

Art Analysis Assignment: Commodore Perry and the Black Ship Scrolls  
Niskayuna High School, Niskayuna Central School District, Niskayuna, New York  
World Connections: An Interdisciplinary 10<sup>th</sup> grade class  
February 2005

Catherine Snyder, Teacher

In 1853, President Fillmore commissioned Commodore Perry of the U.S. Navy to travel to Japan to open the country to trade. This event paved the way for Japan's take over of Southeast Asia before World War II. Your task is to research this event through the artwork that was created at that time. Several artists contributed to our understanding of the historic visit by the U.S. to Japan. The first set of artwork can be found at:

[www.us-japan.org/jsnc/virtualjapan/BSS/samstour/st1.htm](http://www.us-japan.org/jsnc/virtualjapan/BSS/samstour/st1.htm)

Go to this website and take the tour hosted by Sam Patch. Study the artwork carefully for what it tells you about Japanese culture and their point of view. Then, go to this Brown University website:

<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/japan/images.html>

This website has additional artwork by another anonymous Japanese artist and it also has paintings by William Heine, who accompanied the American expedition. This site includes excerpts from Commodore Perry's personal journal and other relevant information about the encounter. Review the artwork and choose two paintings: one from the Japanese artist and one from William Heine. Choose two paintings that have a thematic or artistic connection.

Write a 2-3 page typed double spaced analysis of the two pieces of artwork. You may use the resources on the Brown University website to assist you. (Below each painting is a student-written paper about that specific image.) In your paper be sure to:

- address the cultural point of view of the two artists, (25 points)
- the subject the artist is trying to portray, (25 points)
- and the historical data we can learn from a close study of the painting. (30 points)
- Also, include your personal opinion about the artwork: do you think the artist conveyed information accurately? Does the artwork appeal to you visually? (20 points)

This assignment will be due on February 17<sup>th</sup>, next Thursday (barring snow days or other calamities).

Use the handout for additional information. Also, the internet is a good source for more details on this historic event.

Please feel free to email me with questions, [snyder.c@nisk.k12.ny.us](mailto:snyder.c@nisk.k12.ny.us).