

A large, dark wooden Viking longship is displayed in a museum gallery. The ship is positioned horizontally, with its ornate, curved prow on the right side, featuring a prominent spiral design. The hull is made of dark wood with visible planking. A tall, thin mast stands in the center of the ship. The ship is surrounded by a low metal railing. In the background, there are arched doorways and other museum exhibits. The lighting is soft and focused on the ship.

Viking Art

A Pando Project Presentation with Annabelle



• Stop at 1:36

What do you think when you hear “Viking?”

- Axe wielding
- Brute strength
- Sea pirates
- Horned helmets
- Barbaric
- Art lover????





History

- Vikings = Scandinavians from around 790-1100 CE
 - From Norway, Sweden, and Denmark (not actually the same race)
- In Old Norse, “Viking” means “pirate raid”
- Mass migration to and conquer of England
- But first, raids... a lot of them
- Turn to agriculture and creation of Danelaw
- Traders
- Great navigators
 - Leif Erikson found Canada around 500 years before Columbus

General Art Facts



- Instead of making art for arts sake, Vikings typically jazzed up everyday objects
 - ships, axes, doors, cups, etc.
- Curving, interlocking forms
- Stylized animals
- Minimal writing during the Viking period
- Most writing about the Vikings came from Englishmen centuries after.
 - The Vikings violently raided and took over a lot of England. Can we trust what the English wrote about them?
 - Why do you think Viking art is important then?

Ships

- The Vikings were famous for their ships
- Light, fast, efficient
- Allowed them to raid effectively and travel long distances quickly
- Intricate carvings
 - Typical Viking style of animals woven together
- Once painted in bright colors
- Culturally important
- Most information from ship burials like Oseberg





What's going on here?



Metalwork

- Vikings liked materials they could carve and engrave
 - Wood, stone, metal, bone etc.
- Most of the surviving Viking art is metal jewelry and decorated metal goods. Why do you think that is?
- Vikings liked contrast
 - Inlay work
 - Multiple materials
- Weapons symbolized their owner's social status
 - Swords were expensive
 - Weapons often had names

Activity: Design your own ship!

- The Vikings were well known for their beautiful, fast ships.
- Build your own perfect ship. It doesn't need to be made of wood or even made for water. It can be brightly colored, have whatever decorations you want.
- Come up with a short background story and name for your ship

If you're interested in learning more:

- https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/vikg/hd_vikg.htm
 - Article from the Metropolitan Museum of Art briefly going over Viking culture, art, and history
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wc5zUK2MKNY>
 - Crash Course History segment on Vikings
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTugHSIR4Xs>
 - BBC documentary on Viking art
- https://www.ancient.eu/Viking_Art/
 - Ancient History Encyclopedia entry on Viking art
- <https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/articles/zcpf34j>
 - A BBC Bitesize article about Vikings
- <https://www.history.com/topics/exploration/vikings-history>
 - History.com overview of the Vikings and Viking period
- https://www.ancient.eu/Viking_Ships/
 - Ancient History Encyclopedia entry on Viking ships
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/vikings/weapons_01.shtml
 - BBC article about Viking weapons and warfare