

TEO FIOUACAN

CITY OF WATER
CITY OF FIRE

de Young

Fine Arts
Museums of
San Francisco



IN-GALLERY YOUTH GUIDE

Teotihuacan was an ancient city that flourished in the Valley of Mexico more than 1,500 years ago. This place is known for its massive pyramids and large central avenue, as well as numerous apartment complexes that provided housing for many of its residents. Teotihuacan had a very diverse population, but we don't know what language (or languages) the people spoke. Archaeologists have not discovered a written language that we can understand. Teotihuacan's population quickly declined after the year 550 CE when a large fire destroyed many parts of the city. But people continued to live there, and today it is one of the most-visited archaeological sites in Mexico.



Teotihuacan's architecture and art are still captivating and inspiring today. While archaeologists and scholars have learned a lot through the objects its people left behind, the ancient city still holds many secrets.



Words to Know:

Ancient: very, very old

Archaeologist: a person who studies human history by excavating sites and examining artifacts and other remains

Civilization: a group of people who live and work together creating government, language, laws, religion, art, and culture

Deity: a god or goddess

Fragment: a small piece of a bigger whole

Mesoamerica: region encompassing Mexico and Central America where Olmec, Teotihuacan, Maya, and Aztec, and other civilizations flourished

Murals: a painting, usually large, created directly on the surface of a wall

Offering: something that is given to a god or gods as a part of religious worship

Symbol: an object or image that represents something else

Teotihuacano: person who lived in ancient Teotihuacan

Worship: to show respect for a god or gods especially by praying and having religious services or rituals

Gallery Guidelines:

- Sit with your materials on your lap.
- No lying on the floor or leaning on the walls.
- Stand 18 inches away from the art at all times. Do not touch the art.
- Walk slowly and be aware of other visitors.
- Use pencils only in the gallery. By not using pens, you help ensure the safety of the art.

THE CIUDADELA'S

In 2003 Mexican archeologists discovered a long tunnel under the Feathered Serpent Pyramid. This tunnel had been sealed by Teotihuacanos more than 1,700 years ago. Inside of it, archaeologists found offerings including thousands of objects made out of such materials as shells, ceramic, and precious stones.

When the archaeologist Sergio Gómez Chávez first discovered the tunnel, he was scared to enter because no one had been inside for hundreds of years. He tied a rope around his waist and was lowered into the tunnel.

Discuss

If you were an archaeologist exploring this tunnel, what tools would you bring? (circle)

flashlight	pick	spatula	brush	books	phone
rubber bands	shovel	axe	rubber gloves	other: _____	

What dangers, surprises, or treasures might you find in a tunnel below a pyramid?

Archaeologists discovered four human figures at the end of the tunnel.



Discuss

- How are the four figures similar?
- How are they different?
- Why might Teotihuacanos have placed these at the end of the tunnel?

What words would you use to describe their facial expression? Circle the words:

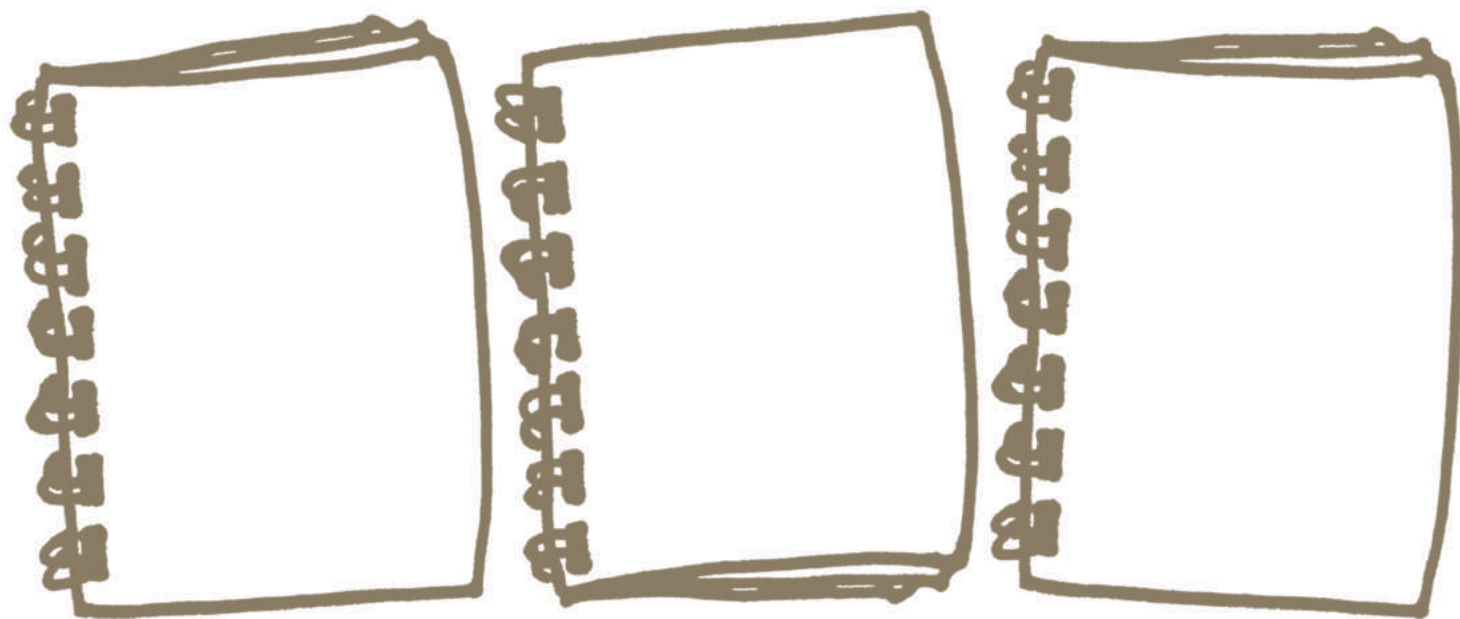
serious	wise	asleep	compassionate
royal	awake	funny	other: _____

“UNDERWORLD”

Also found in the tunnel were seashells with detailed carvings. These shells came from the Caribbean Sea, hundreds of miles away from Teotihuacan.

Sketch

Find these shells in the gallery and sketch the patterns that you see on each shell.



These shells must have had a special significance for the Teotihuacanos since they were buried in the tunnel along with other valuable and sacred objects made of precious obsidian, greenstone, and beautiful ceramics.

Discuss

If you were to make a very important offering, what objects would you choose?

WELCOME TO TEOTIHUACAN

Teotihuacan was a highly organized city. We know very little about the rulers of Teotihuacan, but we do know that these rulers designed the city on a grid; built impressive pyramids, housing, and government buildings; and influenced the way people lived and worshipped. In this gallery, you will learn about the deities of Teotihuacan and the art found in the city.

Solve: Gods of Teotihuacan

Use the clues below to find out more about the gods of Teotihuacan. Draw a line between the god and the riddle that describes the god.

MAIZE



"I POUR DOWN FROM THE HEAVENS WEARING A HEADDRESS, EYE GOGGLES, AND EAR HOOPS. I KEEP THE SOIL MOIST AND GREEN SO THINGS CAN GROW. FROM MY CURLED MOUTH MY FANGS STICK OUT. IN THIS ROOM YOU WILL FIND ME ON MURALS AND JARS! **WHO AM I?**"

STORM



"JUST LIKE THE VOLCANOES IN THE DISTANCE, I AM OLD BUT I CAN STILL BURN! LOOK FOR THE WRINKLES ON MY FACE AND THE LARGE HOOPS ON MY EARS. I WARM HOUSES AND TEMPLES, AND BRING LIGHT TO DARKNESS. I CARRY A HEAVY HEATING PAN ON MY HEAD. HUMANS AND ANIMALS FEAR ME WHEN LEFT UNTAMED. **WHO AM I?**"

FIRE



"I'M A YOUNG MAN OF COLOR GREEN, AND I'M THE GOD OF THE FOOD AND THE FEED. IN THIS GALLERY YOU CAN ONLY FIND MY HEAD! IT'S SHAPED TO LOOK LIKE THE PLANT USED TO MAKE TORTILLAS. **WHO AM I?**"

PLACES ON THE PERIPHERY

Teotihuacan was a city of immigrants. Migrant groups from all over Mesoamerica moved to neighborhoods, or barrios, in Teotihuacan where they maintained the traditions, religions, and languages from their homes while also integrating themselves into the city. They often lived and worshiped together in multi-family apartment complexes.

Life as a Teotihuacano

In this gallery you will find objects that came from the apartment complexes.

Discuss

Can you guess what these objects were used for? It is okay if you can't guess them all—archaeologists are still trying to understand the use of many of these objects. Teotihuacan is a city full of mystery.



USE: _____



USE: _____



USE: _____



USE: _____



USE: _____



USE: _____

WORD BANK

TOY

WORSHIP

TOOL

COOKING

RELIGIOUS
RITUAL

CONTAINER

OTHER

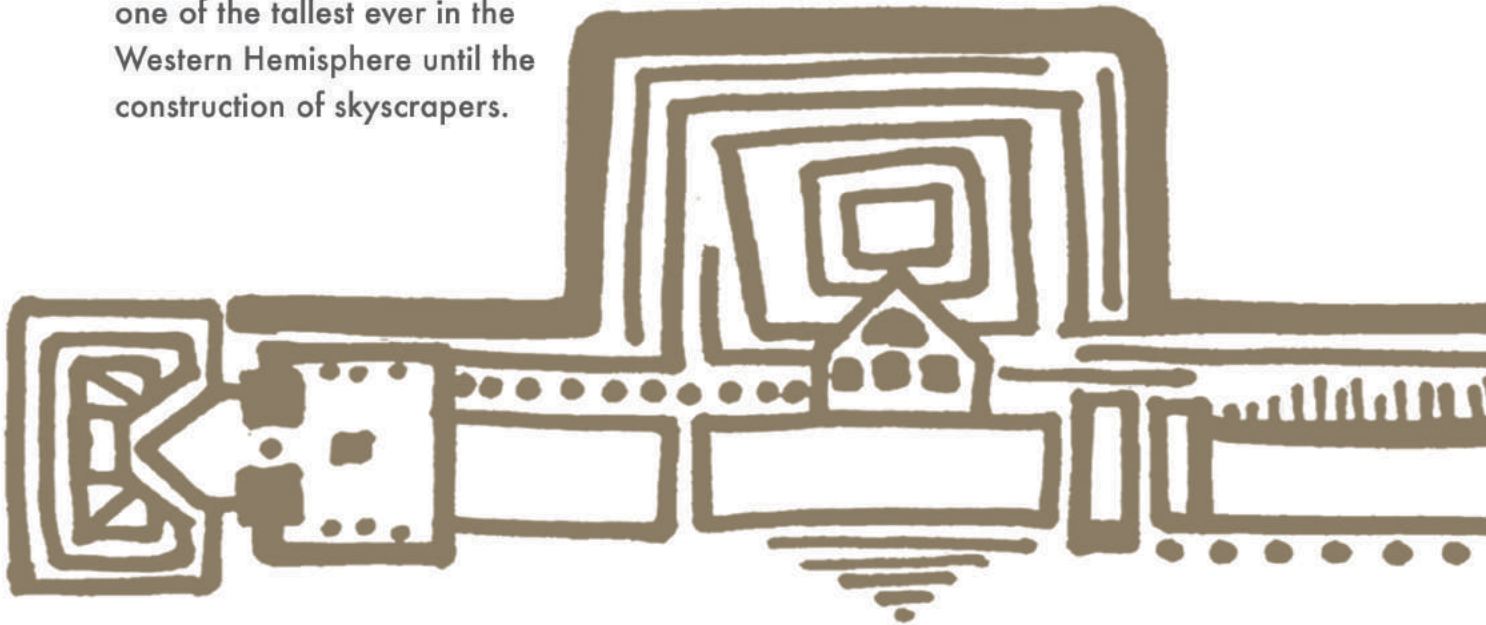
STREET OF

In this gallery you will find objects from buildings and pyramids located along the Street of the Dead, Teotihuacan's largest street. Located on this street are the main government buildings, the Sun Pyramid, Moon Pyramid, and Feathered Serpent Pyramid. These pyramids represent the major places of worship in Teotihuacan.

Archaeologists still don't know much about the religious rituals and traditions of Teotihuacanos, but we can learn something by looking at the art found in the city.

SUN PYRAMID

The Sun Pyramid is one of the largest structures ever built in the ancient world, and it remained one of the tallest ever in the Western Hemisphere until the construction of skyscrapers.



MOON PYRAMID

The Moon Pyramid was one of the Teotihuacan's earliest monuments. Initially it was a very small structure, but more layers were added over time.

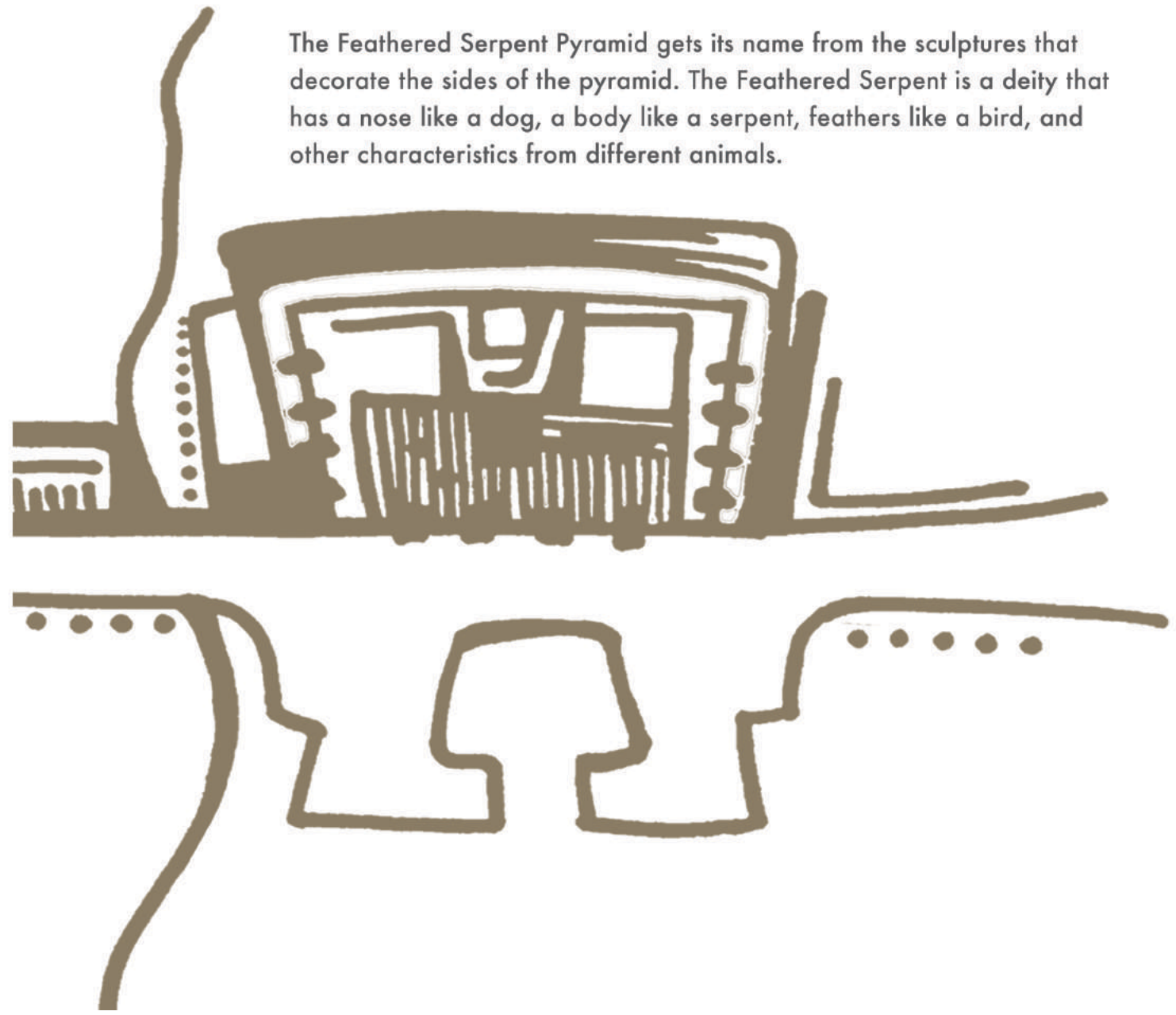
THE DEAD

Activity

Walk around the room and look at the different types of objects. Think about the places where the objects were found. What activities might have taken place at these sites? Do the objects in this gallery give any clues?

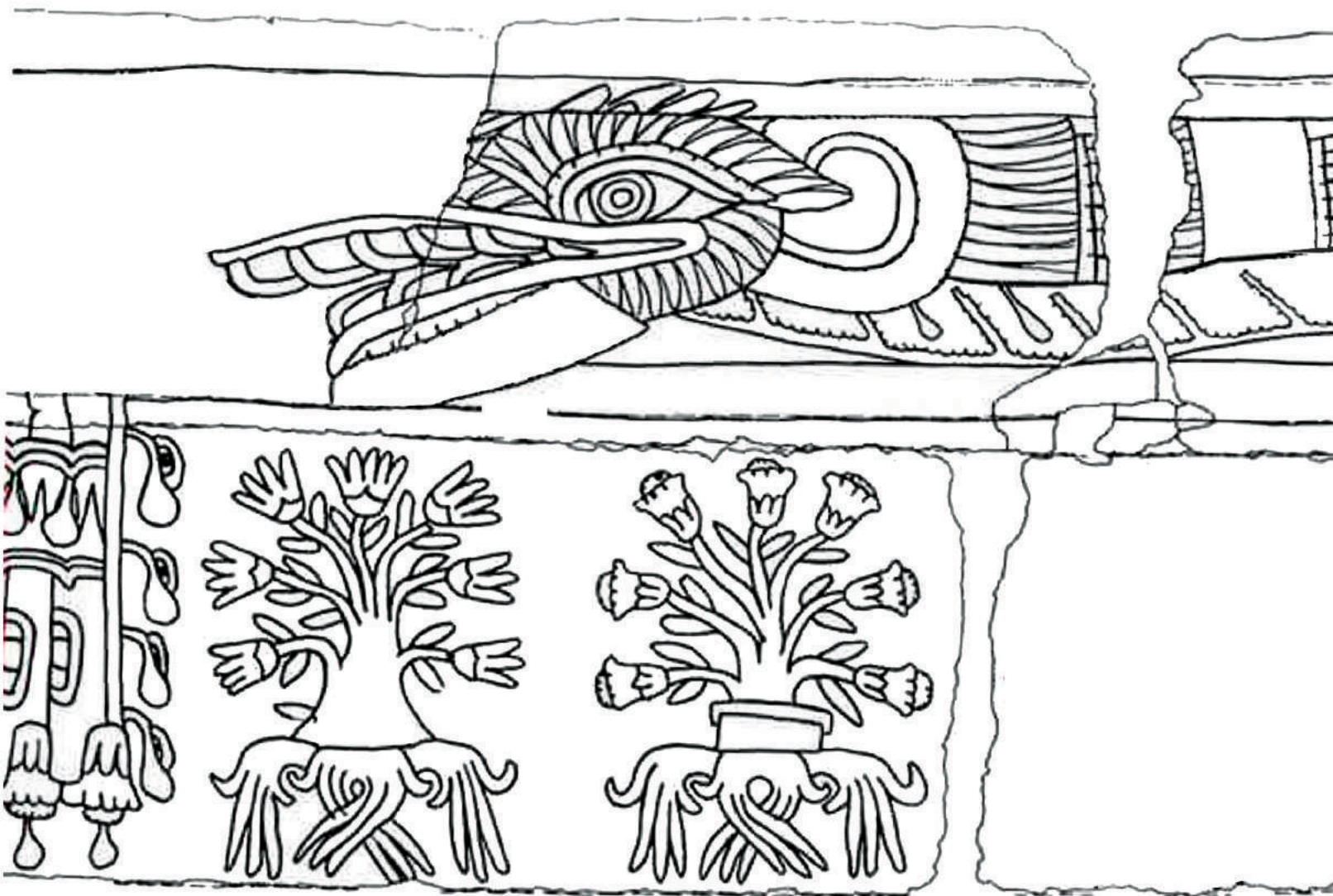
FEATHERED SERPENT PYRAMID

The Feathered Serpent Pyramid gets its name from the sculptures that decorate the sides of the pyramid. The Feathered Serpent is a deity that has a nose like a dog, a body like a serpent, feathers like a bird, and other characteristics from different animals.



TECHINANTITLA

In this room you will find mural fragments from the apartment complex called Techinantitla. Many of the apartments had decorative murals created with red pigments. Many of the murals sparkle because finely crushed powder from a shiny gemstone was added to the pigment. These murals have symbols and messages that archaeologists are still trying to understand. They believe that the murals communicated messages to the people that were important for keeping the city united.

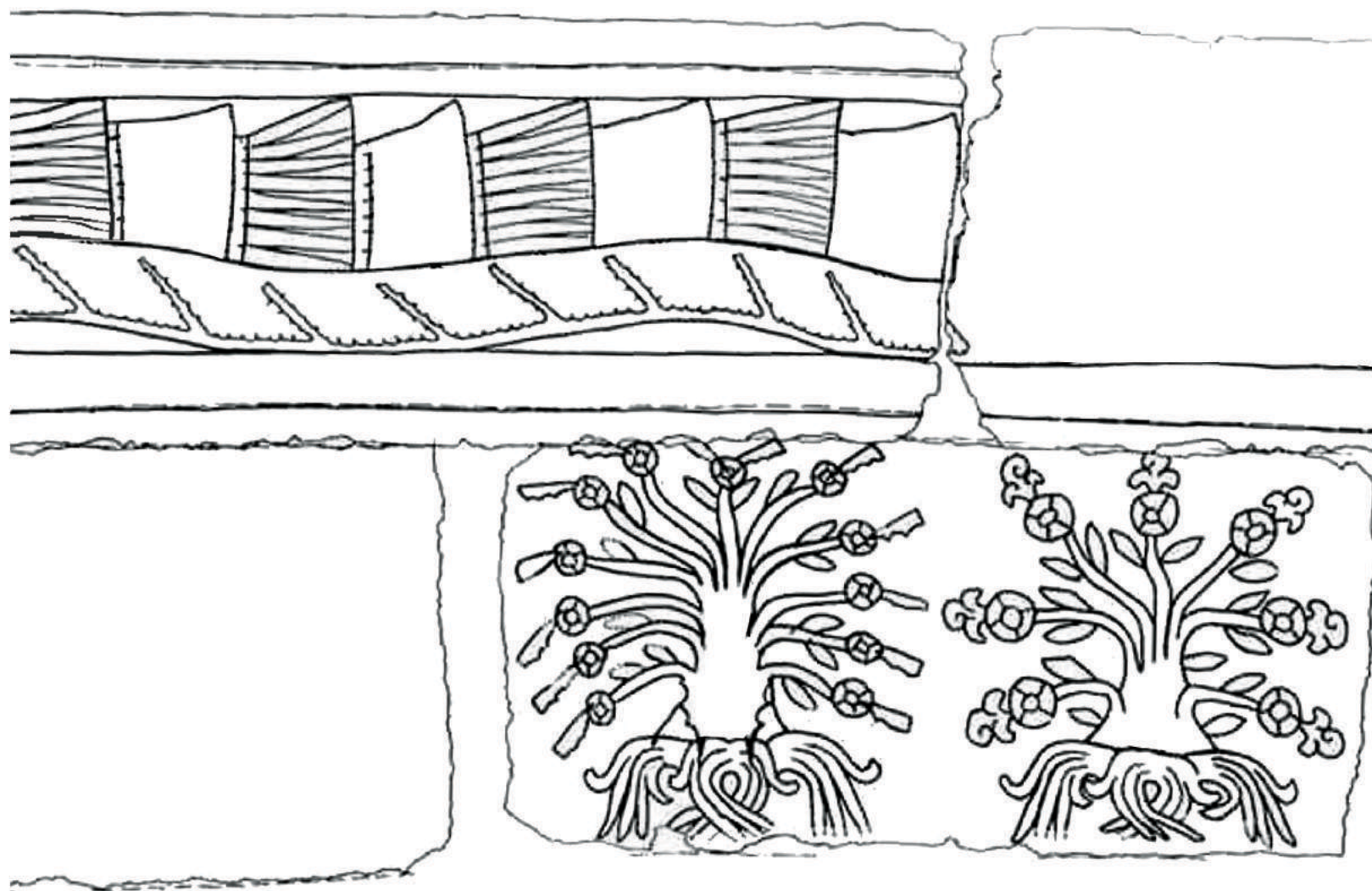


Discuss

Look at the three murals of the Feathered Serpent. Archaeologists think that the trees under the serpents might represent agriculture and life. What other symbols do you see?

Sketch

Look at the mural and complete the drawing below.

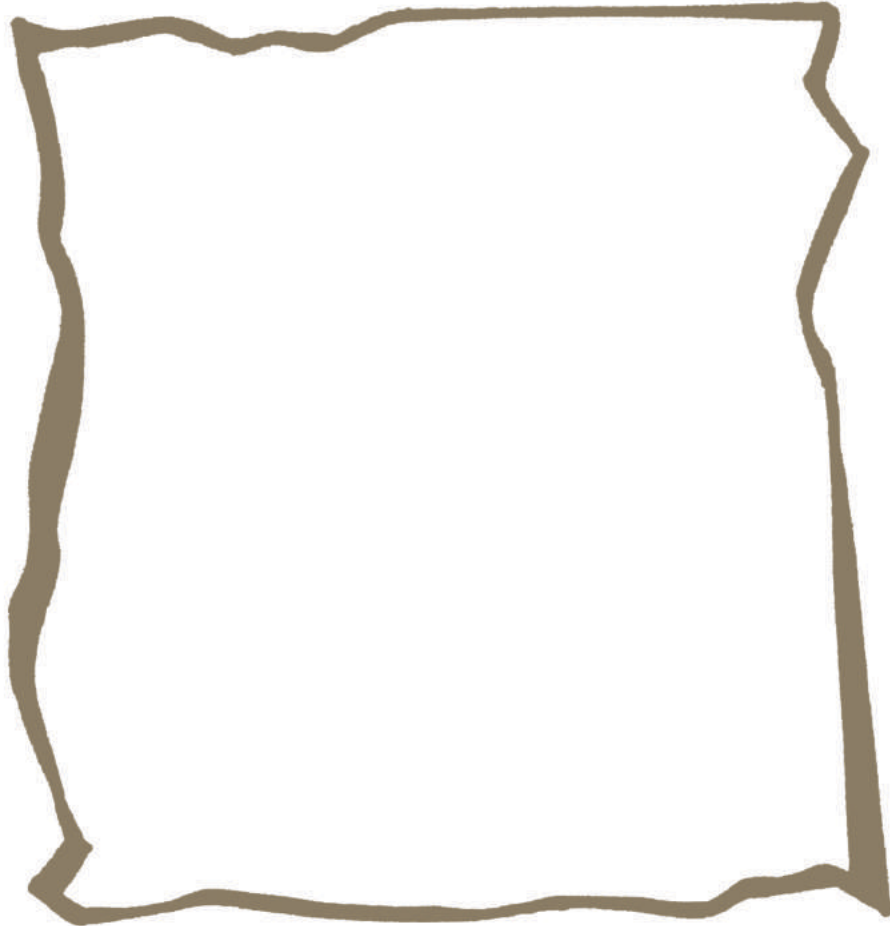


MOON PYRAMID AND XALLA

Sketch

You have seen many objects shaped like people throughout these galleries. Archeologists do not fully understand the significance of these objects.

Sketch your favorite human figure here.



Xalla was a palace where wealthy and powerful people lived. Xalla was violently destroyed around the year 550 CE, at the same time the ceremonial center of Teotihuacan was burned. This marked the beginning of the collapse of the city. The reason for the fire and destruction is still a mystery.

After the collapse, Teotihuacan was never fully abandoned. Groups of people from other parts of Mesoamerica moved into the city. Aspects of the culture specific to Teotihuacan were passed down to the people who came later, including the Aztecs. Some part of Teotihuacano culture is still alive today!

Write

You have reached the end of the exhibition and learned a lot about Teotihuacan. However the city has many mysteries. What more would you like to know? Write your questions below. Maybe one day you will be the one to uncover the truth!

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____





CAPTIONS + CREDITS

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

All photographs are by Jorge Pérez de Lara Elías, © Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH).

Circular relief, 300–450. Stone, 49 1/4 x 40 1/2 x 9 7/8 in. (125 x 103 x 25 cm). Museo Nacional de Antropología / INAH, 10-81807

Aerial view of Teotihuacan

Figurine, 200–250. Ceramic and pigments, 4 1/8 x 4 1/4 x 2 3/8 in. (10.5 x 10.3 x 5.9 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH

Standing figure, 200–250. Greenstone, 14 1/8 x 6 1/2 in. (36 x 16.5 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH

Standing figure, 200–250. Greenstone, 18 1/2 x 7 1/2 in. (47 x 19 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH

Standing figure, 200–250. Greenstone, 20 1/2 x 9 1/4 in. (52 x 23.5 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH

Standing figure, 200–250. Greenstone, 20 1/2 x 9 1/4 in. (52 x 23.5 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH

Incised shell, 150–250. Shell, 14 1/8 x 7 1/2 in. (36 x 19 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH

Effigy urn, 450–550. Ceramic, greenstone, shell, and pigments, 13 1/4 x 8 1/4 x 9 in. (33.8 x 21 x 23 cm). Museo Nacional de Antropología / INAH, 10-393504

Incensario, 200–350. Ceramic, 28 5/8 x 13 3/4 x 13 in. (72.6 x 35 x 33.1 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH

Avian effigy vessel, 250–350. Ceramic, shell, greenstone, and stucco, 9 1/8 x 9 1/2 x 13 3/4 in. (23.2 x 24 x 35 cm). Museo Nacional de Antropología / INAH, 10-80489

Blade core, 400–500. Gray obsidian, 7 1/8 x 5 7/8 x 5 5/8 in. (18 x 14.9 x 14.3 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH

Vessel, 200–250. Ceramic and pigments, 4 1/8 x 6 3/8 x 1/4 in. (10.3 x 16.2 x .5 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH, 10-585238

Mano and metate, 250–350. Basalt, mano: 11 x 2 in. (28 x 5.1 cm); metate: 10 7/8 x 7 1/8 x 2 3/8 in. (27.6 x 18.1 x 6 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH, 10-600130, 10-600131

Standing Figure with Earflares, 200–250. Greenstone, pyrite, and shell, 12 x 4 1/2 x 3 in. (30.6 x 11.4 x 7.6 cm) shells 2 in. (5 cm) and 1 7/8 in. (4.8 cm). Zona de Monumentos Arqueológicos de Teotihuacán / INAH

View of the Moon Pyramid looking north, with the peak of Cerro Gordo in the background

Old Fire God sculpture, 150–550. Stone, 25 9/16 x 24 13/16 x 26 in. (65 x 63 x 66 cm). Museo Nacional de Antropología / INAH, 10-81811

Youth guide developed by Raquel García del Real, museum educator, and designed by Anneliese Salgado, senior teaching artist, at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

de Young

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