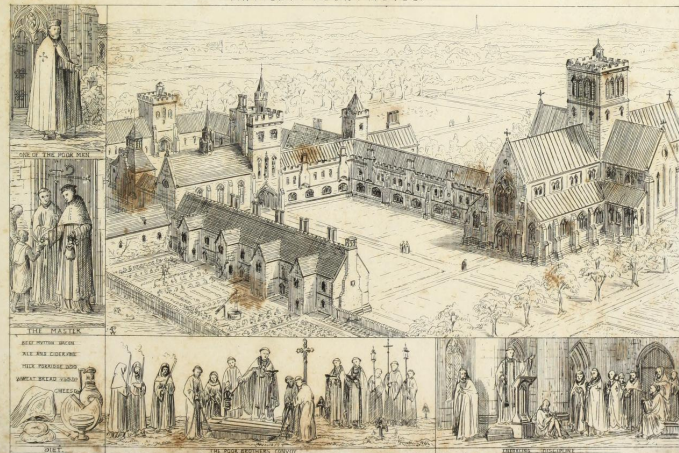
Manufactured by Minton in Stoke on Trent



Contrasts, or, A parallel between the noble edifices of the Middle Ages, and corresponding buildings of the present day : shewing the present decay of taste

By Augustus Welby Pugin, 1841

https://archive.org/details/contrastsorparal00pugi_0/page/n13/mode/2up



A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS ALWAYS READY
FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS.

2 OZ OF BREAD 1 PINT OF GRUEL
 3 OZ OF BREAD 1 PINT OF GRUEL
 1 OZ OF BREAD ½ PINT OF GRUEL
 OATMEAL PORRIDGE



DIET



THE POOR MAN'S CONVOY

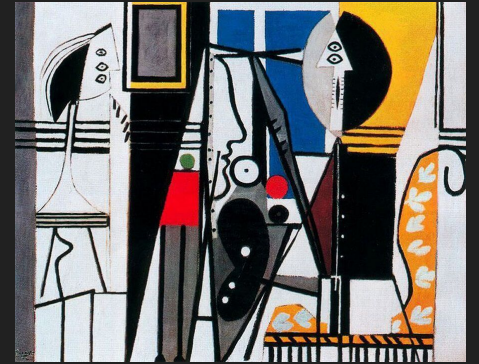
BEEF MUTTON BACON
 ALE AND CIDER
 MILK PORRIDGE
 WHEAT BREAD
 CHEESE



DIET.



THE POOR BROTHERS CONVOY



Pablo Picasso
Painter and Model, 1928
Painting

Richard Millet
Hydria 13 - 7319 with Painter and
his Model, 1988
Earthenware and Plaster

Collection of the Canadian Clay &
Glass Gallery

Where to find historic
examples to inspire your
projects

Online Collections:

V&A / Victoria & Albert Museum

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/collections?type=featured>

The Met / Metropolitan Museum of Art

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search>

Art Institute of Chicago

<https://www.artic.edu/collection>

Online Collections:

ROM / Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

<https://collections.rom.on.ca/>

Gardiner Museum, Toronto

<https://www.gardinermuseum.on.ca/collections-research/>

Aga Khan Museum, Toronto

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection?tags=ceramics>

History of pottery at a glance

<https://quatr.us/china/history-pottery-clay-pottery.htm>

<https://archive.org/details/tenthousandyears0000coop>



The Shoemaker's vase, c.500 BC

<https://www.ashmolean.org/shoemaker-vase>

Resources (about Greek & Etruscan):

<https://quatr.us/african-history/early-african-pottery.htm#:~:text=People%20in%20East%20Africa%20st%20arted.and%20Yoruba%20potters%20made%20pottery.>



Mesoamerica

Plate with hieroglyphic text
Mayan, Central Peten, possibly Uaxactun,
Guatemala

Late Classic Period (600-850 CE)
550-650

<https://emuseum.gardinermuseum.com/objects/507/plate-with-hieroglyphic-text>

Resources:

https://www.gardinermuseum.on.ca/collection_type/mesoamerica/



Africa

Vessels, Ghana

Various dates ranging 740–1340

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/760810>

Resources:

<https://quatr.us/african-history/early-african-pottery.htm#:~:text=People%20in%20East%20Africa%20started.and%20Yoruba%20potters%20made%20pottery>

https://www.si.edu/object/jar:nmafa_89-13-27

Mesopotamia



10th Century, Iraq, lusterware

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/dish-akm741>

Resources:

<https://www.ashmolean.org/article/lustreware-across-borders#:~:text=Initially%20used%20to%20decorate%20glass,signal%20refinement%20and%20regal%20authority>



China

Jar with Dragon

China

early 15th century

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/39666?when=A.D.+1400-1600&where=China&high=on&ao=on&ft=c ceramic&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>

Resources:

https://artsandculture.google.com/story/NwVh7_2sSDeJKw



China

Circular box
China
9th century

Source:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/44347?when=A.D.+500-1000&where=China&ao=on&ft=ceramic&offset=0∓rpp=40&pos=34>

Student Worksheet: additional info & examples

[Go to worksheet](#)

1. Choose an ancient civilization and study pottery from that time period

Pick an era you know a lot about - what have you studied in this class?

Pick an era you have a personal interest in or connection to. Is there a time period that resonates with you?

2. Collect design inspiration

Sketch historic examples. Sketch at least 4 designs or patterns. Write on your sketch where each design comes from.

“good artists copy; great
artists steal”

- Pablo Picasso

“good artists copy; great
artists steal”*

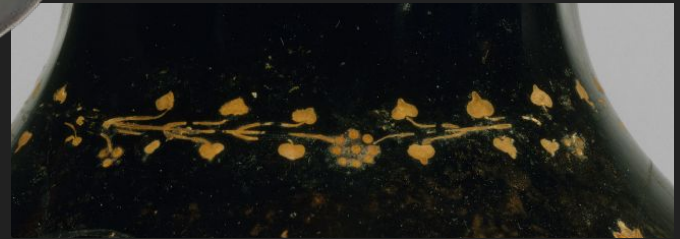
- Pablo Picasso

*But historians always cite their sources





[Source](#)



3. Decide on your modern message

Create a visual mind map

Visual Mind Map

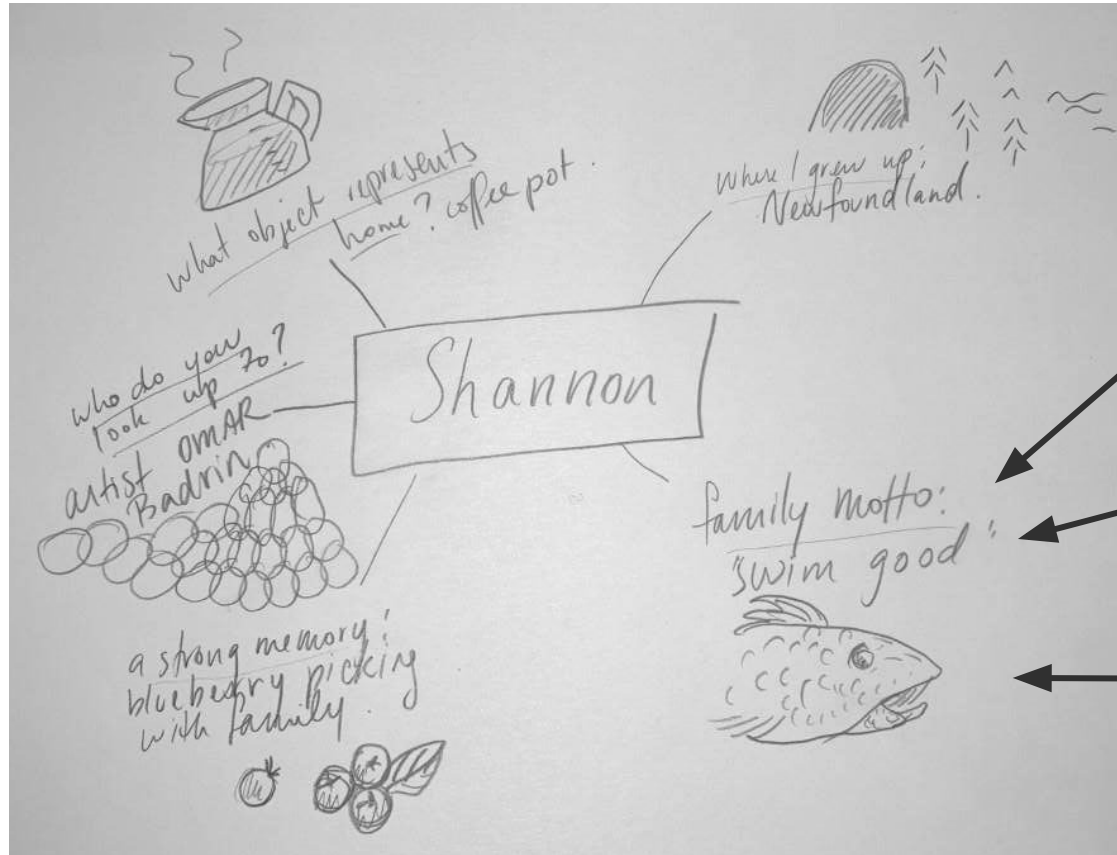
Instructions:

1. Write '2023' in the middle of a page
2. Pick prompts from the right.
3. **Write and Draw** your answers beside each prompt.

Prompts:

- A social justice issue
- A modern day hero
- A person you admire
- A motto or phrase you use/see today
- What we will be remembered for
- A scene from everyday life
- An important moment in your life
- Something you admire about the past

Example of a mind map from another project



Prompt

Written answer

Drawing

Bonus Activities



4. Pick a single object and study it.

- Where and when was it made?
- What materials were used?
- What techniques were used?
- What images and stories are in the decoration?
- What can you learn about this time and place by studying this object?

<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/162/hydria-water-jar>

5. Write your art label

If your finished artwork was in a museum, what would the art label say?

Create a display of your plates at school when they come out of the kiln.

Art Label

Artist:

Date:

Materials:

Techniques:

Description / artist statement:

(what does your work mean? Why did you select this topic? What inspired you? What do you want people to think/feel when they look at your piece?)

Additional info: V&A's 10 point guide to writing art labels

https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/VA_Gallery-Text-Writing-Guidelines_online_Web.pdf