



## Non-Western Art: A Brief Guide

*By Lynn MacKenzie*

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This volume offers an introduction to the indigenous visual expressions created in the Americas, Africa and Asia. It provides a foundation for understanding the context and aesthetics of art forms ordinarily only addressed in speciality texts. It is designed for courses in Art History and Humanities.

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## Non-Western Art: A Brief Guide By Lynn MacKenzie Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

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## Preface

Five years ago I composed a slim volume to address a specific need in art history. It had puzzled me to find no textbook on Non-Western art in an academic environment where global studies were at a premium. *Non-Western Art: A Brief Guide* was my first, hesitant attempt to design a publication for a topic we were mandated to teach, although from the beginning we all were unclear on exactly what we were to teach. Needless to say, I welcomed Prentice Hall's invitation to rewrite the text for a second edition, to reconfigure material, correct factual mistakes, and add topics and images. While changing neither the audience nor the goals of the 1995 edition, I have tried to improve the quality of the text to facilitate the learning process and foster a greater appreciation for the topic.

The material following this Preface has been written for students and represents what I, having taught Non-Western art for over a decade and art history for twenty-five years, feel we reasonably can expect a college student in an introductory course to know. It is a primary text for one-semester and one-quarter college-level courses in Non-Western art, Advanced Placement Art History in high schools, and a supplemental text for Non-Western humanities and history courses with strong visual components. Whether one reads this book because it is required or because of personal interest, it will function as a handbook for a first encounter with an immensely varied, complex, and fascinating topic. Although small, the book is intended to give an enormous topic direction, organization, and emphasis. It consolidates a vast amount of information—usually found scattered about in libraries, on bookstore shelves, and just about anywhere in art history survey textbooks—into a portable, affordable guide to Non-Western art.

The approach—a chronological survey of art and architecture—organizes material by geographic regions beginning in Africa, moving east to Asia and the islands, and crossing the Pacific to the Americas. This traditional art history format was chosen over a topical approach because I feel it is important to reinforce the fact that Non-Western cultures *have* histories, that known events occurred, important people with names lived, and the arts changed through time. A chronological survey orders unfamiliar material in a familiar way and permits valid comparisons. Only China breaks the mold a bit because readers can become mired in the dynastic sequences and lose sight of the art. The book is about art and is written in the language of art. It is not a history book or an anthropology book or a religious studies book. Time is spent describing individual works so readers will have grounding for articulation and evaluation in the visual arts. Driving the text is my firm belief that cultures are encoded in art. Because art makes ideas and values visible, the context of each work is developed with material on religion, philosophy, social structure, and historical events. Where possible, the works were selected from American museums to underscore the fact these objects are accessible although no longer in their original contexts.

Having devoted years to this material, both in personal research and talking through ideas with colleagues and in the public forum of the classroom, I have come to sense themes that make the material manageable, intelligible, and memorable. I write this statement knowing full well that the problems with teaching Non-Western art are legion. No one wants to touch it because too much material is covered and nothing can be developed in depth. On this point I offer the words of Chacoan specialist Stephen Lekson, who wrote that selection involves weeding *and* pruning. We, as educators, are charged with determining what is worth knowing as well as the depth to which knowing should be taken in an introductory course. Topics can be

added and others expanded. We all have our specialties and presenting them to students only enriches their education and makes their encounter with us unique. Any text merely provides a platform or a foil for our own views and experiential resources. For example, to the reviewer who requested the addition of Laplander art, I would recommend outside readings to augment this intriguing subject. When covering the Asante, I always include kente cloth, although you never would know it from this text. Sometimes I begin the course with Chapter 7 (the Americas), other times with Chapter 1 (Africa), and occasionally I use Chapter 6 (Oceania) for the Introduction. Flexibility is the key. Start with your strength.

Others shy away from teaching Non-Western because the names are unfamiliar, difficult to pronounce. And tied to the problem of foreign words is the reality that the subjects themselves are "foreign" to those of us who have had a classical Western education. Two thoughts on this issue: First, no one person can know the artistic, religious, social, philosophical, historical, etc. nuances of all these cultures. It is an impossible and unreasonable expectation. Unfortunately, the most difficult sentence for a professor to utter in public is "I DON'T KNOW." Confucius offers all of us who stand with our backs to the screen a liberating strategy with the following advice from the *Analects*: "Shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, maintain you know it, and when you do not, acknowledge it. That is knowledge." (I am quite sure he was talking about "expertise.") The second thought on this issue of foreign pertains to our obligation in higher education. Equipping students with a basic understanding of Non-Western cultures will spare them the anxieties we suffer now when eventually they take our places. I truly believe it will cease being a problem in a generation.

Finally, others will not teach Non-Western because they argue the topic is invalid and "Non-Western" creates the notion of "The Other" by lumping together cultures that share nothing. These are major issues, and ones which cannot be addressed in a preface, although the situation is pitiful, indeed, if we are shackled by inherited methodologies. I always have been dissatisfied with the term "Non-Western" but do not feel the term has pejorative implications. The subject reflects our awareness of the richness of world cultures, even if a satisfactory word has yet to be coined.

And to these ends, this text has been rewritten for clarity, accuracy, and readability. As many changes were made in response to students' questions as to reviewers' questions. Because students were asking for clarification on the same topics (Who *was* the Sixth Patriarch?), I assumed the questions were being raised elsewhere. Errors were corrected, some my misunderstandings and others in light of recent findings. Professors who disagree with information, analyses, or interpretations should use the text as a foil. With the classroom mantra "But the book says . . . ." students place a textbook on par with the Gospels, but one of the thrills of teaching has always been to be wiser than the text. All chapters have new material, notably Africa and the Americas. And as disappointed as some will be, I am still unable to harness enough marble horses from ancient Greece to drag Egypt out of Africa. Hopefully, the nine maps are welcome additions and will help secure cultures in space. The bibliographies were expanded and placed at the end of each chapter to encourage readers to pursue the topics and to provide students with a starting point for research papers. Reviewers prompted the inclusion of study and discussion questions, and while I resisted my editor on this point, I now recognize them as valuable tools in the learning process. To the Glossary have been added general art terms, such as "abstraction" and "realism," to provide a common language. They are more than adjectives; they are at the core of image making and art analysis.

Turning to the mechanical aspects of the publication, a few remarks on usage may be helpful. In descriptions of works of art, "right" and "left" refer to the right and left sides of illustrations. Chinese words are pinyin and diacritical marks have been added for Spanish words. Only one date indicator is used, BCE (meaning "Before Common Era" and corresponding to BC, meaning "Before Christ"). A date in the Common Era (corresponding to AD, meaning *Anno Domini*, or "The Year of Our Lord") has no prefix. Although "a little pretentious and a little too 'politically correct' " for some (quote from *Cahokian*), it is concise and it works.

For sites and cultures with contested dates and for cultures beginning and ending at different times in different regions, a slash separates the earliest and latest possible dates (1000/500 BCE-200/600).

In conclusion, pages could be filled with the names of people who contributed to this project. Regrettably, I do not know the names of many who provided invaluable assistance. A note of thanks is due the vanload of women who picked me up at North Rim Overlook on the frightful road up to Mesa Verde and to Ranger Sherrie who helped me break into my car to retrieve the keys locked inside. At Chichen Itza, thanks to the white-haired man who helped me count backwards from 365 in Spanish after my backpack shifted and I froze on top El Castillo. Thanks also to the eagle-eyed proofreaders at Prentice Hall for their thoroughness, and to the reviewers across the country for their comments and suggestions. Others I can thank directly. At Prentice Hall, for their persistence, insistence, and patience, Bud Therien, Publisher Art, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Kimberly Chastain, Assistant Editor Art and Music; also, Production Editor, Judith Winthrop, to whom goes all the credit for the look of the book you hold. Among my colleagues, special thanks to Misty Sheehan, Associate Professor of Humanities at College of DuPage, for her insight on Asian cultures, and to a cenote of information on Mesoamerica, Jeff Kowalski, Professor of Art History at Northern Illinois University. Also at College of DuPage, thanks to Ed Kies, Dean of Liberal Arts, and Ed Storke, Associate Dean. In Louisiana, to Robert Connolly, then Station Archaeologist at Poverty Point, for opening the resources of that vast site to me; and at Watson Brake, to Joe Saunders, Regional Archaeologist stationed at University Louisiana at Monroe, and Recca Jones, who first mapped the site, for the same opportunities there. I would like readers to know the monuments they curate figure much larger in the story of world culture than the space I could give them in the text. From among the thousands and thousands of students whose ideas have shaped this book, and in a very real sense, who I am, I single out Corinne Louw, who helped structure many of the questions at the end of each chapter and suggested the expanded glossary; she is one of the people who will take our place. And finally, love and gratitude to my parents, Helen and Eric Yaeger, and, as always, to Kate.

Lynn Mackenzie *Glen Ellyn, Illinois*

From the Publisher

Nonwestern Art: A Brief Guide offers a concise, useful introduction to the indigenous visual expressions created in the Americas, Africa and Asia. It provides a foundation for understanding the context and aesthetics of art forms ordinarily addressed in specialty texts and advanced art history courses.

From the Back Cover

This second edition offers an expanded treatment of indigenous visual expression created in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Author **Lynn Mackenzie** has build a foundation for understanding the context and aesthetics of art forms ordinarily addressed in specialty texts and advanced art history courses

Emphasizing a global perspective, Mackenzie covers representative examples of African, Indian, Southeast Asian, Chinese, Japanese and Oceanic art, along with Andean, Mesoamerican and Native North American traditions. In addition, Non-Western Art constructs a pedagogical framework to support a fast-paced, concentrated approach. Additional support for teaching and learning has been included through:

- Study and discussion questions at the end of each chapter
- Additional material on each region, including expanded bibliographies to encourage student research and further reading
- A glossary that includes general art terms as well as terms specific to the study of Non-Western material

- General regional maps for each of the nine global regions discussed in the book

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Loretta Yoder:**

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in each way. By being competitive currently, people have to do something to make all of them survive, being in the middle of the crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated it for a while is reading. Yes, by reading a guide your ability to survive improves then having a chance to stay than other is high. For you who want to start reading a new book, we give you this particular Non-Western Art: A Brief Guide book as a starter and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

#### **Aaron Blue:**

Do you consider one of those people who can't read gratifying if the sentence is chained from the straightway, hold on guys that aren't like that. This Non-Western Art: A Brief Guide book is readable by you who hate the straight word style. You will find the details here are arranged for enjoyable looking at experience without leaving even decrease the knowledge that want to offer to you. The writer involving Non-Western Art: A Brief Guide content conveys prospect easily to understand by lots of people. The printed and e-book are not different in the information but it's just different as it. So, do you continue to think Non-Western Art: A Brief Guide is not loveable to be your top listing reading book?

#### **William Carroll:**

Is it an individual who has spare time in that case spend it whole day by means of watching television programs or just telling lies on the bed? Do you need something new? This Non-Western Art: A Brief Guide can be the reply, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are so out of date, spending your spare time by reading in this fresh era is common not a nerd activity. So what these textbooks have than the others?

#### **Tim Gonzalez:**

What is your hobby? Have you heard which question when you got learners? We believe that that issue was given by teacher to their students. Many kinds of hobby, Everyone has different hobby. Therefore you know that little person similar to reading or as reading become their hobby. You have to know that reading is very important as well as book as to be the thing. Book is important thing to provide you knowledge, except your current teacher or lecturer. You discover good news or update regarding something by book. Numerous books that can you go on to be your object. One of them is actually Non-Western Art: A Brief Guide.

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