

# Ancient Greek Art



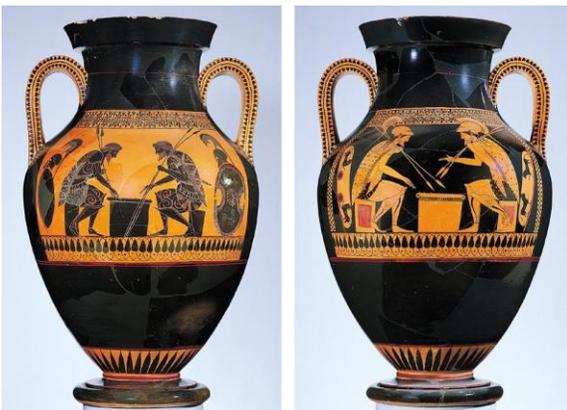
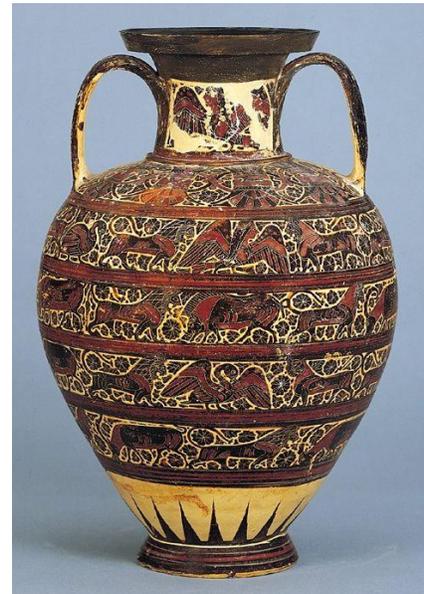
## Dipylon Krater (Period: Geometric, 900-700 B.C.)

Geometric period was named this because the art is based around geometric principles. This was found in the Dipylon cemetery. Usually these were used to mix wine; however, holes were drilled in the bottom of the vase and placed on top of the grave. Mourners could pour wine into and it would drip down to the body. It was created in separate pieces and baked in a kiln. Slip was used to create the images and decorations. **Slip**— same as clay, but it is thinned with water. During the firing process the oxygen turns the slip black. There is a **meander** pattern at the top of the vase (maze pattern). There is geometric repetition throughout the vase. The top register of the vase is depicting a funeral pyre. The bottom register of the vase is depicting a war being waged with a celebratory game (to celebrate the people who were still alive). Ancient Greeks celebrated life, not death like the Egyptians.

## Corinthian Black-Figure Amphora

(Period: Orientalizing, 700-600 B.C.)

This would have been used in the home. There are more organic forms being used and less geometric forms. **Horror vacui**—fear of blank/ open space (every inch of the vase is covered in decoration). The top of the vase has a bird with a woman's head (considered evil in the Greek culture). There are boars and horses on the vase (local animals) as well as lions and tigers (exotic animals). **Palmettes**— flower motif (looks like little flowers or sun bursts). The technique for black figure is created by outlining the forms first and then they fill in the figure. They manipulate the slip to get different colors when it is fired in the kiln. A sharp instrument called a stylus (looks like a dentist pick) is used to incise the lines. It was called black figure because all the people and pictures look black (who would have guessed? 😊)



## Achilles & Ajax

(Period: Archaic means "old", 600-480 B.C.)

Made for a wealthier class, it is not cluttered and has a single register. This is a narrative scene of Achilles and Ajax before they go to war; it's the calm before the storm. They have their helmets and shields ready just in case they need to spring into action. This is a **red figure technique**; it was preferred because it allowed more freedom in the thickness of the lines. Instead of painting the images, you paint the negative space. It also gave the figures a more natural skin tone. It uses the angle of the shields, eyes, spears and hands to draw the viewer's attention to the dice game. There is symmetry and balance on each side.



## Goals for Greek Sculpture:

Artist is interested in muscles and anatomy. The quest for sculptures is to find the cultural ideal, perfect human body with all the right proportions and measurements. They wanted to create lifelike three dimensional sculptures. The male nude is investigated more than the female body and proportions.



## Kroisos, Anavysos (Period: Archaic means "old", 600-480 B.C)

Proportions are more natural and the statue has an open form. The figure is carved from all sides. The muscle definition is more realistic with a smooth transition of body parts. The figure is still rigid and stiff with its stance. This was a grave marker for a fallen war hero. This would have been painted. He has an archaic smile which is typically seen for statues at this time.

## Polycleitus, Spear bearer

(Period: Early & High Classical 480-431 B.C)

Polycleitus wrote the Canon on the ideal human and how it can be represented with proportions and ratios. He believed that a body needed to be balanced, but also show beauty. He discovers **contrapposto**, which shows the shifting of weight and muscle movement. One leg supports the body's weight while the other leg is used for balancing. The sculpture has classical features: he's not smiling, he has full and puffy lips, he has a heavy chin/ jaw area and he has normal sized eyes. This is the ideal for the Greek culture= athletic and youthful.



## Lysippos, The Scraper

(Period: Early & High Classical 480-431 B.C)

Lysippos was the court artist for Alexander the Great. He challenged the Canon and the way sculptures were represented; he believed the body should be longer and leaner. The fig leaf is not Greek or original, it was added later by the command by the Council of Trent during the 1550's. Sculptures now have a heart shaped face instead of a heavy squared shaped head. The curls don't fall in symmetrical curls anymore (like the Spearbearer). It is not like classical art because it doesn't have a single, dominant point of view. This sculpture makes you walk all the way around it because of its multiple view points. Open sculpture (NEW!!!), his arms are extended outward.

## Old Market Woman

(Period: Hellenistic, 323-31 B.C)

This sculpture depicts a dirty and poor old woman (NEW!!). This depiction of imperfection and everyday people has never been done or seen before. She appears tired, weary and thin; her chest bones are visible. Before this, the art appealed to the intellect, it was based on math and appealed more to the eye. Now, the artists are trying to bring out an emotional response from the viewer. She is clothed with wet clinging drapery to show her legs and shape of her body and to create movement within the sculpture. Women were rarely shown nude.

