**Overview**

This Teacher Resource Guide was developed as part of the Fulbright Hayes Group Project Persianate World Study in conjunction with CMES and the University of Arizona. Ceramics and Culture: *The Story of Uzbekistan Ceramics* present an opportunity for educators, grades K – 12, to look deeply into the forms and functions of objects to understand more about the cultures that formed the pieces and the history of the times in which they were produced. Uzbekistan, where Persian ceramics reached its apogee is composed of a wide variety of cultures, religions and ethnicities. Looking into the history and beliefs of these peoples gives all of us a greater understanding of how to get along as a global community today. Tracing the trade routes of these ceramic pieces and witnessing how Uzbek transformed this art form is an excellent example of vibrant intercultural exchange. Using this resource guide as an impetus to study cultures through objects and as a jumping off point for developing creative expression in students is an informative way of assisting

**Educational Objectives:**

Teachers and students will understand that the study of *Uzbek Pottery* informs us about the history of the times in which it was created, the politics of those times, the dominant religions, the dress of the period, foods that were popular and the influences of the cultures that created it. Teachers and students will understand that the creation of *Persianate Ceramics* embodies relationships between diverse cultures and religions such as: Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Teachers and students will experience the way that trade patterns impacted Uzbekistan ceramics. illustrates trade patterns and allow global citizens to comprehend who they are in relation to history, culture and artistic expression.

The following standards are addressed in the lesson plans:

National Standards for Arts Education Content Standards for the Visual Arts Grades K – 12

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

2. Using knowledge of structures and foundations.

3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.

6. Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

**Time Line**

**7th-8th centuries** - Arabs conquer the area and convert its inhabitants to Islam.

**9th-10th centuries** - Persian Samanid dynasty becomes dominant and develops Bukhara as important center of Islamic culture. As it declines, Turkic groups compete to fill the vacuum.

**13th-14th centuries** - Central Asia conquered by Genghis Khan, and becomes part of Mongol empire.

**14th century**- Mongol-Turkic ruler Tamerlane establishes empire with Samarkand as its capital.

**18th-19th centuries** - Rise of independent Uzbek states of Bukhara, Kokand and Samarkand.

**Introduction**

 It is known from history, that ceramics is one of the oldest of ancient handicraft arts. Ceramics has been developed in many villages and cities of Uzbekistan and each region has its own distinctive features

“When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy.”  
― **Rumi- 13th -century Sufi Poet of Persian Literature.**

Ceramics mirror culture. Many ceramic objects are used every day, the plates we eat off of, the cups we drink from. Their forms and decorations are a visual and physical presence which reflect economy, society, politics and religion. This is especially true of Uzbekistan; whose pottery likens it to a ceramic version of the painted canvas.

**Questions for discussion**

1. How and why do everyday objects tell us about the culture that produces and uses them?

2. What does your household use every day that reflects culture or tells a story?

3. What ceramic objects do you use at home? Where are they from? Do you know who made them?

**Islamic Origins of Uzbekistan Pottery**

During the 7th century, Arab invaders brought Islam to Uzbekistan. For the next 200 years, Islamic culture became firmly established. The Samanid dynasty rose in 819 CE. The most important contribution of the Samanid age to Islamic Art is the pottery produced at Samarkand. The Samanids developed a technique known as slip painting: mixing semifluid clay (slip) with their colors to prevent the designs from running when fired with the thin fluid glazes used at that time. Bowls and simple plates were the most common forms made by Samanid potters. The potters employed stylized motifs such as horsemen, birds, lions, and bulls’ heads as well as Arabic calligraphic design. Polychrome pieces usually used, bright yellows, greens, black, purples, and reds being the most common.

The contributions which came from the Islamic Arab world included the potter’s wheel, a style of kiln and the techniques for producing tin-glazed earthenware as well as the introduction of glazed ceramic tiles used to decorate architectural structures. What are other elements of Islamic art that infuse the forms of Islamic artists are followers of Mohammed (c. 570 – 630), the founder of Islam. The important texts of Islam are the Qu’ran and the Hadith. Artists are discouraged to create figurative images as they are forbidden in the mosque. Therefore, Islamic artists tend to work with purely decorative, non-figurative forms. Script and calligraphy are regarded as very high art forms because of their association with the Qu’ran. Geometric figures, stylized vegetal motifs and non-representational designs became a dominant part of Arab artistic inspiration. Islamic art is often characterized by the fear of open spaces. Highly intricate patterns and decorative motifs, often the use of dots are an element that distinguished the influence of Muslim artisans. Islamic culture emphasized the role of the artist as part of a larger tradition, one with exacting standards and established design frameworks and techniques. Patterns and design were passed down from masters to apprentices to people who made humble utilitarian objects for everyday use. Even mundane objects, such as plates and bowls are embellished to show an appreciation for all aspects of everyday life

**Questions for discussion**:

1. What ideas and/or expressions that change our current technologies come from other countries or other cultures? (Think about computers, the automobile industry and music.)

2. How does one invention trigger change?

3. What are your favorite inventions and when were they invented?



Islamic Pottery Plate Samanid Plate

Calligraphic Plates

Objectives

1. Students will understand that calligraphy is a significant element of Islamic art and that it was used to decorate ceramics (historical and cultural understanding).

2. Students will recognize stylistic elements of Islamic calligraphy and design (perceiving, analyzing and responding).

3. Students will make their own plate design utilizing calligraphy as a decoration (creating and performing).

Materials

This project may be done as a simple design project or as a completed ceramic object. You will need newsprint, drawing paper, paper plate to be designed or made, drawing pencils, erasers, compasses and markers or colored pencils. If your students will be completing plates you will need clay, tools, water, a kiln, glazes and brushes.

Motivation

1. Islamic artists use calligraphy to decorate objects of everyday use such as plates, bowls and tiles. Often the common wares are embellished with prayers or other words of inspiration. Show your students examples of decorated ceramic objects and ask them if these decorations change our perception of everyday objects. Ask your students what objects they use every day and how the objects are decorated. Do the decorations have an effect on them? How do they feel about writing as a decoration?

2. Look at Islamic calligraphy (look in the resource section for books on Islamic art) and/or other calligraphy and have your students analyze the forms. Translate some of the phrases (if possible) and discuss their meaning.

3. Direct your students to form small groups and discuss words and/or phrases that inspire them. The groups can write down their favorites and share them with the entire class.

4. Explain that the students are going to decorate a simple plate form with an inspiring word or phrase using calligraphy. Have each student use their own idea or select a word or phrase that had been discussed by the group.

Procedure

1. Students can develop a calligraphic style that relates to the content of their inspiration word or message by drawing and sketching on newsprint.

2. Once they have their idea sketched out they can draw the design on a plate.

3. Students will transcribe their calligraphy onto the circular form of the plate. They can repeat their calligraphy to fill up the plate or just write it once.

4. To color in the design with colored pencils or markers, students can work with the negative spaces as well as the calligraphy.

5. If you are working in a ceramics studio you can either have the students make plates, fire them and glaze them with the calligraphic design or have your students paint in glaze on purchased plates and fire them.

**Videos**

[Uzbekistan-Pottery of Uzbekistan - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tcus645vQNQ)

[**https://youtu.be/Tcus645vQNQ**](https://youtu.be/Tcus645vQNQ)

English Subtitles video length 42 minutes

*Bukhara’s rich handicraft heritage-English pottery begins at 2:30-3:50 in video length 5:02*

<https://www.euronews.com/travel/2015/11/16/bukhara-s-rich-handicraft-heritage?jwsource=cl>

Samarkand, Uzbekistan History: Heart of the Silk Road-English video length 21:11

<https://youtu.be/mDUhxZH8EA8>

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**Curricula**

**Doorways to Islamic Art Spiral-bound – January 1, 1996** by [Sylvia Godlas](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Sylvia+Godlas&text=Sylvia+Godlas&sort=relevancerank&search-alias=books) (Author)

Islamic geometric design provides the territory where history, art, math, and science meet. Doorways to Islamic Art is the vehicle for the encounter. An essential ingredient in your multicultural art library, this kit (book of 99 pages and set of 34 slides) is intended for across-the-curriculum study of Islam and its manifestations in the lives of Muslims in more than fifty countries. Enter the art through five doorways - each exemplifying one of the five characteristics of Islamic Art. Students will learn the vocabulary of the art, do some art exercises, and then create works that will astound everyone. Contains Everything You Need: 34 slides, a written slide narrative, duplicate masters and instructions for two Islamic geometric design projects and lesson plans for both a research project and a critical thinking discussion based on three readings. Can be use wonderfully for 5th grade to adult - social studies/mathematics/art/across-the-curriculum.

**Virtual Museum**

[Unofficial site Museum of applied art of Uzbekistan - Collections - Ceramic articles (artmuseum.uz)](http://www.artmuseum.uz/en/ceramic_products.html)

**Extension Activities**

One of the uses of the plates is for the consumption of food.

The national dish of Uzbekistan is an aromatic rice pilaf known as plov. It is enjoyed as a weekday meal and specially prepared for holidays and wedding feasts.

<https://youtu.be/_cGn8Ja4-RA>

Time: 8:11 English Subtitle

Make the following Plov recipe with your students. Enjoy the food and discuss what cultures influence the ingredients. Have students research the history of recipes in Uzbekistan and discuss whether they were eaten daily or for special occasions.

**Ingredients for Plov Uzbekistan National Dish**

1 lb leg of lamb boneless (beef, or chicken), cut into bite size pieces

* 1 cup basmati rice
* 1 head garlic whole
* 1 large onion thinly sliced
* 2 large carrots cut into thin matchsticks
* 1 tablespoon cumin seeds
* 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
* 1/2 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
* ½ cup barberry zereshk
* 1 cup vegetable broth
* 1 tablespoon salt
* 1 tablespoon oil
* lace the basmati rice in a large bowl and cover with hot water. Set aside.
* Wash the garlic head. Cut about a quarter inch off the top to expose the cloves. Set aside.
* Lightly toast cumin, coriander seeds and peppercorns in a pan for a few minutes. (Take care that they do not burn)
* Grind using a mortar and pestle or a spice grinder. Set aside.
* Heat oil in a large dutch oven over high heat. Add the lamb pieces, stir occasionally until the lamb is browned all around. (crokpot can be used)
* Remove the lamb pieces and set aside.
* Stir in onions and cook, until onion is soft and golden, about 10 minutes.
* Stir in carrots and cook, until carrots are tender, about 10 minutes.
* Add the lamb and mix.
* Sprinkle the mixture of cumin, coriander, peppercorns and add the barberries.
* Add the whole garlic head, mix well. Reduce heat to medium. Cover and cook for 30 minutes.
* Wash and drain the basmati rice. Pour the rice over the lamb mixture in an even layer.
* Slowly pour the vegetable broth in. The rice should be covered in liquid by about ½ inch. Do not stir.
* Season with salt and reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and cook until rice is tender and liquid has been absorbed, about 20 minutes.
* Mix the ingredients as you serve the dish on a platter. Garnish with the garlic head.

**Nutrition**

Calories: 422kcal | Carbohydrates: 64g | Protein: 20g | Fat: 9g | Saturated Fat: 4g | Cholesterol: 46mg | Sodium: 2051mg | Potassium: 451mg | Fiber: 3g | Sugar: 3g | Vitamin A: 5243IU | Vitamin C: 4mg | Calcium: 61mg | Iron: 3mg

**Key Vocabulary**

Fun Extension-Familiarize yourself with the list of common Persian words and phrases to add language learning to the lesson.

1.        salam/ dorood – Hi

2.       sobh bekheyr – Good morning

3.        asr bekheyr – Good evening

4.        khosh amadid – Welcome

5.        haleh shoma chetoreh? – How are you?

6.       khoobam – I’m doing well

7.        (kheily) mamnoon – Thank you (very much)

8.       khodahafez – Goodbye

9.       esme shoma chieh? – What is your name?

10. shoma ahl e koja hastid? – Where are you from?

11.   **(…)** – man ahl e (…) – I’m from ( … )

12.    – bebakhshid – Excuse Me

13. lotfan-*please*

14. baleh-*Yes*

15. nakheyr- *No*