

The influence of greek pottery art on modern art

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In "Herakles writes home" we can see how Marian Maguire has used Greek mythological figures taken from ancient Greek vases and put them into the scenes of New Zealand's colonization and conflict with Maori to show the effects of the British settlers had on the shaping of New Zealand's fate be it negative or positive depending on the viewpoint of the viewers. The pot Maguire uses in "Herakles writes home" is a black figure Volute Krater similar in shape to the Black-figure Volute Krater made by an Anonymous Greek painter between 525 and 500 BC.

The Pot shares many resemblances with the one used in Herakles writes home which lets me make the assumption that the shape of the pot in the lithograph is a Volute Krater. Both of their middle body pieces are the in shape with large top which gets smaller the further towards the bottom it goes but Black figure Volute Krater has more of a slant to where it reaches the base piece whereas the pot in Maguire's lithograph has a sharp change in angle where it reaches the bottom.

The bottom piece in the two pots is again similar with some variation between the two. The pot in the Herakles writes home has a flatter band around the base of it which allows for it to have a decorative band in it unlike the Black figure Volute Krater. The band below the top band in the Volute Krater is practically the same in shape to the one used in the Pot in the Herakles writes home Lithograph the only difference is the Black figure Volute Krater lacks decoration there.

The top band of the two pots is similar but there is a bigger difference between them than most of the other parts of the pot. In the Pot in the Herakles writes home lithograph the top band is joined at the sides to the

<https://assignbuster.com/the-influence-of-greek-pottery-art-on-modern-art/>

handles whereas the Black Figure Volute Krater's handles don't meet at the sides of the top band they are joined to the top of the pot, The top band is similar in shape to each other though the Black Figure Volute Black figure Volute Krater 525-500 BC, Anonymous Greek painter.

Black figure Volute Krater 525-500 BC, Anonymous Greek painter. Krater does have more of slant to it. Where the handles come out of the pot there is the biggest difference. In Herakles writes home the handles come out of the pot and keep their shape and decoration the same through the whole handle whereas the handles come out of the pot black and smaller than the ends of the handles in the Black Figure Volute Krater then change into orangey/red with patterns and thicker handles. Even with those differences it is clear that the figure of the original Black figure Volute Krater has influenced what the shape of the pot in Maguire's lithograph and that it is clearly an Attic Volute Krater. Handle of an Attic red-figure volute-Krater, 450-440 BC depicting the double ivory leaf pattern. Handle of an Attic red-figure volute-Krater, 450-440 BC depicting the double ivory leaf pattern. The decorative feature on the pot in the Herakles writes is clearly influenced by other classical pots but Maguire has incorporated them into a unique way.

The handles on the pot in the Herakles writes home lithograph are double ivy leaf but not the traditional ones you find on ancient Greek pot's Maguire has put a twist on it by replacing the ivy leaf shape with that of the Kowhai tree which is native to New Zealand (Something about what it shows about something) Another decoration in the pot that bears classical influence is the chevron pattern on the foot of the pot depicted in Maguire's lithograph similar to the pattern around the top of the Persephone painter's red-figure

bell-Krater. 440 B. C. Red-figure Bell-Krater Attributed to the Persephone Painter 440 B. C. ; Red-figure Bell-Krater Attributed to the Persephone Painter What's interesting about the pattern is that the leaves used are that they are olive tree leaves arranged in a way that it looks like an olive wreath. The reason Maguire has chosen to use an olive wreath in this particular artwork is that an olive wreath signifies being victorious and also peace as in the ancient Greek Olympic Games the winners of events were awarded Olive Wreaths from wild-olive leaves from a sacred tree near the temple of Zeus at Olympia.

Maguire used this as a symbol because it creates a contrast between the settlers and England at that time, as Herakles was the son of Zeus it gives a family link between the figure of Herakles in place of a settler on the pot and the wreath is a symbol of Zeus who being the father of Herakles would be in the Place of Settler period England. The presence of the wreath also signifies the victory of the Maori population of New Zealand which if in the Ancient Olympic Games the two cultures, Maori and Settler, would have been awarded to the victor which in this case was the settlers, this can be backed up by the relaxed and post battle/victorious feel of the scene on the belly of the pot. Bottom of the Herakles Attacking a Centaur, Greek, Athens, about 530-520 B. C pot depicting stylised rays. Bottom of the Herakles Attacking a Centaur, Greek, Athens, about 530-520 B. C pot depicting stylised rays.

The next feature on the pot on Maguire's lithograph was stylised rays, but not as the same as the classical Greek stylised rays depicted on the picture to the left but with a European/settler twist. Maguire has put in Settler Farming tools in the place of the classical Greek's rays. This drastic

change to what normally would have gone in there leaves us wondering why she would change this.

The reason behind this would be that it shows how drastic the change the settlers bought in on New Zealand and replaced the old with their new stuff leaving little evidence of the old but its adapted style and structure. Greek pot depicting Herakles and the Nemean Lion Aegisthus Painter 470 B. C. Greek pot depicting Herakles and the Nemean Lion Aegisthus Painter 470 B. C. Herakles was perhaps the most glorified and famous Greek hero who achieved immortality due to his feats and Maguire has used this image of Herakles to reinforce the ideas she is conveying.

The idea of Herakles as his own man is perhaps the misconceived thing about him as his twelve labours were directed by Eurystheus, the king of Tiryns and Mycenae on the command of Apollo after killing his wife and children in a fit of madness Hera induced in him, but it is important to point out that even though he was under the command of Eurytheus he did it of his own free will and by completing these twelve labours he became the greatest hero in all of Greek mythology.

By skilfully using Herakles in the place of settlers Maguire has given us a better understanding of the message she is conveying. One of the main things about Herakles being the Greek mythological figure Maguire used is the fact that he was an instrument to complete the tasks of Eurystheus which the settlers were to England merely tools to complete tasks for their own benefit.

In the case of Herakles he built up his own “ Kleos” by completing these feats and intimidating Eurythesus causing Eurythesus to fear for his life “ Amazed at his manhood, Eurystheus forbade him thenceforth to enter the city, but ordered him to exhibit the fruits of his labours before the gates. They say, too, that in his fear he had a bronze jar made for himself to hide in under the Amazed at his manhood, Eurystheus forbade him thenceforth to enter the city, but ordered him to exhibit the fruits of his labours before the gates.

They say, too, that in his fear he had a bronze jar made for himself to hide in under the earth” Apollodorus, the ancient writer who collected legends in his mythology handbook, the library, this may not be a completely true tale as Myths handed down orally and weren't physically recorded until late after their creation which makes bits of the Myth liable to changes because of a sort of Chinese whisper effect. This is similar to the situation with the settlers and England latter on <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/13467> <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/13467>