SELF-GUIDES TO
THE ART INSTITUTE OF
CHICAGO

How to Use the *Ancient Art and Ideas through the Ages* Self-Guides

The following self-guides, *Ancient Art and Ideas through the Ages*, provide students with the opportunity to discover the impact of ancient Greece and Rome on art from later periods. These three age-appropriate self-guides will lead students to related objects in the collections of American arts, European decorative arts, European painting, and Modern and contemporary painting and sculpture. Photocopy the appropriate self-guide for students to use at the museum, or adapt all three of them to meet your students' needs.

Prior to using these self-guides at the museum, prepare your students in the classroom by using this *Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World: Egypt, Greece, Italy* teacher manual.

In the classroom:
- look for "Ancient Mediterranean Connections" referenced under each object included on the self-guide
- prepare your students by discussing and showing them transparencies or slides of these "Ancient Mediterranean Connections"

At the museum,
- a teacher or chaperone must accompany students at all times.
- remind students to look, not touch.
- remind students to use pencil only.
- remind students not to use cases, pedestals, or walls as writing surfaces.
- consult a museum map for gallery locations and/or ask a security guard for assistance in finding specific galleries.

*Because objects in the museum's collection often rotate or may be loaned for a special exhibition, some of the works listed in this guide may not be in the galleries at the time of your visit.*
ANCIENT ART AND IDEAS THROUGH THE AGES
A Self-Guide to Related Objects for High School Students

Art from ancient Greece and Rome had a profound impact on art through the ages. Ancient myths, architecture, artistic styles, clothing, and history can be found in American, European, and 20th-century works of art. Explore these works of art to discover their connections to the ancient world!

Go to the American Arts galleries

For the artist Elihu Vedder, the three Fates symbolized humanity's lack of control over its own destiny. According to Greek mythology, the Fate Clotho spins the thread of life with her spindle. Lachesis uses a distaff to fix its length, and Atropos cuts it with shears when it is time.

- Locate and identify the Fates' implements of life and death.
Besides the subject matter of this painting, how else does the artist make references to ancient Greece and Rome?

Gallery 174
Elihu Vedder (1836–1923)
The Fates Gathering in the Stars, 1887
Oil on canvas

(Ancient Mediterranean Connections:
Funerary Stele, image 11; Fragment of a Sarcophagus, image 10)
Bacchantes (the Roman equivalent of the Maenads) were the mythological female followers of the god of wine Bacchus (known as Dionysos in Greece).

- What Bacchante attribute (identifying object) does MacMonnies include in this sculpture?
- How does this figure express wild abandonment?
- How does this behavior differ from the preferred behavior of women in ancient Greece and Rome?

(Ancient Mediterranean Connection: Stamnos, image 10)

Go to the European Painting galleries

Spending most of his artistic career in Rome, Nicolas Poussin was immersed in ancient art and history. This painting reveals the influence that ancient Rome had on Poussin’s style. Here, Saint John, one of the four evangelists who wrote the Gospels of the Bible’s New Testament, is dressed as a Roman orator. As such, he composes the Book of Revelation on the Greek island of Patmos.

- How does Poussin suggest the vanished glory of the ancient Mediterranean world?

(Ancient Mediterranean Connections: Relief of a Fallen Warrior, image 18; Architectural Relief Showing a Gigantomachy, image 14)
Lady Sarah Bunbury was known for her beauty. In this portrait she makes a sacrifice to the Three Graces—the attendants of Venus, who, like the Roman goddess of love, were also personifications of grace and beauty. How does the artist make this late-18th-century scene look as if it were depicted in ancient Rome?

- Describe the interaction between Lady Sarah Bunbury and the Three Graces.
- Look closely at the upper part of Lady Sarah's robe. What color is it in contrast to its lower part? Symbolically, to what might this be an allusion?

Go to the Modern and Contemporary Art galleries.

In Greek mythology, Zeus turned into a swan and lay with Leda, a mortal woman. The artist Constantin Brancusi explained, “I could never imagine a male being turned into a swan, impossible, but a woman, yes, quite easily. Can you recognize her in this bird? She is kneeling, bent backwards.”

- Look carefully at this marble sculpture and identify Brancusi’s transformation of a woman into a swan. What do you think the round, concrete base is supposed to represent?
- How might this sculpture’s form remind you of Cycladic art?

- What other connections to ancient Greece and Rome can you find at The Art Institute of Chicago?