



ARTS, CRAFTS & ARTEFACTS



ARTS, CRAFTS & ARTEFACTS

Arts, crafts and historical artefacts capture our region's history and culture. As well as being pleasing to look at, they also show different cultures' values and beliefs.

- **Art** is a way of communicating or representing our ideas, emotions or aspects of our lives. Humans express themselves through art even though it is not necessary for their survival.
- **Craft** is the application of artistic skill to everyday objects.
- **Artefacts** are objects, often of historical value, which reflect our culture and the way we live.

Artistic techniques and styles have migrated across Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand, influenced by local materials and beliefs.

For example:

- The calligraphy carved on traditional Malaysian houses shows how the local method of wood carving absorbed the Arab-Islamic art form of calligraphy.
- Southeast Asian artisans and craftsmen often use Buddhist and Hindu religious symbols in their work.



EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ART, CRAFT, AND AN ARTEFACT.

FIND AND DESCRIBE AN EXAMPLE OF EACH FROM THE FACT SHEET.





PAINTING

Painting is a common way for people to express themselves and their cultures. Many different painting styles and techniques can be seen across Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

- Vietnamese lacquer paintings are popular for their vivid colours and evocative designs.
- Indonesian paintings often depict nature and traditional dance.
- In Thailand, paintings are traditionally used to decorate important buildings such as temples and palaces.
- Wat (temple) murals are an ancient tradition in Cambodia.
- Australian Aboriginal painting has a distinctive style and is found on tools, weapons, ceremonial clothing and even the human body. In addition to painting wood and stone, Aboriginal people also used leaves or bark as canvases.
- In New Zealand, traditional Māori painting predominantly uses shades of red, black and white created by natural dyes. The more earthy tones in Māori art are very different from the bright colours of much Southeast Asian art.



CALLIGRAPHY

Calligraphy is ornate, artistic handwriting common across the region because of the influence of Islamic and Chinese art forms.

- Calligraphy is an important part of Islamic art because of the value placed on contemplating the Hadith (or Prophet's sayings). Calligraphy is also important in traditional Chinese art where characters from the Chinese scripts are drawn using a brush.
- Calligraphy hangings often have religious significance. The hangings are created for Buddhists to burn as offerings at shrines and for Muslims to decorate their homes and contemplate.
- In Indonesia, calligraphy is often used for decorative purposes, in line with the Islamic tradition of not depicting humans or animals in art.
- In Vietnam, instead of using Arabic or Chinese characters, calligraphers use Quoc Ngu, a Roman character-based alphabet.

...and you?

"My family has a big picture of Islamic words and letters forming figures. We have some Egyptian art of my father's made of papyrus and some embossed plates."

Naema, 15, F, Philippines



RELIGION & BELIEFS IN ART

Art is often used to reflect or represent important aspects of a particular religion, religious practice or event. Over time, different religious communities have developed or adapted specific styles of art. These styles are now strongly associated with that religious tradition.

- Islamic art does not show animals or humans, as the Qur'an warns against glorifying idols or objects, particularly if these relate to religion. Therefore, Islamic art focuses on plants, geometrical shapes and calligraphy instead.
- New Zealand Māori and the Aboriginal peoples of Australia expect the pictures of ancestors to be cherished just as the living person would be, as they believe that the spirit of a person or animal lives on in their image.
- Human beings in Māori art are usually physically distorted. This distortion illustrates the Māori belief that only the ultimate creator can create a perfect human being.

As people from different cultures and religions have travelled, they have introduced their unique artistic styles to new countries and communities. Now we can see art that has been influenced by various religions throughout Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

- The influence of Islamic weaving techniques can be seen in loosely-woven double ikat-pattern *patola* cloth or *cinde*, and in the flower motifs found on fabrics across the region.
- Buddhist art originated in India. It was brought to the region by traders and immigrants and is now found across the region.

HOW HAVE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS INFLUENCED ART ACROSS THE REGION?

PUBLIC SCULPTURE

- Traditionally public sculptures are statues of significant figures from a country's history, including royalty, politicians, artists or soldiers.
- Buddhist sculptures are found across the region. They are created from a variety of materials including bronze, silver, gold, wood and semi-precious stones or carved into walls. A five kilometre-long relief sculpture at the temple of Borobodur in central Java illustrates the life and teachings of the Buddha.
- Large outdoor sculptures can also link to the environment. In Wellington, the capital city of New Zealand, Phil Price's 'Protoplasm', a kinetic sculpture, moves about in the wind.
- Christian sculptures, particularly depictions of the crucifixion of Christ and of the Madonna, are found in churches, schools and homes across the region.
- Miniature silver or gold crucifixes worn on necklaces are also a common First Communion or Confirmation gift.

TEXTILES



BATIK

- Batik is considered both an art and a craft, and has been a traditional skill in Southeast Asia for centuries. Batik can be found in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar.
- To create batik, melted wax is applied to fabric, forming designs, often of folk motifs, flowers and plants. The fabric is dyed and dried before the wax is removed.
- Batik's popularity has varied – it is now being revived by designers, including in countries beyond Southeast Asia, with different patterns, colours and fabrics used for formal and casual clothing.

EMBROIDERY

Embroidery is decorative needlework, usually stitched on a loosely woven fabric or canvas to form a picture or pattern.

- Embroidery is a traditional craft enjoyed as both a professional and leisure activity throughout the region.
- Indigenous styles of embroidery have mixed with techniques brought by travellers and migrants from the Middle East, India, China and Europe.
- Embroidery has not changed much over the centuries. In Vietnam, for example, folk techniques have passed through the generations and elaborate pictures of scenes from nature or mythology are still popular locally and as international exports.

WEAVING

Weaving interlaces threads such as yarn or wool to form fabric. This can be done by hand or using a machine such as a loom.

- Weaving is used across the region, but the materials differ according to what is accessible. Cotton, flax, wool and silk are common materials.
- Thai silk has been woven for centuries from the cocoons of both wild and cultivated silkworms. It is hand-woven and has a slightly rough texture. Silk patterns can often be very complicated and, when viewed from different angles, Thai silk looks like it is two different colours.

HOW ARE TEXTILES
TRADITIONALLY
DECORATED?

...and you?

"We have a lot of art. We have a lot of textile pieces from my Mum and other people she went to university with. We also have a few other artworks, a few from school and things from different countries we have travelled to, especially in Asia."

Joshua, 17, M, Australia

CERAMICS

- Ceramics are objects (both decorative and functional) made of clay, porcelain or glass through a process of heating and cooling.
- The first potters in Southeast Asia adopted Chinese technology and Indian decorative techniques. Over time, local styles were developed and incorporated into their pottery.
- Vietnamese pottery shows a mix of Chinese ceramic techniques and indigenous forms and patterns.

...and you?

"I collect small ceramic animals and small posters."

Trang, 16, F, Vietnam

ART FORMS ARE THE SAME ACROSS THE REGION BUT THEY ARE DECORATED DIFFERENTLY. DO YOU AGREE? EXPLAIN.



MUSIC & DANCE

- There are long-standing traditions of music and dance in every society, for example:
 - In the Filipino folk dances *tinikling* and *singkil*, dancers test their dexterity by trying to avoid long bamboo poles being clapped together.
 - A similar dance, *Robam Kom Araek*, is found in Cambodia.
 - New Zealand Māori have a traditional dance called the *Haka*, a group dance involving vigorous movements and stamping of feet with rhythmically shouted accompaniment.
- Traditional dances are increasingly studied and performed across the region. These dances are a source of national identity and pride and are often performed on important national days or as cultural demonstrations for visitors.
- Teenagers share pop music from around the world via CDs and the internet. This exchange allows them to keep up with current trends in music, clothing and performance styles, wherever they live.

...and you?

"I have studied a number of Indonesian dances such as saman from Aceh, ngarajeng from Betawi, and piring from West Sumatera."

Riska, 17, F, Indonesia

"I am part of a Dikir Barat group - a Malay choral singing group, usually singing folk songs."

Syukri, 15, M, Singapore

ART AT SCHOOL

...and you?

"My computer teacher was an amateur artist who explained the significance and meaning of different types of traditional motifs to me. This inspired me to use traditional symbols in my own art. When I draw, I draught in pencil then work with coloured pens."

Taimus, 17, M, New Zealand

"In art class at school I took classes in drawing and making clay sculptures."

Angela, 16, F, Philippines

"I studied art in school - drawing and painting mostly."

Syukri, 15, M, Singapore

WHAT ARTS ARE YOU
ABLE TO STUDY AT
YOUR SCHOOL?

DECORATING YOUR OWN ROOM

...and you?

"I don't put posters on my walls, but I do have photos of me and friends stuck on them."

Riska, 17, F, Indonesia

"I have photos on the walls in my cupboard. I have a wall hanging with hearts. I chose the colour of my room. It's golden yellow, the colour of sunflowers."

Sian, 19, F, Australia

"I have a bulletin board to put up stuff. I have posters and artworks as well as a collection of miniature bags from different cities in the world that I visited."

Nuraini, 17, F, Malaysia

"I have a cork-board covered with photos of my family, friends, sports teams, plus mementos and medals. There are also photos in frames, several jewellery boxes (collectibles) and china dolls my grandmother collected on her travels and gave to me. The walls are painted purple, so minimal decoration is required!"

Maddy, 16, F, New Zealand

"I have posters of my favourite football players, both local and international, on my room's walls."

Banuaji, 13, M, Indonesia

WHAT SIMILARITIES ARE
THERE IN THE WAY TEENAGERS
DECORATE THEIR ROOMS?

FAMILY ART & ARTEFACTS

...and you?

"My father keeps a keris, a traditional Javanese dagger. He inherited the traditional weapon from his father. My father believes that kerises have supernatural powers. He told me that the one that he had could bring safety to his family. He said that someday the keris would be mine."

Banuaji, 13, M, Indonesia

"We have jewellery from my grandmother who gave it to us when we visited the family in the Philippines. I like it because it speaks about my culture and it is something priceless so I take good care of it."

Naema, 15, F, Philippines

"I like all types of art as they are unique in their own way, not any of those renowned ones. My mum makes flowers from clay and does flower arrangement, a skill she learnt while we were staying in Saudi Arabia. I enjoy doing cross-stitch (embroidery)."

Nuraini, 17, F, Malaysia



WHAT DO THEIR ARTEFACTS
TELL YOU ABOUT WHAT
IS IMPORTANT TO THEM?

