

Ancient Civilisations

Myth and Meaning

Many of the paintings and sculptures in the gallery are inspired by Greek and Roman myths. There is also a collection of ancient Greek vases and Roman antiquities.

Myths tell the stories of Greek and Roman gods or immortals, but were also about human beings or mortals living on earth. They acted as a guide to the living. Acts of courage and bravery were rewarded by the gods, while anger and greed could mean severe punishment.

Greek vases



Psykter, Greek

Find this vase in Room 5.

The *psykter* (pronounced sik-ter) was used by the Greeks as a wine cooler. The figure in the centre is Dionysus. **What was Dionysus the god of?** (circle your answer):

Sea & sand

Wine & song

Juice & dance

Can you find any other images of Dionysus in the room? Draw one in the box below:



Krater, mixing bowl

Find this vase in Room 5.

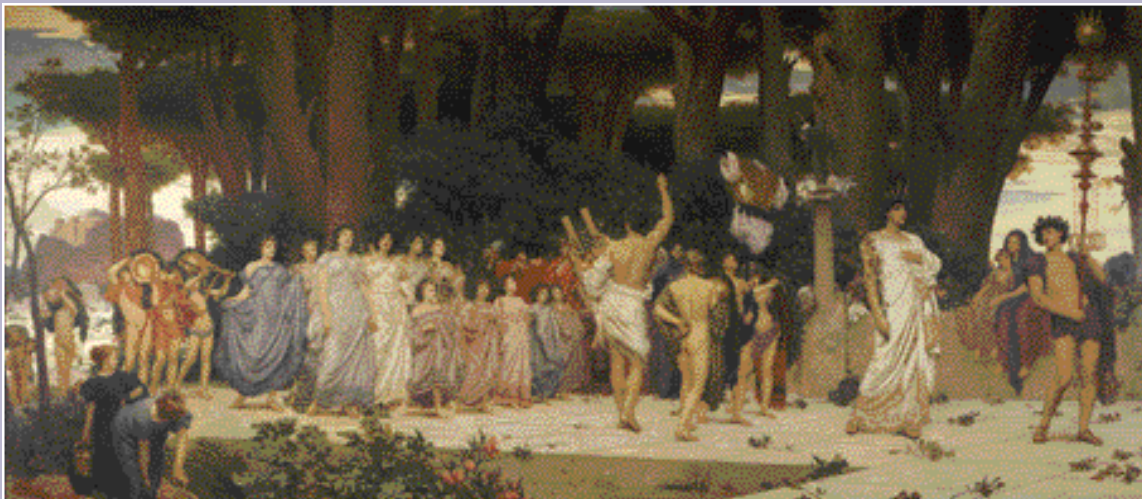
The *krater* was used by the Greeks to mix wine and water together.

What is different about the colour of the figures on this vase?

Did you know?

There are two different types of painting on Greek vases. Black figure painting - like the psykter - showed figures painted with a mixture of black pigment, clay and water. In red figure painting - like the krater - the background was painted with a mixture of black pigment, clay and water so the figures on the vase turned red when it was fired.

Myth and Meaning in Paintings



The *Daphnephoria* by Leighton

Find the largest painting in the gallery pictured above!

This painting shows a parade during the festival to honour Apollo, the sun God. **On the image above, circle the figure you think represents the sun God.**

Look at the background in the painting. What can you see in the distance?

How many figures can you see in the painting?

This painting is over 2.2 metres tall and 5.2 metres wide! **Find another big picture in the gallery and write down the title and artist below:**

Title:

Artist:



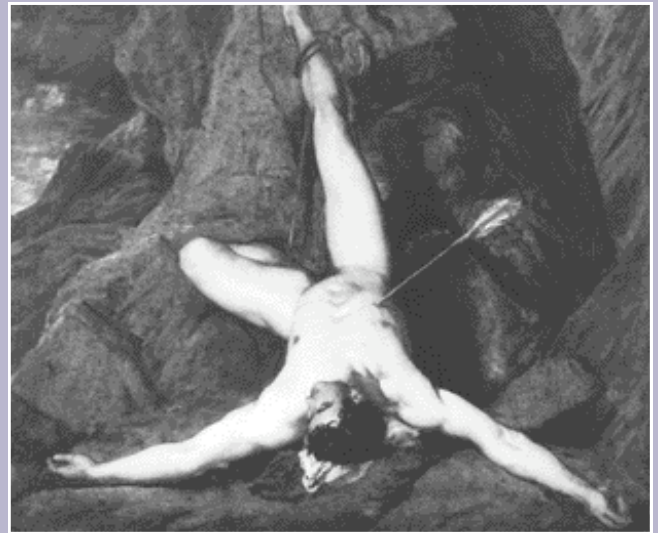
The Garden of Hesperides by Leighton

Find this painting in the gallery. The Hesperides guard the golden apples that will give eternal life to any person who eats them. A dragon also lived in the garden to help guard the apples.

Leighton painted an enormous snake in place of the dragon mentioned in the original myth.

What other animals can you see in this painting?

Draw one of the animals in the box below.



Prometheus by William Etty

Find this painting in the gallery. This painting shows the story of Prometheus who gave fire to mankind. He was punished by Zeus and sent to a mountain.

Who was Zeus? Circle your answer:

- God of fire
- King of the gods
- Prometheus's brother

What is sticking out of Prometheus' chest?

How do you think Prometheus felt while he was being punished? Circle your answers:

- Sad
- Lonely
- Angry
- Energetic
- Hurt
- Tired
- Happy
- Proud

Myth and Meanings in Sculpture



Pandora by John Gibson

Find this sculpture in the gallery. This is a sculpture of Pandora who was the first woman in Greek and Roman mythology. She was given a box by Zeus that contained all the evil and disease in the world.

What do you think she is about to do?

If she opens the box, what do you think will happen?

Pandora did open the box and after all of the evil and disease was let out, there was still “hope” left behind.



Cephalus and Aurora by John Flaxman

Find this sculpture in the gallery. Aurora was the goddess of the dawn or morning and she was cursed by Aphrodite.

Aphrodite was the god of: circle your answer

Hate	Night	Fire
Love	Hope	Light

Because she was doomed, Aurora fell in love with a human called Cephalus.

What do you think this sculpture is made of?

Without touching the sculpture, think about how this material would feel.
