Myths and Legends

Pan, by an unknown sculptor of the French School
Room 19 (North Rotunda)
Introduction to the Gallery

The Lady Lever Art Gallery houses the personal collection of William Hesketh Lever. It contains one of the UK’s finest collections of fine and decorative art. It has the best collection of Wedgwood jasperware anywhere in the world and its collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings is internationally renowned.

The Gallery was founded by William Hesketh Lever (1851-1925) and is dedicated to the memory of his wife Elizabeth. Lever wanted to share his collections with the public. At first he used the village library for small displays, but he needed a bigger building for his collections. Lever personally selected works of art from his huge collection for the Gallery. The Gallery still contains the best of his personal art collection.

Notes

These notes are designed to support Key Stage 2 teachers exploring the collections at the Lady Lever Art Gallery focusing on the theme of Myths and Legends. They provide starting points for discussion, ideas for practical activities and suggestions for extended work. They can be used independently or alongside our staff led Chinese and Greek Myths and Legends session.

What’s on offer at the Lady Lever Art Gallery?

The Education programme at the Lady Lever Art Gallery, offers a range of educational opportunities for individuals and groups to think creatively and enjoy a rewarding gallery experience. For primary and secondary teachers and students the Gallery provides an inspiring environment to explore, investigate and enjoy through activities that enhance the national curriculum. From booking one of our staff-led sessions to exploring the Gallery on your own, the Lady Lever Art Gallery is an ideal place to engage learners.

Self-guided visits

Teachers are welcome to explore the Gallery without direct input from Gallery staff as part of a self-guided visit. We have a range of resources for teachers to utilise, either on their own or with their class.

Education sessions

Book one of our education sessions led by a member of staff, which offer an exploration and hands-on experience of the Gallery. All of our sessions link to the national curriculum and utilise our collections and displays. Booking well in advance is advised. A full listing of all our gallery-led and self-led sessions is listed on our website at liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/learning or by contacting our group bookings team on 0151 478 4788 or bookings@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Teachers’ events

If you are interested in bringing a group to the Lady Lever Art Gallery, we run twilight events for teachers which include guided tours, familiarisation visits and sessions to support you interpreting the collections with your group. The sessions are a great way to keep up to date and learn new skills. For more information or to find out the date of the next event please contact LLAuransat@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Resources

Trails, sketchbooks and pupil booklets can be requested by teachers at the time of booking a visit to the Gallery.

Dish with design of dragons and burning pearl, Qing Dynasty, Kangxi reign, 1662-1722, Room 7
Lady Lever Art Gallery - floor plan

1 The Gallery and Port Sunlight
2 18th and 19th century sculpture
3 & 4 Wedgwood
5 Chinoiserie
6 18th century furniture and paintings including Reynolds, Romney & Vigée Lebrun
7 & 8 Chinese pottery and porcelain
9 Napoleon Room
10 (Main Hall) Victorian painting, including Millais, Rossetti, Burne-Jones & Leighton, sculpture and 18th century furniture
13 Mortlake tapestries and 18th century furniture
14 Gobelins tapestries and 18th century furniture
15, 16 & 17 Special exhibitions and displays
18 Early 18th century Room
19 Classical and 18th century sculpture, Greek pottery
21 Adam Room
22, 23 & 24 18th century furniture and paintings
25 Tudor and Stuart Room
26 Lever the Collector: a history of the Gallery and its founder
27 Tapestries
28 William and Mary Room
30 18th century furniture and 19th century paintings including Etty, Turner & Constable

Balconies
19th and 20th century paintings

Ground Floor

Basement

Café
Shop
Family Activity Rooms
An interactive space for families including puppets, dressing up clothes and story books
Myths and Legends

Before your visit

Pre-visit discussion starters, ideas and activities to support learning prior to visiting the Gallery

Words to investigate
• Myth/mythology
• Legend
• Gods and goddesses
• Heroes and heroines
• Symbolism
• Culture
• Ancient
• Tragedy
• Moral

People and countries to investigate
• Hero and Leander
• Cupid
• Hercules
• Pandora
• Garden of Hesperides
• Ancient China
• Ancient Greece
• Ancient Rome

Enquiry
• Explore myths and legends in literature. (History, Literacy/English, Art & Design)
• Introduce Greek, Roman and Chinese culture and locate these countries on a map. (History, Literacy/English, Art & Design, Geography)
• Introduce images of ancient Greek, Roman and Chinese art. (History, Art & Design)

During your visit

Discussion points, ideas and activities to support learning during your visit to the Gallery
• What is a myth or legend?
• Where might we see heroes and villains in the present day?
• What is a god, hero or heroine?
• Where did the gods live?
• What was their relationship with humans/mortals?
• Why do we have rules?
• What happens when we break the rules?
• What are rewards and punishments?

Enquiry
• Objects in the Gallery can be used as evidence for life in ancient Greece, Rome and China. Discuss how people lived in the past and compare to present day. (History, Literacy/English, Art & Design, Geography)
• Re-create one of the mythological stories using role-play. Discuss and show what happens next in the story. (Drama, Literacy/English, History)
• Making the right choices. Discuss a moral tale such as Pandora who opened a box she was told not to and the consequences for breaking the rules. (Literacy/English, History, SMSC)
• Show facial emotions by taking turns posing as characters from a mythological painting, tapestry or sculpture e.g. happy, sad, confused, envious, loved, despair or fear. (Drama, Literacy/English)
• Acts of courage and bravery were rewarded in mythological stories and anger and greed could mean severe punishment. Explore these themes using Pandora and the Garden of Hesperides. (Literacy/English, History, SMSC)
Objects in Myths and Legends

The Garden of Hesperides
by Frederic Leighton
Room 10 (Main Hall)

- The painting features the Hesperides who were the daughters of the evening.
- The Hesperides were the guardians of the golden apples that would give eternal life to any person who ate them.
- The golden apples were a present given by Gaia, Mother Earth to the goddess Hera on her wedding day to Zeus, the king of the gods.
- The Hesperides lived in a remote garden where they were assisted by Ladon who is shown as a snake. The Hesperides are singing a lullaby to Ladon.
- The theft of the apples is well known as one of Hercules’ Twelve Labours.

Chinese wine pots
Ming Dynasty 17th century
Room 7

- The peach is an important symbol of long life and immortality, sacred to the Daoist goddess Xiwang Mu, the Queen Mother of the West in ancient Chinese culture.
- Daoism began as a set of ideas rather than a faith based religion. Its teachings encouraged people to seek harmony with nature by following the Dao, or way of the universe.
- The Chinese philosopher Laozi, who lived around 6th century BC, is generally regarded as the founder of Daoism.
- Daoists believe that the soul is part of the greater universe and that after death it merges with it once more.
The six tapestries illustrate the ancient Greek myth of the tragic love of the priestess Hero for Leander. Leander swam the dangerous currents of the Hellespont, the straits between Europe and Asia at the Bosphorus, in order to see his love, but was drowned one stormy night.

The tapestries were made by the Mortlake tapestry works in Thames-side around 1660-70. They were established in 1619 under royal patronage and made use of the weaving skills of immigrant Flemish workers.

More than one set of tapestries of Hero and Leander were made and the very first set was made for James I in 1625.

The six panel story is outlined below.

1. Hero and Leander meet at the temple of Venus.
2. Leander swims from Abydos towards Hero's isolated tower on Sestos to meet her.
3. Hero peers coyly around the door while Leander greets Hero's servant.
4. Leander tells his parents of his love for Hero and decides he shall marry Hero, bringing her by ship from Sestos.
5. Hermione (Leander's sister) watches anxiously as Leander swims lit by moonlight and a torch carried by Cupid (god of love). In the sky the three fates (who decide destiny, inevitability and fortune) prepare to end Leander's life.
6. Apollo's (son of Zeus) chariot appears in a blaze of light on the horizon and is mirrored in the now calm sea. Cupid sits mourning on the rock on the right. Leander's body lies across the rocks at the foot of the tower. Hero is heartbroken at the death of her lover.
Objects in Myths and Legends

*Pandora*
by John Gibson
Room 19 (North Rotunda)

- Pandora was the first woman in Greek and Roman mythology.
- Pandora was given a box by Zeus. She did not know that it contained all the evil and disease in the world. Zeus told Pandora not to open the box but to keep it somewhere safe.
- The sculpture shows Pandora in the moment before she decides to open the box.
- Pandora did open the box and all the evil and disease was let out into the world but ‘hope’ was left behind as she quickly shut the box again.
- The sculpture is made out of one piece of white marble. The marble was originally painted with wax colours. Most of the paint has been lost over the years but if you look carefully you can see some colour on the edges of the drapery and on the box.
- The sculptor who created this object, John Gibson was born in Conwy, North Wales. John moved to Liverpool with his family when he was nine years old.
After your visit

Post-visit discussion ideas and activities to support extension work back in the classroom

- Create a storyboard based on a moral or tragic tale. (Art & Design, History, Literacy/English)
- Explore how a tapestry is made and designed by researching one e.g. the Mortlake Tapestry in the Gallery or work by contemporary artist Grayson Perry such as The Vanity of Small Differences. (Art & Design, Literacy/English)
- Research Greek, Roman or Chinese culture and create a display of your findings. (History, Literacy/English, Art & Design)
- Create an acrostic or shape poem based on a mythological story. (Literacy/English, History)
- Develop your fantastical creature designed during the Gallery visit. Work on improving the features and develop into a mixed media piece of work with supporting written work based on the creature's characteristics. The design could be developed into an animation using illustration or stop frame animation. (Art & Design)
- Investigate where gods or deities lived and what their relationships were with human/mortals. Create a journal, photo album or artwork to illustrate your findings. (History, Literacy/English, Art & Design, SMSC)