Welcome to the Diekemper Gallery of Pre-Columbian Art!

Art created in Central and South America before the 15th century is referred to as Pre-Columbian art, which is artwork created before the voyage of Christopher Columbus in 1492. Pre-Columbian cultures believed in many different deities (gods) who controlled all aspects of life and nature. In this gallery, there are a variety of objects made by the historical people of Colombia and Panama. Ranging from sparkling beads and shiny gold, to earthy pots and figures, the items in this gallery had great meaning in Pre-Columbian culture. Some items had a practical use, like for drinking, and some were important reminders of symbols, such as opposing forces like good vs. evil.

Rededicated in 2005, many of the interesting artifacts in the Diekemper gallery of Pre-Columbian Art were donated by Ray J. Diekemper Jr. and Lou Dunn Diekemper. Ray attended Stanford and Harvard before moving to Lubbock, TX. He became an independent oil operator, and he and his wife became active members of the Lubbock community participating in organizations such as the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce, the Lubbock Economic Council, YWCA, Women’s Protective Services, Junior League of Lubbock, the Science Spectrum board, and both were founding members of the South Plains Food Bank. Ray passed away in 1999. Lou Dunn Diekemper is still a generous benefactor of both Lubbock and Texas Tech University.

Pottery

Groups living in Pre-Columbian times made pottery for many reasons. They made vessels of all sizes and shapes using a coil method: building the walls from a long string of clay before smoothing them out and adding pictures or shapes.

All the pottery that you see here was made by hand. Pre-Columbian cultures did not have the modern techniques that we have today. They decorated their pottery by incising (carving) designs onto the clay and painting them with minerals they found in their area.
PRE-COLUMBIAN JEWELRY

Some of the Pre-Columbian groups in Colombia and Peru made jewelry from all kinds of stones and metals, such as **carnelian** (brownish-red), **crystal** (clear), **jasper** (red, yellow, brown, or green), and **gold** (yellow).

The Tairona (tay-ou-nah) of Colombia was a group that lived in the regions now known as Cesar, Magdalena, and La Guajira (La gua-ji-ra). The Tairona civilization is well-known for its gold-work. In their society, gold was worn and utilized by all people, not just the elite. Their gold artifacts consist of pendants, nose ornaments, earrings, and necklaces.

**Jadite and carnelian beaded necklace**
Tairona
Colombia
400 AD – 1500 AD

**Shell necklace**
Momche
Peru
400 AD – 1500 AD

**Tumbaga earrings**
Sinú’
Colombia
100 AD – 1600 AD
RATTLE FIGURES
A group called the Quimbaya (kimbyeuh) made rattle figures shaped like humans. The rattle figures are hollow and contain a small pebble or clay ball inside.

Clay “rattle figure”
Quimbaya
Colombia
1000 AD – 1400 AD

ZOOMORPHIC DESIGNS
Sometimes Pre-Columbian cultures made pottery shaped like animals; this is called a zoomorphic (zohuhmauorfik) object. The animal shapes were symbols for different ideas in the groups’ lives. For example, a snake meant life, while jaguars (a type of big cat) were symbols of power and thunder.

BE ALERT!
There are animals in this gallery. See if you can find them all and check them off on this list.

- Armadillo
- Bird
- Crab
- Eagle
- Fish
- Frog
- Jaguar
- Sea Creature
- Serpent
- Shark
- Snake
- Owl

VERAGUAS
The Veraguas (veraugwa)s, a group from Panama, created plates with “feet” that had animal designs painted onto the surface.

USE THE SPACE BELOW TO DESIGN YOUR OWN VERSION OF A VERAGUAS PLATE!
MATCH GAME
SEE IF YOU CAN MATCH THE WORD WITH ITS DEFINITION!

DRAW A LINE FROM THE WORD ON THE LEFT TO ITS DEFINITION ON THE RIGHT!

A. ALLOY (al-oi)–
B. CLAY (kley)–
C. PRE-COLUMBIAN (kuh-luhn-bee-uhn)–
D. POTTERY (pot-uh-ree)–
E. SYMBOL (sim-buhl)–
F. VESSEL (ves-uhl)–
G. TUMBAGA (tum-ba-ga)–
H. ICONOGRAPHY (ahy-kuh-nog-ruh-fee)–
I. INTERLAYING REGION (in-ter-ley-ing ree-juhn)–
J. CAYMAN (key-muh-n)–
K. ZOOMORPHIC (zoh-uh-mawr-fik)–
L. ANTHROPOMORPHIC (an-thruh-puh-maur-fik)–
M. COIL METHOD (koil meth-uhd)–
N. ANNEALING (uh-neel-ing)–
O. ALCARRAZA (al-car-raza)–

1. A container for holding liquid.
2. Strengthening (or hardening) and applying colors on pottery by heating and then cooling the object slowly.
3. The present-day lands of Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, and Ecuador.
4. Things made out of clay that are baked until hard.
5. An object, letter, or animal that represents an idea or natural phenomena.
6. A metal made by mixing two or more metals used for various things like coins, jewelry, etc.
7. An earthy material that is flexible when wet (but hard when baked) that is used for brick, tile, and pottery.
8. A recurring thematic element of an artistic work.
9. The time before Christopher Columbus came to America in 1492.
10. The winding of clay in a continuous series of loops, like a “coil of rope,” which is then paddled into the shape of a vessel.
11. A basic jar form with double spouts connected by a handle.
13. A Central and South American reptile similar to a crocodile or alligator.
15. An animal-shaped form.

ANSWER KEY

1. 6–10
2. 1–5
3. 6–8
4. 1–10
5. 6–10
6. 6–12
7. 1–15
8. 1–15
9. 1–15
10. 1–15
11. 1–15
12. 1–15
13. 1–15
14. 1–15
15. 1–15

HOW TO READ A LABEL IN THE GALLERY
First line: Object
Second line: Culture
Third line: Country
Fourth line: Date
HOW DO I SAY THAT?

CULTURES FROM COLOMBIA:
- Calima (cah-lee-ma)
- Muisca (moy-sca)
- Quimbaya (kim-byeh-uh)
- Tairona (tay-oo-nah)
- Tolima (toe-lee-ma)

CULTURES FROM PANAMA:
- Coclé (ko-klay)
- Veraguas (ver-aug-wa-s)

FUN FACTS
Once thought to be toys, clay whistles and other clay instruments were actually used to play music for entertainment and for special events. How many whistles can you find in this gallery?

ANSWER: 2

Clay amphora water container with face
Quillacinga (quil-la-cin-ga)
Colombia
750 AD-1250 AD

WORD SEARCH

Circle the words. The words can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.

ALLOY   SYMBOL   CAYMAN
CLAY    VESSEL   COIL METHOD
PRE-COLUMBIAN TUMBAGA   ALCARRAZA
POTTERY   ICONOGRAPHY

For definitions, check out the previous page.
CHECK IT OUT!
Follow the links below to learn more about Pre-Columbian Art

ART IS....PRE-COLUMBIAN ART

HTTP://Y2U.BE/QI8NQMQ/0QM
WWW.VISUAL-ARTS-CORK.COM/HISTORY-OF-ART/PRE-COLUMBIAN.HTML
WWW.DEPTS.TTU.EDU/MUSEUMTTU

ON THE COVER
1. Clay amphora water container with face
   Quillacinga
   Colombia
   750 AD-1250 AD

2. Clay owl effigy
   Alcarraza
   (Earthenware container)
   Calima
   Colombia
   300 AD-1300 AD

3. Tumbaga earrings
   Sinú’
   Colombia
   100 AD-1600 AD