

Concept Paper

Initiative: “Art as a Mirror of Culture”

A joint cultural initiative between Oman and Greece

In collaboration with UNESCO

1. Introduction

Art is a visual language through which cultures express their values, beliefs, and history. Traditional designs in architecture and handicrafts—especially doors and pottery—serve as mirrors reflecting the spirit of society.

This paper highlights the artistic similarities and differences between Oman and Greece, focusing on traditional designs of doors and pottery, and proposes creative applications through the design of bookmarks and artistic murals.

2. Objectives of the Initiative

- Promote cultural dialogue between students in Oman and Greece by drawing inspiration from traditional arts and applying them in modern creative works that reflect the convergence of civilizations.
- Introduce students to traditional artistic symbols in Oman and Greece and their cultural meanings.
- Develop students' creative skills by transforming traditional ornaments into contemporary products (bookmarks, murals).
- Strengthen the values of citizenship and cultural diversity promoted by UNESCO.
- Encourage collaboration between schools through joint face-to-face and virtual activities.

3. Proposed Activities

- Joint Art Workshops: Students learn techniques of drawing Omani and Greek ornaments.
- Designing Bookmarks: Blending traditional motifs from both cultures with colors.
- School Mural: A collective artwork titled "Art and Culture" combining Omani doors, Greek arches, and pottery with symbolic designs.
- Virtual/Physical Cultural Exhibition: Displaying artworks with explanations of the cultural symbols used.
- Cultural Exchange Meetings: Online sessions where each team explains the artistic symbols of their country.

4. Expected Outcomes

- A collection of artistic works reflecting a mix of Omani and Greek symbols.
- Implementation of a school mural expressing the unity of art between the two civilizations.
- Local and virtual cultural exhibitions enabling the exchange of artistic experiences.
- An illustrated booklet explaining artistic symbols and their cultural meanings.

5. Anticipated Impact

- Raise students' awareness of the importance of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- Develop students' artistic and innovative sense.
- Build bridges of understanding and mutual respect between the two cultures.
- Support UNESCO's mission of promoting peace and dialogue through education and art.

Section One: Traditional Door Designs

Oman

Omani doors are renowned for their hand-carved wooden panels, often decorated with geometric engravings, floral motifs, and Arabic calligraphy. They symbolize status and hospitality, made from imported teak wood, and adorned with metal nails and finely crafted brass knockers.

Visual Features:

- Frames painted in bright colors.
- Symmetrical engravings.
- Use of metal in structure and decoration.

Greece

Greek doors are famous for their blue and white colors reflecting the Aegean Sea and sunlight. They also show influences of Phoenician, Ottoman, and Byzantine architecture, with arches and colorful wooden panels.

Visual Features:

- Bold colors (blue, white, earthy tones).
- Ornamental handles and knockers.
- Integration with stone facades.

Section Two: Traditional Pottery Designs

Oman

Omani pottery dates back more than 5,000 years. It was used for storage, cooking, and decoration. The most common shapes are *juhal* (water containers), *buram* (date storage), and *khuroos* (cooking pots). Designs often feature forts and geometric motifs, using clay from areas like Bahla.

Visual Features:

- Earthy colors (red, green, white clay).
- Functional shapes with artistic decorations.
- Handmade and kiln-fired.

Greece

Greek pottery is a cornerstone of ancient art, evolving from geometric styles to black- and red-figure painting. Vessels like *amphora*, *krater*, and *kylix* were used for wine, oil, and rituals, often decorated with mythological scenes, animals, and key patterns.

Visual Features:

- Narrative illustrations.
- Symmetrical and abstract forms.
- Use of black and red colors.

Section Three: Cultural Similarities and Differences

Feature | Oman | Greece

Materials | Teak wood, local clay | Fired clay, local stone

Motifs | Geometric, floral, calligraphy | Mythological, geometric, natural

Function | Social status, hospitality | Rituals, storytelling

Colors | Earth tones, bright paint | Blue, white, red, black

Mural Concept

Title: "Art and Culture"

Design Elements:

- Doors combining Omani engravings with Greek arches.
- Pottery shapes with shared decorative motifs.
- Desert and marine landscapes symbolizing both cultures.

Conclusion

Through the study of artistic expressions in doors and pottery, we uncover a shared human desire for beauty, symbolic expression, and cultural identity.

Blending Omani and Greek designs in modern applications such as bookmarks, murals, and other creative artworks not only honors heritage but also strengthens cultural dialogue among peoples.