

Script for Audio Guide

Welcome to the Pre-Columbian and Western Art Gallery. Pre-Columbian Art is a broad category that comprises the art of North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. The subjects ranged from natural elements and animals to conceptual subjects like gods, demons and sexual pleasure. Gods were not believed to exist beyond the world. In the Pre-Columbian culture, “The Sun” was believed as the highest deity.

Stop 1- Human Masks. These were used for traditional dances and ceremonies in Mexico. Most were made from wood, while others from leather, wax, cardboard and other material. Common depictions in masks include old men, women, animals, demons or devils.

Stop 2- Vessels. Stirrup spout vessels are type of ceramic vessels, common among several Pre-Columbian cultures of South America. The double spout and bridge vessel was a form of ceramic drinking container developed on the Peruvian coast. Initially the Paracas designed them from the art of Chavin culture on the vessel surface but later, they began to treat the vessel as sculptural form.

Stop 3- Standing Warrior. Mexico has a history of warriors. Its native population has been known for their courage and bravery in battle, which they carry even today. The standing warrior symbolizes the sense of pride that Mexicans have in their warrior heritage.

Stop 4- The Metate Stone. Also known as the grinding stone. It was found in Costa Rica. The stone was used for grinding spices by the indigenous people in about 300 BCE- 300 CE.

Stop 5- Corn Popper vessel. This is a Peruvian pottery made from red clay by indigenous people around 200-700 CE. Maize was a prominent crop grown in Peru. This vessel with a long-necked human was used by the Moche civilization. It was probably used to toast and pop the kernels. The popped corn (quersu) was favorite amongst them as poppers.

Stop 6- Yoke Showing Jaguar Head. The U- shaped Yokes began during the 300 BC- 300 AD. They were worn by the ballplayers on their waist while playing the Ball Game to protect their hips and abdomen from the impact of solid rubber ball. This yoke is made of stone and is beautifully carved with jaguar head.

Stop 7- Gold Crown. A tall Egret is flaring top of the circular band, which has 3 head of priests embossed on it and it reaches in 4 divisions on top. The priests probably indicates, that Inca Kings combined in their kingship the two officer heads of administration and religion. The Inca ruler's crown was distinguished by a headband on a scarlet, with small golden tubes which fell on his forehead.

Stop 8- Metamorphosis. Designed by Alex Sastoque, it is a polished bronze sculpture of an AK-47 rifle turned into a shovel. It was designed under the theme "Let's Cultivate peace" with an aim to turn weapons into sculptures that are peace symbols.

Stop 9- Madonna and Child. It is a depiction of a popular theme of painting of Virginia and a Child or Mary and Jesus as a child. The theme dates to Byzantine era, and throughout the centuries many different variations have been made, but they all symbolize similar ideology of maternal love, devotion and central role of Mary in Christian Theology.

The Pre-Columbian art and culture, resembles the Indian culture in many ways. The metate or the grinding stone was used to grind spices, the Corn goddess was worshiped, the textiles, embroideries and bands used floral and geometrical designs. In India, grinding stones are still being used, we worship the Annapurna Devi and geometric and floral motifs can also be seen in Indian textiles.