

# Aztec art assignment

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BUSTER**

In the Aztec society, women had a major contribution to daily life and were held in high regard. Though women were looked at as equals or compliments to men in the sense of raising families and what they contributed to daily life, they were also thought of as being instigators of conflict and cosmic disorder that were destined to defeat by the more powerful Aztec warrior. These two conflicting social ideologies of women are known as gender complementarity and gender hierarchy.

Gender complementarity was the views of women from the daily life and economic sense, while gender hierarchy refers to the states more negative view of women. Women gained power in gender complementarity because of the dependence that men had on them. Men were expected to engage in activities such as long distance travel, hunting, fishing, and warfare. Women complimented these activities with activities of their own such as basket weaving, preparing and making food, weaving cloth, medicinal healers, and even acted as merchants in local and regional markets.

The health care, food, clothing, and household items such as baskets provided by the Aztec women proved to be essential to the structure of the Aztec empire as well as the survival and upbringing of Aztec families.

Despite the equality women received economically and in daily life, the state did not uphold the same perspectives of women. Like many of the world's nations, new and old, the Aztecs had a gender hierarchy and from this perspective women were thought of as a source of conflict and warfare.

This side of how women were viewed arose from mythical stories in which women caused conflict and even war between the Aztecs and their

neighbors in the basin of Mexico and because of this the Aztec state thought of women as enemies that resulted in cosmic disorder and even warfare and because of this needed to be conquered by the powerful male Aztec warrior. These ideas can be depicted in works of art that illustrate the goddesses Coyolxauhqui and Coatlicue. These two goddesses represented defeated foes of the Aztec people.

Sculptures of Coyolxauhqui and Coatlicue were seen alongside images of women that died during child birth and though these goddesses were thought of in a negative sense by the state, these images can be interpreted in a positive sense in that woman who died during childbirth were seen as a counter part to the Aztec warrior and like Aztec warriors who died in battle as a sacrifice, women who died in childbirth were seen as sacrifices. After reading this article I was surprised that for the most part, women were seen as equals and incredibly important to the survival of the Aztec culture. I would have expected that women would have been seen less equally in comparison to men, but this was not the case. I do think that the Aztec people are unique in that they had different models of gender relations operating in different social contexts. In today's world it seems to be one way or the other there are some countries of the eastern world that see women as inferior and there are places like the U.

S. that view women as equals. Our sense of equality is still sort of like the Aztecs in that men and women both are thought to have equal and opposite responsibilities that contribute to society such as the men providing and the women do household tasks, though over time this traditional idea of men

and women have been fading in today's society and is approaching a point of complete equality in both contributions and expectations.