**Week 3: My Chosen Cultural Works**

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**Cultural Work that Caught My Attention**

My first choice is the painting titled "The Great Wave off Kanagawa" by Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai. I chose this painting because of its unique composition and vivid colors. The painting depicts a large wave crashing against a group of boats in the foreground, with Mount Fuji in the background (Becker, 2019). The power of the wave is depicted beautifully and the contrast between the bright colors and the deep blue of the water is striking. Here is a link to the painting: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/katsushika-hokusai/the-great-wave-off-kanagawa-1830>.

My second choice is the sculpture titled "The Thinker" by French artist Aguste Rodin. I chose this sculpture because of its powerful symbolism and intricate details. The sculpture depicts a man sitting in a deep contemplation with his chin resting on his right hand (Waterton, 2019). The sculpture conveys a sense of deep thought and contemplation, which I find inspiring and thought-provoking. Here is a link to the sculpture: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/auguste-rodin/the-thinker-1880>.

**Comparison of My Chosen Works**

Both of the cultural works I chose reflect their respective time periods in very different ways. "The Great Wave off Kanagawa" reflects traditional Japanese culture and the country's long history with the sea. The painting is an example of ukiyo-e, a genre of art popular during the Edo period of Japan, when Hokusai was active (Becker, 2019). This genre of art typically focused on images of everyday life, often depicting scenes of nature, such as the ocean in this painting. The painting also reflects the strong spiritual beliefs of the time period, as Mount Fuji, a sacred mountain in Japan, is featured prominently in the background.

The sculpture "The Thinker" reflects the time period in which it was created, the late 19th century. This was a period of great intellectual and philosophical growth in Europe, as seen in the sculpture's depiction of a man in deep contemplation. Rodin's use of intricate details in the figure's face and body also reflects the increasing emphasis on realism in art during this time period (Lai, 2020). Both works of art reflect the cultural values of the time period in which they were created, and stand as reminders of the beauty and complexity of the cultures that created them. Overall, the sculpture conveys a sense of intellectual thought, which was an important cultural value during the Enlightenment Era.

**Question on the Key Aspects of Human Culture**

**My question is:**

How did the cultural context in which Katsushika Hokusai created "The Great Wave off Kanagawa" influence the painting?

I might begin my research by using keywords such as "Katsushika Hokusai," "The Great Wave off Kanagawa," and "cultural context" to search for scholarly sources (Bellow, 2019). I could start looking through books and articles related to Japanese art and culture in the Edith Garland Dupré Library, as well as online databases such as JSTOR and Google Scholar. Additionally, I could consult with art historians and scholars to gain further insight about the cultural context of the painting.

**References**

Becker, J. R. (2019). A Moment's Monument: Medardo Rosso and the International Origins of Modern Sculpture. *Sculpture Journal*, *28*(1), 146-152.

Bellow, J. (2019). Hand Dance: Auguste Rodin’s Drawings of the Cambodian Royal Ballet. *The Art Bulletin*, *101*(3), 37-65.

Lai, Q. (2020). *Monumentality of Serenity and Dynamism* (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Tech).

Waterton, E. (2019). Changes, then and now. *Landscape Research*, *44*(1), 1-5.