

MEXICAN PRINTS

MINNEAPOLIS
INSTITUTE
OF ARTS

AT THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

*A resource for secondary
teachers and students*



Alvarez

Mexican Prints at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

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ABOUT THIS LEARNING RESOURCE

Dear Educator,

Mexican Prints at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts provides a close-up look at fourteen prints from the collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) made by a selection of Mexico's leading artists from 1890 to 2010. This resource is designed to be relevant to visual arts, social studies, English language arts, Spanish language, and interdisciplinary lessons for students in grades 6 to 12. Guiding questions and activities encourage students to look closely at, analyze, and communicate about each of the works of art using various methods ranging from discussion and writing to art creation.

These materials are not designed as a curriculum of sequenced lessons. Instead, the components are intended as springboards for you to integrate into your curriculum or use as a discrete lesson plan to challenge your students and meet their curricular needs. We have provided a list of Minnesota state standards that can be supported by using these materials.

This learning resource includes:

- An introductory essay
- A chronology of events in the history of Mexico and the history of printmaking in Mexico, which contextualizes works of art
- Short essays on fourteen prints and the artists who made them. Each essay includes discussion topics and activities
- High-quality images of each work of art
- An outline of Minnesota State Standards that can be supported with this resource
- Description of print processes
- Additional activities
- Resources for further study.

Mexican Prints at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts is the product of a collaboration of many talented individuals. This learning resource would not be possible without the research, writing and keen insights of Rebecca Shearier, intern, and Mariann Bentz, intern and former teacher, Minneapolis Public Schools. Maria Cristina Tavera, director of the McNairs Scholars Program, Augsburg College, generously shared her knowledge of and passion for Mexican prints in her introductory essay. Dennis Michael Jon, associate curator, and Kristin Lenaburg, curatorial assistant, both in the MIA's Department of Prints & Drawings, assisted us throughout the project. Other contributors include: Jodie Ahern, editor; Heidi Miller, graphic designer; and Carolina Zarate, docent and translator for the Spanish version. Thank you to ArtOrg [<http://artorg.info/>] for sharing this resource with participants in its "2012 Thousand Print Summer" program. Special thanks to everyone in the Division of Learning & Innovation; in one way or another you contributed to this project.

Sincerely,

Sheila McGuire

Manager | Department of Learning Resources | Division of Learning & Innovation
Minneapolis Institute of Arts

WHY PRINTS?

What is printmaking? And, perhaps even more important, why does an artist choose the medium of printmaking? Prints are reproducible. After the hard work of making the initial image on a surface such as stone, metal plate, or wood block, the artist (or a printer) inks the image and transfers it to paper, usually by running it through a printing press. Numerous impressions (prints) of each image can be made by re-inking the original and running additional paper through the press. The artist can decide to make a few or many impressions of each image, creating what is called an edition.

Printmaking thus enables artists and print publishers to reach a larger and more diverse audience for the work of art. Although many artists make prints for sale to art patrons, in general printmaking enables all people to view art in a variety of forms including printed posters, political tracts, and brochures.

Before Johannes Gutenberg invented his movable-type printing press in the 15th century, most people had never seen a book, or even learned how to read. Suddenly printed books were increasingly available, and literacy among the masses increased, giving people access to the knowledge spread through books.

A more recent comparison might be Facebook. Before e-mail and Facebook, people communicated long-distance by writing a letter or talking on the phone. This system enabled only one person at a time to communicate, cost the price of a stamp or a phone charge, and was slow. Printmaking allowed people to communicate instantaneously with a huge group, for very little cost.

Printmaking was revolutionary for Mexico. It enabled artists to send their works of art out to the masses. Unlike stationary murals, prints brought the works of art into the people's homes, and almost everyone could have art in their daily lives. ■

CHRONOLOGY AT A GLANCE

1000–400 BCE | Olmec culture



300–900 CE | Mayan culture at its height



900–1200 | Toltecs gain power as Mayan dominance declines



1426–1519 | Aztec empire grows



1519 | Hernán Cortez arrives at present-day Veracruz, beginning of The Conquest



1535 | The first Spanish viceroy arrives, beginning of the Colonial period



1539 | The first printing press established in Mexico City



1811–21 | Fight for independence from Spain



1821 | Independence, New Spain renamed Mexico to honor the Aztecs (México).



1848 | Mexico cedes Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California to United States



1857 | Benito Juárez, of Zapotec origin, elected president

1858–61 | Mexico's civil war



1876–1911 | General Porfirio Díaz serves as president of Mexico



1910–20 | Mexican Revolution



1911 | Díaz forced into exile, Francisco Madero takes office



1917 | Signing of the Mexican constitution



1920 | Mexican Revolution ends



1920s–30s | New value placed on Mexico's Native indigenous art and culture



1937 | Taller Editorial de Gráfica Popular founded



1939 | World War II (1939–45); Mexico enters in 1942



1994 | Mexico, Canada, and United States sign NAFTA



1999 | Mexico joins the G20 (Group of Twenty)

THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO DRAW FROM THE PAST

By Maria Cristina Tavera

Mexican prints and graphic arts provide key insight into understanding Mexico's rich history. The practices can be traced back thousands of years to several cultures, including the Olmec, Toltec, Teotihuacan, Mayan, and Aztec, who used tools to stamp a design on paper or fabric. [http://www.famsi.org/research/graz/fejervary_mayer/index.html] People in these cultures recorded important life events, including rituals, wars, human sacrifices, and legends about their rulers, by using pictures in accordion-style books called *codices*. [<http://www.famsi.org/research/pohl/jpcodices/index.html>] Many codices were destroyed when Spain conquered the territory in 1521; remaining codices preserve important moments in ancient history. Graphic prints have changed drastically over the years to incorporate changing ideas and document historical moments. The methods of printmaking also changed as the need for multiples transformed the print industry.

Printmaking has become an important medium for Mexican artists in exploring their cultural heritage and creating a Mexican identity. Prints reflect Mexico's cultural and social history and through themes about ancient cultures, colonial times, or specific historical periods, illustrate what it has meant to be Mexican over the centuries. Mexican print practices continue to evolve today, using borrowed themes, motifs, and techniques. What remains constant is how print artists capture the essence of Mexican identity.

Fusion of Native and Christian Iconography

Spanish missionaries arrived in what is now Mexico with the intent of imposing their religious ideology on the indigenous population. They found communicating ideas through illustrations to be an effective technique in overcoming language barriers. Thus, printmaking became an important method for reproducing large quantities of religious illustrations intended for spreading Christianity in the "New World."

The religious prints distributed by the Spanish communicated the consequences of not converting to Catholicism. Spanish Catholics designed imagery with the goal of persuading the Native population to abandon their traditional beliefs in favor of Christianity. Therefore, the religious prints created in the 16th and 17th centuries emphasized virgins, saints, and angels who represented protection. After three centuries under Spanish rule and cultural influence, the Native peoples began incorporating imported beliefs and iconography into their own lives. Indigenous artists fused Christian symbols and Native images in depictions of devils, skulls, and demons. Most likely, their images of skeletons and skulls representing death were taken from Aztec images. Aztec codices depicted *Tzompantli*, racks that displayed the skulls of war captives and sacrificial victims. Prints with religious themes became increasingly prevalent as the indigenous population adopted Christian ideology.

Nationalistic Imagery

By the early 1800s, Mexican printmakers started to illustrate themes promoting Mexican nationalism, as the general populace began to express discontent and resist Spanish control. Images that mock death and the unknown became prevalent in the art of José Guadalupe Posada.

Posada was famous for his political cartoons that satirized Porfirio Díaz, Mexico's dictator for thirty-five years (1876–1911). Díaz created policy that benefited the nation's upper classes, clergy, and major landowners. He favored European influences over Mexican cultures, and neglected Mexico's lower classes. Posada's prints commonly expressed frustrations over poverty and social injustices. He used images of *calaveras* (skeletons) in his prints to criticize the government without getting into trouble. Posada depicted his skeletons in a playful manner participating in daily activities of the living. He did not invent these skeletal personifications; he popularized them. Most likely Posada adapted

imagery from the ancient ruins in Mexico, transforming the skeletons to resemble famous figures—commonly those in power—while remaining technically anonymous. [http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/52027?search_id=1]

A gifted and versatile artist, Posada created thousands of lithographs, woodcuts, metal engravings, and zinc etchings. One of the earliest and most celebrated printmakers to convey Mexican culture in his work, Posada created his prints for Mexico's oppressed populations. He validated their culture, traditions, and belief systems by including familiar icons they could relate to. One was the Virgin of Guadalupe, a symbol of Mexican Catholicism blended with indigenous imagery (for example, see page 8 of this resource). She is easily identifiable by her dark skin, the aura (halo), and the angel below. In color prints she is typically adorned in the colors of the Mexican flag: green, white, and red. In Posada's prints, the Virgin is a symbol connecting with the Mexican people. Such messages were especially important during Díaz's presidency, when the upper classes favored European influences over Mexican traditions.

Thirty-five years of oppression and inequality culminated in the Mexican Revolution and the overthrow of Díaz in 1911. Fueled by the revolutionary spirit of idealism and popular nationalism, the country began to redefine Mexican identity. Author Octavio Paz described the revolution as the "discovery of Mexico by the Mexicans."¹

After the revolution, Mexico's new government employed artists as cultural workers. The new secretary of education, José Vasconcelos, commissioned artists to paint large-scale frescoes on internal and external walls of public buildings. This mural movement was meant to educate the country's largely illiterate populace through pictorial storytelling, highlighting—and often romanticizing—episodes of Mexican history. [<http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2011/rivera/intro.php>] Murals were

bold and colorful, addressing political, social, and class struggles through images of soldiers, workers, and farmers. Artists often revived ancient and indigenous imagery in search of what they considered the "authentic" Mexico. The socially relevant art was defined by "Los Tres Grandes" (The Great Three), artists Diego Rivera (1886–1957), David Siqueiros (1896–1974), and José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949), who all received worldwide recognition.

While "Los Tres Grandes" were initially known for their murals, they also collaborated in printmaking as an effective method to raise social awareness about nationalism and communism following the Mexican Revolution. These artists considered art and politics to be inseparable. Their goal was to educate Mexicans through art, history, national pride, and identity. But murals could not reach a large enough audience, as not everyone had access to government buildings. Prints, however, could be posted anywhere in the cities and even throughout the countryside. They were simple, cheap, and effective. Like the murals, prints expressed concerns regarding social, political and economic injustices. [<http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=142399;type=101>]

Mexican print artists worked together to establish print collectives such as the Taller Gráfica de Popular (TGP), established in 1937, to inform Mexicans of what was happening nationally and in the rest of the world.² The TGP's politically charged prints communicated pride in indigenous culture, a devotion to national identity, and a celebration of Mexican heritage. Print artists used simple carving techniques to create woodcut designs, many of which drew inspiration from ancient imagery and sculpture. They also worked in stone lithography, and began using ancient aesthetics to create communist propaganda, signifying an important melding of ancient and modern to help shape Mexican politics and ultimately, identity.

New Artistic Expressions

The social climate in Mexico was increasingly political in the decades following the Mexican Revolution. While artists like Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros focused their artistic energies on illustrating propagandistic newspapers, artists like Rufino Tamayo (1899–1991) took a more expressionistic approach. Art historians often mistakenly define Tamayo as the “fourth” of Mexico’s “Grandes,” but Tamayo refused the honor in 1953, telling a journalist for the Mexican Daily Excelsior, “I am neither the fourth, nor am I great. . . . I am the first in a new modality of Mexican painting that attempts a universal voice.”³ Tamayo, born in Oaxaca, drew considerable inspiration from his Zapotec heritage. His passion for Mexican culture and the Oaxacan landscape is evident in his use of rich earth tones, and warm, saturated colors that reflect Mexico’s vibrant flora and fauna, and the intensity of the sun, ocean, and sky. But rather than using overtly Mexican imagery, he focused on creating a universal experience through art. His surrealist technique renders simple figures of humans, animals, and landscapes. Tamayo’s pictorial language is separated from reality, relating more to the human experience of emotions than to political struggles. His graphic images trigger certain feelings through his use of color, texture, and strong lines. No matter the viewer’s nationality, Tamayo’s images are evocative.

Oaxaca proved an inspirational location for not only Tamayo, but also for the graphic artist Francisco Toledo (born 1940). Oaxaca’s remoteness helped keep the region insulated from Spanish cultural encroachment during the colonial period. Even today, the Oaxacan population and culture continues to draw from rich traditions. Like Tamayo, Toledo is a Zapotec from Oaxaca. Both artists have used myths and legends from their Native heritage in their work. Their prints appear dreamlike, expressing innate human feelings based on intuitive experiences. Their art is universal. They use similar shapes, colors, and textures, but Toledo’s prints focus more on nature. He uses iconography such as turtles, bats, snakes, rabbits, and coyotes, [<http://www.artnet.com/artwork/426216763/425490280/francisco-toledo-sapos-con-frijoles-toads-with-beans.html>] believing

that “Each human’s fate is intertwined with the spirit of an animal form.”⁴ His prints are anthropological commentaries addressing issues related to human interaction with nature, particularly the destructive consequences of human encroachment. Images of conflicts between humans and nature raise awareness of the negative consequences of maintaining animals in captivity. Toledo’s art is bound to his concerns for preserving the beauty and dignity of the Oaxaca region in the face of modernity. His use of traditional imagery helps preserve regional Mexican cultural tradition while keeping it relevant today.

Luis Jiménez and Mexican Identity Outside of Mexico’s Borders

Accomplished artist and professor Luis Jiménez (1940–2006) drew inspiration from his personal experience as a person of Mexican descent who was born in the United States. Through his art, he illuminated recent social struggles for Mexicans living in the United States and political conflicts that still arise along the border. [<http://www.artnet.com/artwork/426092860/727/luis-jimenez-cruzando-el-rio-bravo---border-crossing.html>] Jiménez lived in New York in the mid 1960s and early 1970s, when many artists were focused on minimalism and conceptual art, styles that explored abstract ideas and non-representational forms. Instead, Jiménez began producing figural art with emotional intensity. His heritage can be seen in his art, influenced by social realism and Mexican colors. Jiménez is best known for his controversial sculptures made of fiberglass, a material commonly used by the working poor to build or repair cars. These dramatic political sculptures displayed in public places recall the work by the muralists. [<http://plainsart.org/collections/luis-jimenez/>]

Instead of telling stories about Mexican history, however, Jiménez’s narrative is about his Mexican American upbringing in the poverty-stricken city of El Paso, Texas. He intended to give a voice to those who are marginalized, e.g., immigrant laborers, steelworkers, and cowboys. Prints by Jiménez also show the human experience of contemporary Mexican American life. His images incorporate

Native myths and legends into illustrated stories about the disadvantaged, suffering from poverty, unemployment, and unjust working conditions. He depicted many of his subjects in crisis, distress, anger, or conflict, and addressed the emotional plight of Mexicans living in the United States by exploring complicated subjects such as immigration. His commentary on the suffering of Mexican immigrants evokes Posada's illustrations of the deprived populace.

Mexican Conceptual Art

Creating a language rich in symbols and metaphors to explain social and political situations is a strategy also used by contemporary artist Carlos Amorales (born 1970). His art reflects the stories he heard during his upbringing in Mexico, which he eventually realized were adaptations of universal tales. Uncomfortable with the idea of writing stories, he created a method to share his ideas through images.⁵

Amorales simplifies each subject, reducing it to a geometric, solid-colored silhouette image. Over time, he created a collection of these images, which became the basis of a digital archive he calls the "Liquid Archive." The digital database contains hundreds of his drawings, which he uses and reuses in his multifaceted body of work.⁶

Amorales does not create traditional Mexican art. He recognizes that he, like others, is influenced by both Mexican and European factors. Many of the ordinary objects he depicts are relevant to many cultures, such as a butterfly, a skull, a plane, or a crow. He creates compositions by juxtaposing and superimposing isolated images into unexpected combinations. [<http://www.artnet.com/artwork/426155778/423941488/carlos-amorales-small-colors-for-holding-large-spaces-cromofobias-6.html>]

The compositions are meant to challenge the viewer as each element is detached from its common associations. By presenting the images in a new format and deciding which images appear together, he opens them up to different interpretations. The resulting message depends greatly on the viewer, and what he or she identifies in the images, based on upbringing and cultural norms. Amorales's *Use-*

less Wonder Maps (see page 28) are a good example of this: each viewer has a unique interpretation of the prints, perhaps identifying his or her own country first. Progressively each print in *Useless Wonder Maps* decomposes the whole image and shifts the shapes until the original image is unrecognizable.

The distortion is intentional and the metaphors are never-ending. One interpretation could be a picture of globalization and how the autonomy of countries becomes less obvious.

Mexican art over the years has evolved and is not easily defined. Individual artists and their original perspectives alter the themes, mediums, and expectations of Mexican art. The art is inevitably influenced by its predecessors, and the active reworking is creating new and exciting artistic expressions. How we interpret the art of Mexico helps us understand the complexities of Mexican history and culture in the present. ■

- 1.) Paz, Octavio. "El laberinto de la soledad," México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959. Paz wrote, "The Revolution is a search for ourselves and a return to the mother..." 181.
- 2.) Ittmann, John W., Innis H. Shoemaker, James Wechsler, and Lyle W. Williams. *Mexico and Modern Printmaking: A Revolution in the Graphic Arts, 1920 to 1950*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006.
- 3.) Coffey, Mary K., Diana C. Du Pont, and Rufino Tamayo. "Tamayo and Mexican Muralism," *Tamayo: A Modern Icon Re-interpreted*. Santa Barbara, California: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2007.
Coffey states that in a 1953 interview with the art critic Bambi Tamayo declared, "I'm not the Fourth Great One."
- 4.) "Miami Biennale: Artist Biographies, Education Through Art," http://miamiennale.org/miami_biennale_francisco_toledo.html (accessed April 17, 2012). According to Christian Viveros-Faune, "Toledo's work is based in part on the largely misunderstood shamanistic notion of the nagual, the belief that each human's fate is intertwined with that of an Aztec spirit in animal form."
- 5.) Amorales, Carlos, Hans-Michael Herzog, and Katrin Steffen. "Carlos Amorales: Dark Mirror," May 5–September 2, 2007, Daros Exhibitions, Zürich, Switzerland: Hatje Cantz, 2007. Amorales talks about his childhood influences and how his Mexican upbringing has influenced his art in a conversation with Hans-Michael Herzog.
- 6.) Philadelphia Museum of Art <http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/313.html?page=2> (accessed April 28, 2012).



José Guadalupe Posada
 Mexican, 1852–1913
The Procession, 1890–95
 Relief engraving
 Gift of J.B. Neumann
 P.12,970

JOSÉ GUADALUPE POSADA

José Guadalupe Posada is the father of Mexican political cartoons. He created many lithographs for popular “penny papers,” illustrating dramatic news stories that appealed to the uneducated, working poor in Mexico City. Posada’s images of national heroes, traditional symbols, and personal hardship reveal his interest in the daily struggles of the working poor, and his dreams of Mexico as an independent nation.

Posada created many of his political cartoons during Porfirio Díaz’s presidency (1876–1911). President Díaz was determined to turn Mexico into a modern, industrial nation. To attract foreign investors, he changed many of Mexico’s old laws, ignoring the needs of his own people. To increase Mexico’s agricultural output, he consolidated farmland into large estates. Farmers had to work in a hacienda system, where they labored to pay off impossible debts to their

estate lord. Díaz also violently oppressed the Native populations who resisted his laws. As a result, many farmers and indigenous peoples migrated to the city for industrial jobs. Even in the cities, however, both groups endured hard lives and experienced discrimination.

Posada understood the hardships of urban workers and believed the poor were important Mexican citizens. His representation of traditional Mexican icons, such as the Virgin of Guadalupe, helped encourage even the poorest Mexicans to be proud of their heritage. As an artist, Posada had the power to illustrate and promote his vision of the “real” Mexico (both the good and the bad).

This image of a procession of peasants is one of Posada’s rare country scenes. Because most of his audience lived in Mexico City, Posada typically illus-

trated urban themes. Images of the countryside recalled the life many workers left behind. This scene shows peasants dressed in traditional clothing: loose white pants, ponchos, and sandals, instead of European styles. They carry a *maguey* (agave) plant with an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Posada typically used the maguey plant to symbolize the Mexican people. The Lady of Guadalupe, a comforting figure in times of need, also represented Mexican Catholicism.

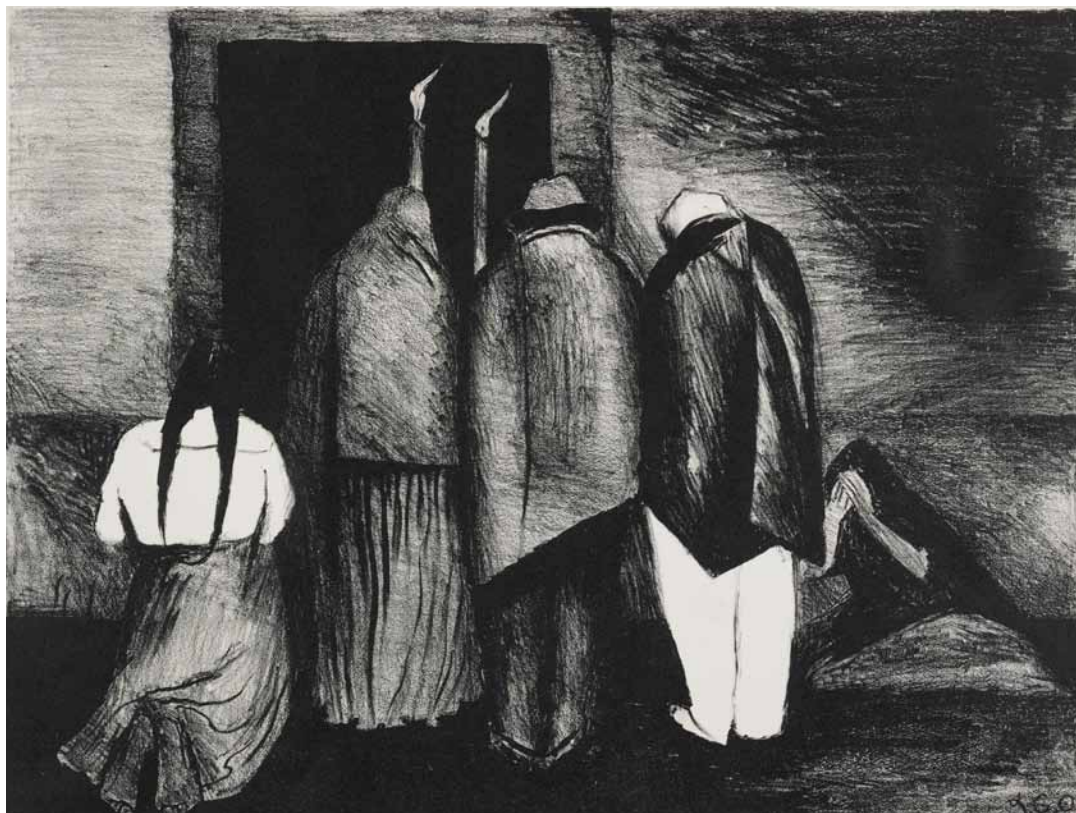
Many of Posada's prints appear to be of very poor quality. A naturally talented printmaker, Posada intentionally created rough-looking images for cheap, unofficial newspapers. To create this effect, he drew bold, broken lines, recycled his print blocks, and printed the nail holes. This technique placed the viewer closer to his creative "manufacturing" process. It reminded the audience of their status as consumers of popular, not elitist art. They also represented the "throw-away" culture of Mexico's new capitalism. ■

Discussion

What do you think is going on in this image? What do you see that makes you say that? Describe the environment where this is taking place. What clues did Posada provide to set the scene? Many of Posada's other prints focus on urban life. Why might he have chosen this particular environment?

Posada made his prints for Mexico's urban working poor. Think about what Posada may have wanted to communicate to his audience with this image. What words would you use to describe the mood in this work of art? How did Posada compose the scene to express mood? Think about the lines, his use of black and white, and the facial expressions.

Porfirio Díaz sought to recreate Mexico as a modern industrialized society. How does this image by Posada contrast with Díaz's vision of Mexico? Consider how Posada manipulated his print to make it look worn and of "poor" quality. Why might he have gone to such lengths to create this look?



José Clemente Orozco
 Mexican, 1883–1949
The Requiem, 1928
 Lithograph
 Gift of Mrs. Charles C. Bovey,
 © 2012 Artists Rights
 Society (ARS), New York/
 SOMAAP, Mexico City
 P.11,646

JOSÉ CLEMENTE OROZCO

A requiem is a mass for a deceased person. In this lithograph by José Clemente Orozco, the viewer enters a scene of mourners huddled before a darkened doorway, beyond which the deceased may lie. The three women and two men are in various positions, but all convey a sense of heaviness and stillness. The wavering flames of the two candles are the only sign of movement. The light candles against the dark background contrasts with the dark braids on the light blouse of the kneeling woman on the far left. Orozco masks the identity of all five figures, adding to a sense of universality and timelessness. Although this lithograph is a commentary on the human cost of the Mexican Revolution, the grief is timeless.

Orozco was perhaps the most complicated of “Los Tres Grandes,” which includes Diego Rivera and

David Alfaro Siqueiros. He was less political than Rivera or Siqueiros, and more interested in the human suffering caused by conflict than in furthering the cause of revolution. Born in Zapotlan el Grande (now Ciudad Guzman) in 1883, the young Orozco would walk by the shop windows of José Guadalupe Posada and see the master illustrator at work, opening up for him the world of art. After graduating from school in agriculture and architecture in 1900, he studied art at the Academy of San Carlos. In 1909 Orozco decided to become a painter, and entered a period of intensive self-training.

Orozco was most famous for his bold murals located in Mexico and the United States, but he is also known for his political cartoons and caricatures, which were featured in *La Vanguardia* (1911–15) and *El Machete*

(1924–29), leftist newspapers in Mexico. When in the United States working as a muralist, Orozco discovered the possibilities of lithographs. Looking for other ways to make money with his art, and not wanting to rely on posters (a last resort) or formal painting (too time-consuming), he explored lithography. *The Requiem* (along with *Rearguard*, *Ruined House*, and *Flag Bearer*, also in the MIA's collection) was originally a drawing from a series called *Horrors of Revolution*. For the U.S. market, Orozco changed the series name to the more benign *Mexico in Revolution*, and chose to depict subjects that were heroic, melancholy, universal, and timeless, rather than the more brutal and disturbing literal scenes. *Requiem* was very successful and sold well. It was chosen for the fourth annual *Fifty Prints of the Year*, published by the American Institute of Graphic Arts, which helped increase the price from \$20 to \$100 per impression. Orozco made only about 50 lithographs and etchings in his lifetime, most in the period from 1927 to 1934. These lithographs, however, helped publicize his work. ■

Discussion

Orozco was interested in selling his art to an American audience. He decided not to publish the more difficult images in his original series, *Horrors of Revolution*, which included depictions of violence, blood, and injured bodies. Why do you suppose he would make this decision? Think of a time when you censored your own writing, performance, or other statement. Why did you censor yourself? Do you feel you compromised yourself or your values in any way by doing so? Write a reflection statement on the pros and cons of making compromises or self-censoring.

Compare and contrast Orozco's *The Requiem* to Diego Rivera's *Flower Market*. Both prints were made for sale to Americans. What image of Mexico did each artist portray? What might have appealed to an American audience in each of these?

Compare the use of doorways (or passageways) in *The Requiem*, Francisco Mora's *Silver Mine Worker*, and Rufino Tamayo's *Girl at the Door*. What particular function does the passage or doorway serve in each print? Think about movies, stories, games, or other works of art that also use doorways. What, if anything, do doorways symbolize to you?

Notice the placement of the two candles in *The Requiem*. Why do you think Orozco placed them as he did? How do they relate to other forms and the figures? How do they influence your emotional response to the scene? What associations, if any, do you make with candles in your life experience?



Diego Rivera
 Mexican, 1886–1957
Flower Market, 1930
 Lithograph with yellow tone stone
 Gift of Mrs. Charles C. Bovey
 © 2012 Banco de México Diego
 Rivera-Frida Kahlo Museums Trust,
 Mexico, D.F./Artists Rights Society
 (ARS), New York
 P.11,772

DIEGO RIVERA

Diego Rivera is best known for the government-sponsored murals he painted in the 1920s following the Mexican Revolution. His art typically illustrates his passion for Mexican folk art, and his belief that Mexico's indigenous populations embody true Mexican culture. Rivera's interest in Native Mexican art was influenced by the modernists he worked with in France from 1910 to 1921, who embraced the purity and simplicity of art from unindustrialized cultures as inspiration for their own art. This attitude echoed international disillusionment with industrial modernity during World War I (1914–1918).

Rivera returned to Mexico in 1921 as the nation rebuilt after the Revolution. Mexico's government advocated a new sense of national pride in place of European influences. The new minister of education, José Vasconcelos, hired Rivera and other artists to paint public murals that would teach Mexican history to illiterate audiences. Vasconcelos also sent Rivera to the Yucatán to study ancient Mayan art.

A devoted communist, Rivera believed that art and politics were inseparable. In 1924, he and a few of his contemporaries including David Siqueiros, published a manifesto in the communist newsletter *El Machete*, announcing their union of cultural workers who created art for the people. Their illustrations for *El Machete* criticized the government's oppression of Mexican peasants. Ultimately, however, Rivera complied with government demands to cease publishing such images, but continued to subtly incorporate his beliefs into his art.

Although Rivera was not a prolific printmaker, he did create a small number of lithographs for the influential Weyhe Gallery in New York. Mexican artists like Rivera were popular in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s, and Carl Zigrosser, director of the Weyhe Gallery, was instrumental in promoting their work. This print, *Flower Market*, is one of five lithographs Rivera made for Zigrosser in 1930, and his first foray into the medium. The subject was likely requested by Zigrosser, who

encouraged Rivera to print idealized images of Mexico for an upscale American audience.

Industrious peasants selling and buying flowers in a thriving marketplace present an image of Mexico as bountiful. The bright yellow background enhances the feeling that this is a vibrant, happy place. In many ways *Flower Market* resembles a scaled-down version of a mural; the strong black outlines and the solid forms of the monumental figures defy the relatively small size of the paper. As in murals, the viewer becomes part of the scene by looking into the faces of those buying goods. The women's braids fall neatly down their backs, echoing the orderly repetition of their bodies. The mask-like faces of the figures on the left evoke the feeling of ancient Mexican sculpture. Perhaps the most curious aspect of the image is the inclusion of the vaguely sinister mounted horsemen. ■

Discussion

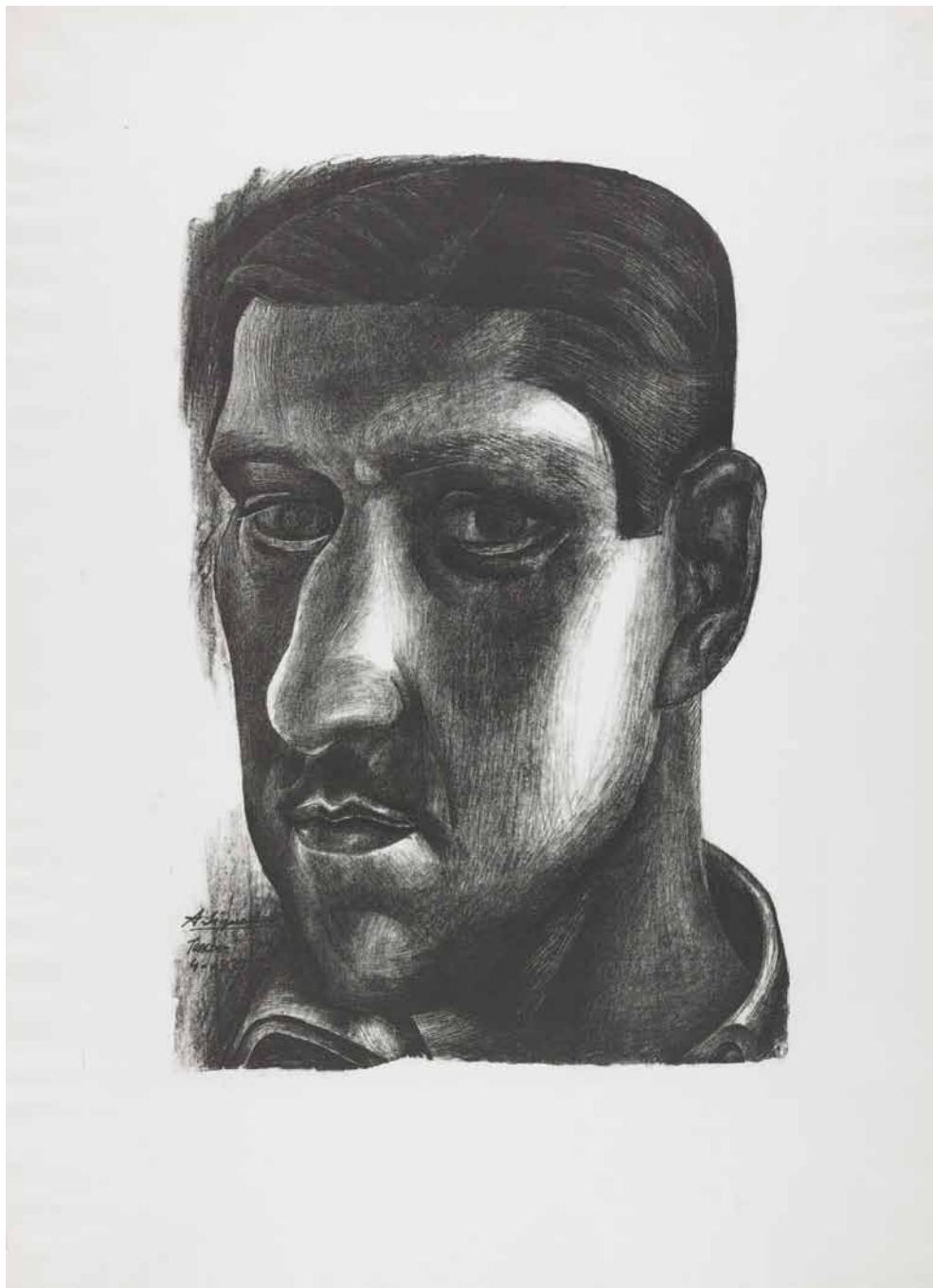
American art gallery director Carl Zigrosser commissioned Diego Rivera to produce this lithograph for a collection to sell to a trendy American audience. Zigrosser even suggested some of the themes for Rivera's prints. Why do you think an artist as politically active as Rivera would consent to making images like this at the request of a commercial publisher? How does Rivera's image represent Mexico?

Rivera was a communist dedicated to fighting for worker's rights and equality for all Mexicans. See if you find any evidence that Rivera still managed to include his politics in this image.

Look closely at the lithograph to find areas where you can see Rivera's work process. Look for extra lines that show where he sketched different positions and outlines. Why do you think an artist as well known as Rivera would want to keep these lines visible in the final edition of the print? Rivera printed the yellow background of this lithograph before printing the bold image in black. Why do you suppose he chose to keep the yellow smudge near the corner in the final print?

Look at the men on horseback in the background. Describe how they differ from the rest of the figures in the image. Why do you think Rivera drew them this way, and why do you suppose he included them in this image?

Compare and contrast Rivera's *Flower Market* to Posada's relief engraving, *The Procession*. What do they have in common? How are they different? Think about the subjects, their rustic handmade quality, color contrasts, and method of creating the scene's space.



David Alfaro Siqueiros
 Mexican, 1896–1974
Portrait of William Spratling, Taxco
 1931
 Lithograph
 Gift of Miss Leona Prasse
 © 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS),
 New York/SOMAAP, Mexico City
 P. 12,846

DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS

David Alfaro Siqueiros came of age while Mexico's urban areas were still shaped by European culture. Before the Mexican Revolution (1910–20), art was typically reserved for wealthy urbanites who favored decorative European art over traditional Mexican work. Like

his contemporaries, Rivera and Orozco, Siqueiros rejected the elite notion of “art for art’s sake,” insisting that art belongs to everybody. Siqueiros saw art as a vehicle for educating Mexico’s illiterate populations, and he admired Native Mexicans as the source of the country’s true cultural essence.

Siqueiros was a lifelong revolutionary who challenged convention in both art and politics. He was imprisoned and exiled several times for his involvement in anti-government protests. As a teenager during the revolution, Siqueiros served in the constitutional army, fighting for the deposed Carranza, who later rewarded Siqueiros with a fellowship to study art in Europe. Like Rivera, Siqueiros returned from Europe in the early 1920s to paint murals for the Mexican government. He initially embraced murals for their public accessibility in teaching a shared notion of history. However, he soon found murals too confining for disseminating his ideology.

Siqueiros found his true passion in woodblock prints, which could be posted on walls to reach a much broader audience than the murals painted inside government buildings. In 1922, Siqueiros founded the artists' union *Sindicato de los Obreros Técnicos, Pintores y Escultores (SOPTE)*, with the help of Rivera, Orozco, and other communist muralists. Siqueiros wrote and published SOPTE's manifesto, announcing the union's dedication to creating art for the socially dispossessed, while engineering a national aesthetic rooted in Mexican traditions. The principles Siqueiros published in the SOPTE manifesto guided his art throughout his career.

Siqueiros found aesthetic inspiration in the blocky, sculptural elements of ancient Olmec art. His prints, including this lithograph, *Portrait of William Spratling, Taxco, 1931*, illustrate his innovative fusion of these ancient aesthetics with modern principles and techniques. Siqueiros first experimented with lithography in New York in 1929. The inexpensive reproduction of lithographs appealed to his sense of what was essential to modern propagandistic art. This extremely rare lithograph was made as a gift to his friend and fellow artist, William Spratling, an American who lived in Mexico and promoted Siqueiros' art. He even sent drawings by Siqueiros to printer George C. Miller in New York to be made into lithographs. The strong lines, expressive features and deep shadows in this lithograph emulate charcoal drawing. Siqueiros showed Spratling as monumental and timeless, like the Olmec art both admired.

Always fascinated with adapting new technology in his work, Siqueiros continued with radical experimentation throughout his career. His unconventional materials and methods later inspired American artist Jackson Pollock. ■

Discussion

What words would you use to describe William Spratling's physical appearance based on this print? What do you think Siqueiros wanted to convey about his friend's personality? What do you see in the portrait that makes you think so?

In March 1931 Spratling wrote in the *New York Herald Tribune* that Siqueiros in his art was likely reaching toward something more Mexican and powerful than other Mexican artists. After looking at some ancient Olmec art, what do you see in this print to support Spratling's claim?

Compare and contrast Siqueiros's portrait to Arenal's *Woman of Taxco*. Both artists were inspired by several rediscoveries of ancient Mexican art. Consider each artist's composition, use of shadow, and facial features.



Francisco Mora
 Mexican, 1922–2002
Silver Mine Worker, 1946
 Lithograph from the
Mexican People portfolio
 Gift of the Print and Drawing Council
 Copyright of the artist, artist's estate,
 or assignees
 2001.97.2

FRANCISCO MORA

Francisco Mora's lithograph *Silver Mine Worker* is a strong critique of the conditions under which Mexican miners labored during the 1940s. Mining has a long, destructive history in Mexico starting with the Spanish colonizers who exploited people and land for their own profit. A belief that laborers, including miners, should control the land they worked was one of the many causes that

led to the Mexican Revolution. Nonetheless, mining remained a critical source of income for Mexico, and accounted for nearly 40 percent of Mexico's exports during the 1940s, and 20 percent of its foreign investment by the end of 1950.

Mora was born in 1922 in Uruapan, Michoacán, to artistic parents—a weaver and a musician. In 1939,

while studying agriculture at a community college in Morelia, Michoacán, he painted a portrait of the governor of the state, which earned him a scholarship to study in Morelia's art school. Between 1941 and 1944 he studied at La Escuela de la Esmeralda, the national painting school, in Mexico City.

In 1941 he also joined Taller de Gráfica Popular (TGP), a collaborative printmaking workshop dedicated to making highly political art to promote revolutionary and social causes. He produced more than 300 printed images through the collaborative. In 1947, he married Elizabeth Catlett, an American expatriate artist known for her portrayals of African American and Mexican women, who also dedicated her art and life to social change.

Mora's best-known graphic works are his linocuts and lithographs depicting the dangers and hardships of the daily lives of Mexico's miners and other working-class laborers. In 1946 he sketched miners from Pachuca, Hidalgo, for the New York publisher Associated American Artists (AAA). From 1906 to 1947, the United States Smelting, Refining and Mining Company was the primary mining company in Pachuca. This lithograph, *Silver Mine Worker*, is the artist's proof of the second plate in a portfolio of prints called *Mexican People* published by AAA. The portfolio, a collaboration with TGP, presented images of laborers, exploitation, and poverty, primarily for American collectors.

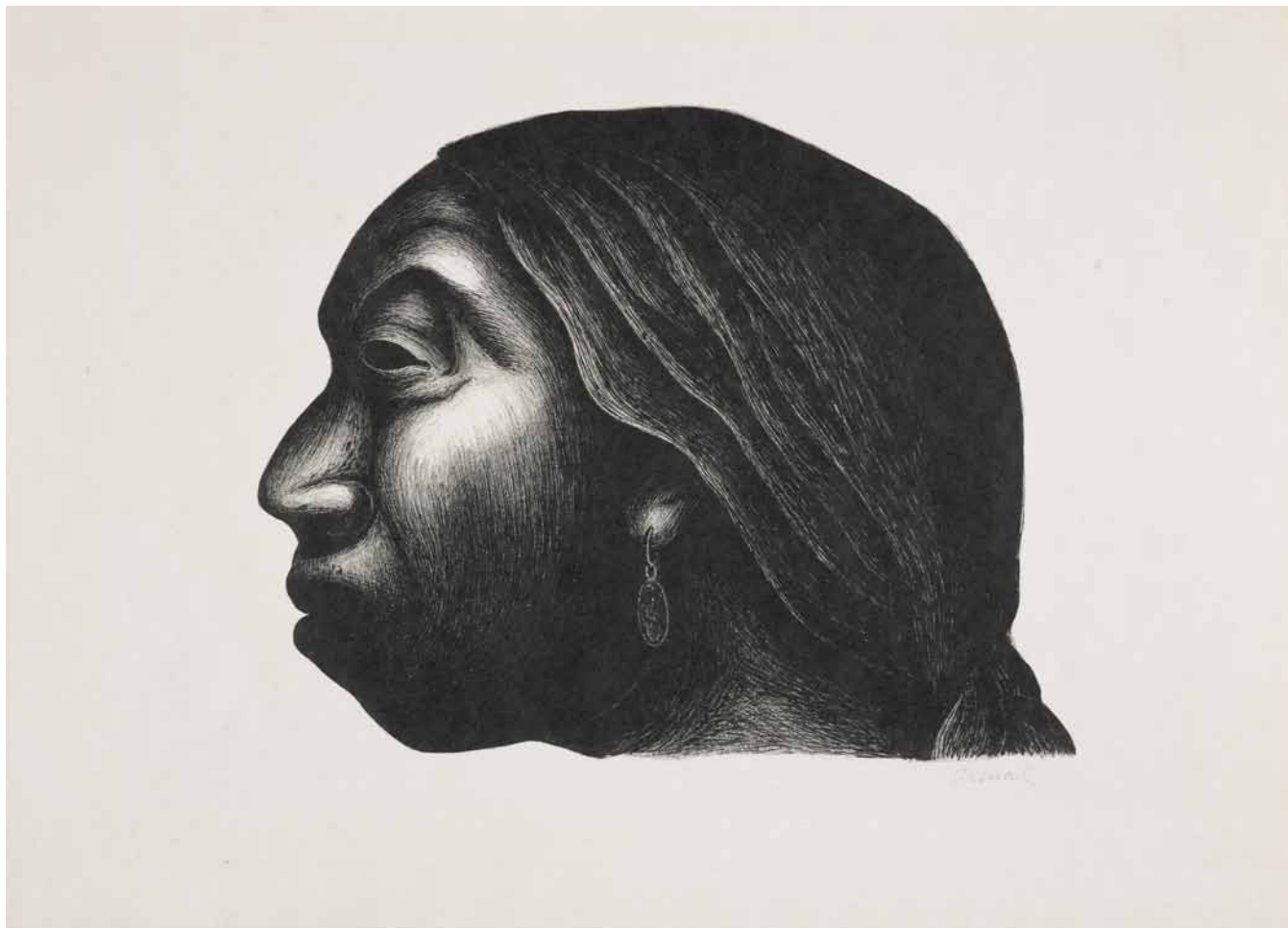
In *Silver Mine Worker* Mora depicted the back-breaking confines of the mine. The aging (or prematurely aged) miner bends low in the tunnel, bare chest and toes exposed to the sharp stones above and below. With a small lantern illuminating only his immediate surroundings, he ventures deep into the mine. By depicting the miner bent over and up close, Mora placed the viewer in the dark, claustrophobic space with him. The dark, root-like lines surrounding the dug-out mine make the sensation of being trapped in the dangerous space palpable. Far in the distance other miners are about to enter; behind them a small area of sunlight alludes to the world they must leave behind. ■

Discussion

Look closely at the details in *Silver Mine Worker*. Imagine you are the miner. Describe how you feel in this space. Describe the light, smells, climate, and your thoughts. What visual evidence from the image supports your description? Write a narrative in the voice of the miner describing this experience.

Compare and contrast Mora's image of the silver-mine worker with Luis Arenal's *Woman of Taxco*. How did Mora emphasize the individuality of the miner? How did Arenal minimize the woman of Taxco's individuality? How did each artist portray the strength of his subject?

Mining for ore has been part of Mexico's history ever since the Spanish colonizers caused death, injury, land destruction, and poverty in their quest to profit from the land's rich resources. Mining continues to be a huge part of Mexico's economy today. How might Mora's image of the silver-mine worker have helped tell American audiences about the plight of the miners? Research the mining industry in Mexico today. Create an image, written work, or performance that tells the world about the downsides of this industry.



Luis Arenal
 Mexican, 1909–1985
Woman of Taxco, 1947
 Lithograph
 Gift of Dorothy Rood
 Copyright of the artist,
 artist's estate, or assignees
 P.12,859

LUIS ARENAL

Luis Arenal, a painter and printmaker born in Teapa in 1909, dedicated his life and work to the cause of the common person. Largely self-taught, Arenal began in his twenties to work with and assist his brother-in-law, David Alfaro Siqueiros, on large, commissioned murals in Los Angeles and New York. In 1933 he served as general secretary of the Mexican League Against War and Fascism; he made many commitments to fight against the fascist oppression, racism, and killing. Arenal's wife, Macrina Rabadan, a feminist and teacher who organized leagues of peasants in the state of Guerrero, inspired her husband's activism.

Arenal may be best known for co-founding the Taller de Gráfica Popular (TGP) in 1937, a collaborative printmaking workshop dedicated to social change through the graphic arts. The community of TGP artists was united in its belief that art must reflect the social reality of the times. The workshop gained an international reputation, in part for its many images of workers and scenes of hunger, illness, and homelessness.

Arenal originally created this lithograph, part of a series celebrating Native Mexican groups, to symbolize his country and its inner strength. In *Woman*

of *Taxco* he portrayed the strength of the subject through her sheer monumentality; her face fills the page. He exploited a drawing style to model the contours of her strong cheekbone, heavy brow, and distinctive nose in deep contrasts of black and white. The natural waves of her dark hair cascade into a thick braid. In many ways the image bears a striking resemblance to numerous self-portraits by Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945), a German printmaker and political activist, who likewise called attention to the plight of workers and women through powerful images. Like the women in Kollwitz’s prints, this woman of *Taxco* is not downtrodden, but rather an icon of fortitude.

Arenal’s decision to show her eye as a dark socket might be a reference to recently discovered ancient Mexican works of art. Modern artists have celebrated the glory of Mexico’s history (before the arrival of Europeans) through references to early art forms including sculptures, masks, and other objects from the ancient Olmec culture. The mask-like quality of her face symbolizes her representation of all the people of *Taxco*.

Arenal’s prints were popular in the United States. The Associated American Artists of New York published this version of *Woman of Taxco*. ■

Discussion

Luis Arenal and many of the other artists associated with the Taller de Gráfica Popular were committed to presenting images that addressed the social realities of daily life. How did Arenal make the woman of *Taxco* appear real? What aspects appear less real? What do you see that makes you say so?

Keeping in mind that Arenal originally created this image as part of a series that celebrated different groups living in the Guerrero region, how did he emphasize her distinctive features? How is she a symbol of the strength of Mexico? Arenal took a strong stance against the political philosophy of fascism spreading throughout some European countries, particularly Nazi Germany. Fascism allowed discrimination against people considered less “pure” than others because of their heritage. What about this image could be considered anti-fascist?

Arenal looked back to art forms that pre-dated the Spanish conquest. Research and study images of ancient works of art made by the Olmec, Maya, and other pre-conquest cultures. What aspects of this image resemble characteristics of these ancient works of art?

Compare Arenal’s image with images of women and self-portraits by German artist Käthe Kollwitz. What similarities do you see? What does his print communicate about Arenal’s feelings about women? How?



Rufino Tamayo
 Mexican, 1899–1991
Girl at the Door, 1960
 Color lithograph
 Gift of Mr. Marvin Small
 Art © Tamayo Heirs/Mexico/Licensed
 by VAGA, New York, NY
 P.12,856

RUFINO TAMAYO

Rufino Tamayo is well known for his response against the politicized imagery of the muralists Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros. Instead, Tamayo promoted the value of making art for its own sake. His prints of the 1950s and early '60s reveal his distinct style, influenced by

modernist ideas about the primacy of color, form, and the artist's personal expression.

Born in Oaxaca to Zapotec parents, Tamayo moved to Mexico City in 1911 to live with an aunt and uncle. In 1921 he became chief of the drawing division of

the Archaeological and Ethnographical Museum. From the 1920s through 1950 he spent of his time between New York and Mexico. By the time he was living in Paris in the 1950s, he was an international success.

This lithograph demonstrates Tamayo's enthusiasm for Surrealism, a movement that began in Europe in the 1930s, emphasizing what lies beneath the surface of an image. Just what is going on in this picture? The picture is filled with a lot of unknowns or mysteries. Who is the woman? Is she coming or going? Where is she headed? Where has she been?

Tamayo abstracted the figure into forms that suggest other forms. The girl's veiled head and torso suggest the shape of a keyhole. Her facial features are obscured. The longer one looks, the more he or she discerns the subtleties of the image. The scene is universal: someone silhouetted in a doorway. Tamayo's focus, however, was on the art-making—the lines, colors, surface appearance, density of the surface, and intersections among these.

As in this lithograph, many of Tamayo's works of art are characterized by colors he describes as Mexican, and rich textures created by layers of color and medium. He created a strong sense of emotion through expressive colors and reworked surfaces. He typically explored the wealth of possibility within a single color rather than using a variety of pigments. It is evident in this lithograph that Tamayo was interested in the complexities within the color orange. The intensity of the oranges at once compete against and complement the cool blues, blacks, and grays. Likewise, the strong geometric forms—squares, circles, triangles and diamonds—compete with the bold, yet soft and expressive lines drawn with the wax lithographic crayon. The delicate hairs and textured surface soften the fairly rigid composition. The sensual surface vies for attention with the wonderfully ambiguous space created by the figure, door, and light. ■

Discussion

What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say so? Do you think this is taking place inside? Outside? Both inside and outside? Tamayo did not assign a single meaning to the work, so feel free to write a story or a scene from a play about what's going on. Use cues from the image (e.g. color, light, doorway, figure, clothing) to supply details in your story. Share your story with others and notice the various interpretations.

Tamayo was interested in achieving great texture and depth in his prints. Lithography, like many printmaking techniques, produces flat, non-textured images. What words would you use to describe the illusion of texture in this lithograph? How do you think Tamayo achieved this illusion? Describe your perception of the sense of space in this image. How did Tamayo create this illusion of depth?

During the 1970s Tamayo wanted to push beyond the limitations of traditional printmaking techniques. He worked with Luis and Lea Remba in their printmaking workshop in Mexico City to pioneer a new printmaking process called "mixografía." Research mixografía. What makes it special? View this image of Tamayo's mixografía print, *Paisaje con Luna* (*Landscape with Moon*) [<http://www.artsmia.org/viewer/detail.php?v=12&id=43989>] in the MIA's collection. How would you describe the sense of space in this print?

Tamayo decided his work would emphasize the act of art making rather than politics. Compare and contrast *Girl at the Door* with Orozco's *The Requiem*. In what ways are the subjects of the pictures different? What do they have in common? How are the moods of the images alike or different? What artistic techniques (line, color, composition) does each artist use to create a sense of mood?



José Luis Cuevas
 Mexican, born 1934
*Music Is a Higher Revelation
 than Philosophy—Beethoven*, 1966
 Color lithograph
 The John R. Van Derlip Fund
 © 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS),
 New York/SOMAAP, Mexico City
 P.68.55

JOSÉ LUIS CUEVAS

The title of this puzzling print by José Luis Cuevas refers to a quote by composer Ludwig van Beethoven: “Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy, it is the wine of a new procreation, and I am Bacchus who presses out this glorious wine for men and

makes them drunk with the spirit.” This color lithograph, commissioned by the Los Angeles Orchestral Society to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Los Angeles Music Festival, is uncharacteristically bright and playful for Cuevas.

Practically self-taught, Cuevas was known as the “enfant terrible” when at age ten he registered as a special student at Escuela de la Esmeralda, the national painting school in Mexico City. He continued his training at Mexico City College. Cuevas was one of the principal artists of a group called “La Ruptura,” which departed from the idea that art should advance and serve a political agenda. Typically, Cuevas’s art is introspective and dark, and often portrays scenes of human degeneration.

By contrast, the dominant orange color and lively figures of this lithograph offer a hopeful and bright feeling. Seemingly random scrapings emanate from the horn and dance around the figures revealing the color of the paper. The bold faces of the main characters and the hands add an even brighter white note to the scene.

Cuevas depicts two musicians and many other characters at work. The largest figure, seated on what looks like a throne and shown in profile, appears to play two pipes. But Cuevas has left the interpretation open. Standing in front of, or perhaps being held by, the larger figure is a smaller figure. Is this entity playing what appears to be a huge horn held upright? Although both faces are partially obscured by the bell of the horn, the left eye of the smaller figure directly engages the viewer. Are those its proportionately tiny hands holding the huge horn? What else might the mysterious little figure be holding? Are these bulging bags? Are the three human faces contained inside of the bags? Or do the faces occupy space outside? Two more faces appear on what might be a draped skirt. Even more curious is the crane-like bird that seems to have laid an egg (or face?) near the shoulder of the larger musician. ■

Discussion

Why do you suppose Cuevas made a picture called *Music Is a Higher Revelation than Philosophy*? It is interesting to wonder if he came up with the image or the title first. How does the title of the print influence how you read its meaning? What additional meaning, if any, does the Beethoven quote add to your interpretation of the print?

Write an essay (or compose lyrics to a song) describing your interpretation of this print to someone else. Whom do you think the faces on the musicians’ clothing depict? Speculate about the significance of the bird atop the human head. Enjoy the nonsense!

Both Cuevas and Toledo juxtapose human and animal figures in their fantasy images. What else do these two prints have in common? Both prints could be called “surreal” even though they post-date the art movement known as Surrealism. Research the meaning of the word surreal and discuss with your classmates why this label might apply to these two prints. Using a combination of human, animal, and other forms, draw a picture from your imagination.



Francisco Toledo
 Mexican, born 1940
Leon (Lion), 1970
 Etching, aquatint
 Gift of Robert and Jane Keller
 © 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS),
 New York/SOMAAP, Mexico City
 2010.70

FRANCISCO TOLEDO

What's going on in this picture? The relationships among humans and animals in Francisco Toledo's *Leon (Lion)* are intriguing.

Toledo was born to Zapotec parents in 1940. After training in fine art as a teenager in Oaxaca and Mexico City, he moved to Paris. There he worked at Atelier 17, a famous print workshop, which sparked his interest in printmaking. He returned to Mexico in 1965, just in time to experience the emergence

of "La Ruptura," a new group of Mexican artists, including José Luis Cuevas, who departed from the dominant styles of the muralists Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros, known as "Los Tres Grandes."

Toledo, influenced by the later work of his mentor and fellow Zapotec, Rufino Tamayo, avoided the political content that defined the art of "Los Tres Grandes." Instead, he created imaginative images drawn from an eclectic blend of Mexican, North American, and European traditions. Although Toledo

has worked in pottery, sculpture, weaving, and painting, most of his works are drawings and editioned prints.

Recently, Toledo has become passionate about conserving and protecting his native Oaxacan culture. He explores indigenous Mexican mythology, rituals, and magic. Dedicated to bringing art to the masses, he has established free institutions in Oaxaca, such as an art library, and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Oaxaca.

Toledo has often turned to the theme of lion or lion tamer. In *Leon*, one of a series of intaglio prints evoking the circus, he depicts the animated lion tamer levitating above the stage. His ambiguous gestures might suggest he has just revealed something (a trick?) to an audience and is waiting for applause. His face appears as a patterned mask, more lion than human. Conversely, the male lion sits aggressively on his haunches, and his open, smiling mouth looks more human or canine than feline. It is as if the two animals, human and lion, have switched places. The lioness in the foreground lounges calmly. The space is unadorned, except for a partial circle on the floor, barely suggesting a circus ring.

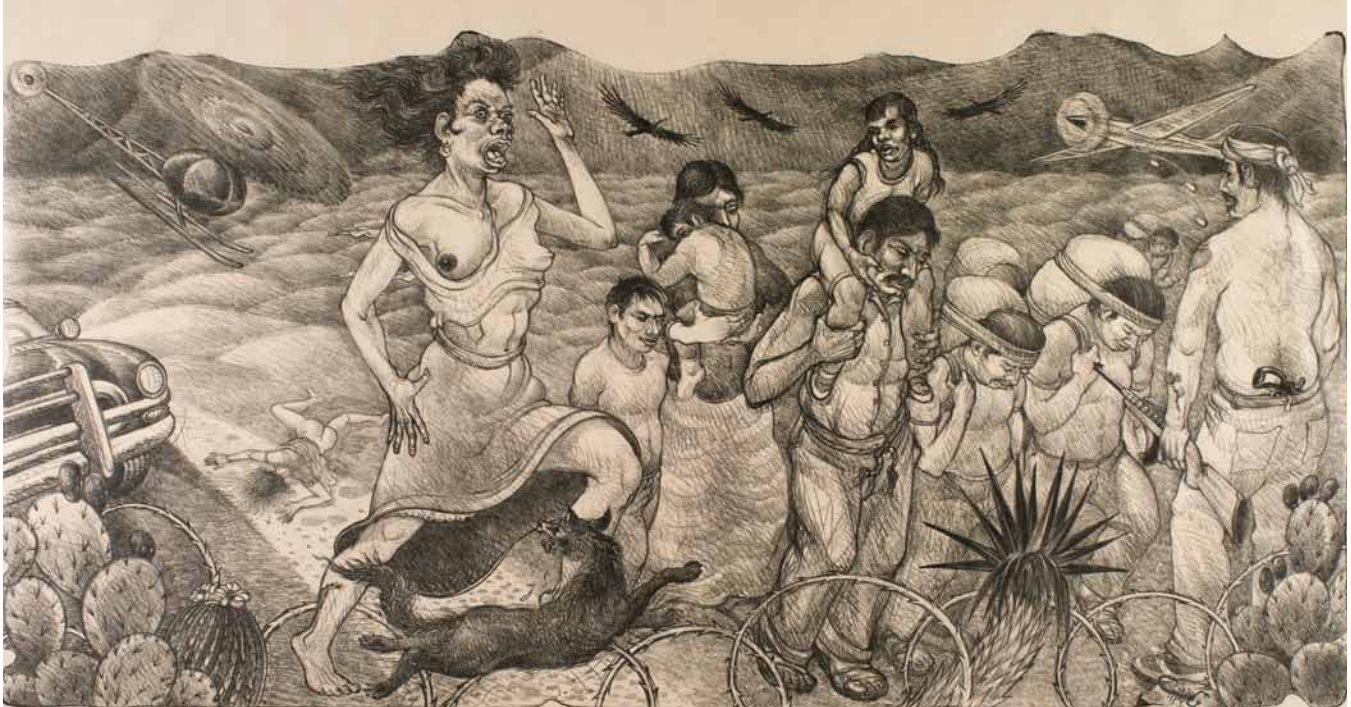
Technically, Toledo uses the unique qualities of aquatint to create deep, soft tones of gray, for example in the chair, on the stage, and even in the tamer's hands. The lion is etched with bold dark lines that assert his powerful presence in the otherwise fantasy space. The print is filled with mystery, contrasts, and enough ambiguity to keep viewers speculating about its meaning. ■

Discussion

Toledo often depicts themes of the circus, lions, and lion tamers. When you hear the word “circus,” what do you think about? What comes to mind when you think about the relationship between a lion and lion tamer? Why do you suppose Toledo showed them in this way? How would you represent this relationship in art?

Contrast Toledo's *Leon* and Orozco's *The Requiem*. How are they alike? How are they different? What is the purpose of each print?

Compare and contrast the male lion and lion tamer. What words would you use to describe each? Think about the narrative of the image and write a story about what just happened. What will happen next?



Luis Jiménez
 American, 1940–2006
Tan Lejos de Dios; Tan Cerca de los Estados Unidos, 2001
 Lithograph
 The Richard Lewis Hillstrom Fund
 © 2012 Estate of Luis A. Jimenez, Jr./
 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
 2011.76.3

LUIS JIMÉNEZ

Porfirio Díaz, the Mexican dictator (ruled 1876 to 1911), is usually credited with the saying, “¡Pobre México! ¡Tan lejos de Dios y tan cerca de los Estados Unidos!” (Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States!) At the time, this quotation probably referred to Mexico’s economic and social struggles, and the Mexicans’ desire to solve these problems themselves. The quotation takes on new meaning as the title of this powerful lithograph by Luis Jiménez, made in 2001. People are shown leaving Mexico, and risking their lives in order to cross the border and find greater economic stability in the United States.

Jiménez is best known for creating large, polychrome fiberglass sculptures featuring southwestern American and Hispanic themes. He was born in El Paso, Texas, and is the only Mexican American artist in this resource. Jiménez studied art and architecture at the University of Texas in Austin and El Paso, and later taught art at

the University of Arizona and the University of Houston. He died in his studio when a large section of *Blue Mustang*, one of his sculptures, fell on him, severing an artery in his leg.

In *Tan Lejos de Dios*, the viewer confronts a chaotic scene reminiscent of the montage style of Mexican murals. Mexican men, women, and children are shown trying to enter the United States illegally. To the left of the group, a woman’s body is sprawled on the ground, perhaps having been hit by the automobile nearby; only the frantic woman in front of her appears to notice. The others move onward in pursuit of what appears to be a hopeless goal of leaving Mexico. The figure of the man with a woman on his shoulders recalls an earlier sculpture, *Border Crossing* [<http://www.museumsyndicate.com/item.php?item=232631>], in which Jiménez depicted his father carrying his mother across the Rio Grande. The two men carrying burdens evoke a famous painting

by Diego Rivera, *The Flower Carrier* [<http://www.sfmoma.org/explore/collection/artwork/265>]. They appear burdened by the lives they cannot truly leave behind.

Numerous terrors and deterrents stand in the way of passage into the United States—cactus, barbed wire, three circling vultures, a helicopter and plane, a wild dog, and the desert landscape itself. The small scorpion is as potentially deadly as the guide's menacing rifle and pistol on the right. Even the upper edge of the lithograph itself, which creates the profile of the mountains on the Mexico/El Paso border, is broken. Despite these challenges, the people continue forward, some with children, in hopes for a better future.

Jiménez grew up in El Paso, across the border from Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, part of the international metropolitan area known as Juárez-El Paso. Border crossings like those depicted in this lithograph were and continue to be a reality, and a hot political topic on both sides of the border. ■

Discussion

Many people have been impelled to flee their homes in order to survive. What are some reasons people may flee their homes? What are some of the political arguments for and against the entrance of Mexicans into the United States? Based on this print, what do you deduce was Jiménez's position on this sensitive and controversial subject? What do you see that makes you say that?

Look at the two women on the far left—the one left behind, and the frantic, running woman. Why do you think the artist has depicted them partially clothed? How would the message of the print change if he had entirely covered their bodies? In what ways does he illustrate the strength of these women?

Compare this lithograph with Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* [<http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/july-28-liberty-leading-people>], an icon of revolutionary painting in 19th-century France. Also compare it to Jiménez's sculpture, *Border Crossing*, which depicts the artist's parents crossing the Rio Grande to migrate to the United States.

Jiménez is known for his allegorical work. What is an allegory? What do you see in this image that is a symbol for something else? What larger, moral message is Jiménez conveying?



Carlos Amoraless
 Mexican, born 1970
Useless Wonder Map 1–4, 2010
 Relief prints from plastic silhouettes
 The Barbara S. Longfellow Fund
 for Works on Paper
 © Courtesy of Highpoint Editions
 and Carlos Amoraless
 2011.59.1–4

CARLOS AMORALES

At first glance, the countries in *Useless Wonder Map 1* appear to be succumbing to continental drift—the notion that continents move in relationship to one another.

When one views all of the maps in the series *Useless Wonder Maps*, it becomes obvious that something else is going on. No longer have the countries and continents simply drifted away from one another—they have been picked up and dropped in entirely different positions. In repositioning the countries and continents, Carlos Amoraless plays with the idea of chance, and calls into question the artificial nature of borders.

Amoraless lives and works in Mexico City and Amsterdam. He studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Since 1998 he has been building a “Liquid Archive,” a digital database of his own drawings. He collaborated with two Dutch graphic designers in 2007 to produce the book *Carlos Amoraless: Liquid Archive, Why Fear the Future*.

Amoraless works in a variety of mediums including painting, sculpture, installation, photography, animation, collage, performance, and printmaking. He has been working on the theme of *Useless Wonder* in different series. The map series is part of his first

venture into printmaking. Amorales collaborated with Highpoint Center for Printmaking (Highpoint Editions) in Minneapolis to produce several series. At Highpoint, Amorales experimented with relief printing. He inked laser-cut Plexiglas shapes, largely based on his “Liquid Archive,” and printed them on the etching press. Pleased with the results, he used this technique in multiple new works. For the *Useless Maps* series he produced plastic templates representing countries, which he arranged in four different configurations, each of which becomes less readable as a map of the world as we know it today. This form of printmaking allows for a sense of randomness and many reconfigurations.

Amorales said “The map of the earth and its countries drifting away in the ocean and getting mixed up seemed a perfect catastrophe in graphic terms... . It reminded me of old stories I have read about sailors, of them trying to cross the Cape Horn... . The map in motion seems to summarize this for me.” (Jens Hoffman, “Amorales vs. Amorales,” in *Carlos Amorales: Discarded Spider*, Lucy Flint, ed. Rotterdam: Veenman Publishers, 2008.) ■

Discussion

The *Useless Wonder Maps* are useless as maps. Think of ways in which these works of art are useful.

What do you think Carlos Amorales wants the viewer to think about the world? What do you see that makes you say that?

Look at maps of our world over time. How has our sense of the world changed? Why has it changed? What is Amorales saying about the power of maps?

An archive is a place or collection containing records, documents, or other materials. Why might Amorales call his archive “liquid”?

One inspiration for *Useless Wonder Maps* was *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* by Edgar Allan Poe, in which the main character goes on a fantastic journey from Nantucket, Massachusetts, to Antarctica. Read the Wikipedia entry on *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Narrative_of_Arthur_Gordon_Pym_of_Nantucket]. What inspires you?

ART MAKING: SPREAD YOUR MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

The Mexican artists featured in this learning resource used the medium of printmaking to spread their art and ideas to large and diverse audiences. They often chose themes that were political, cultural, and controversial. Their hope was to get people to think, and act on their thinking, and thus improve Mexican society.

Think of a current issue that is important to you, in your home, school, neighborhood, or the world.

Design a graphic image that will get people to think about the issue, and persuade them to take your side. The image should not be hurtful to anyone, but rather show a way to make the world better, if only in a small way.

Using digital and social media, share your work of art with a large and diverse audience—your family, friends, neighbors, or school.

TIMELINE: SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

As a class, use the chronology in this resource as a starting point, and make a timeline of the history of Mexico and Mexican printmaking. Individuals or teams could research different time periods, or political or artistic movements. Include images, either hand-drawn or reproduced, of major political, historical, and artistic personalities. Also include hand-drawn or reproduced images of the prints featured in this resource.

WRITING: IMAGES INTO WORDS

Many themes reoccur in Mexican prints. Write about one of these themes.

The People

Many Mexican printmakers focused on Mexico as their subject, taking pride, and reveling in the variety of Mexico's indigenous people. What do you think each artist is saying about Mexican-ness (*mexicanidad*) in his print? Write at least one paragraph for each work of art (below), in which you describe what the artist is saying about Mexico.

Woman of Taxco, Luis Arenal

Flower Market, Diego Rivera

Portrait of William Spratling, Taxco,
David Alfaro Siqueiros

The Land

Compare the idea of "land" in these two prints (below). What role does "land" play in each? What challenging ideas do these artists present to the viewer? What do borders mean to you?

Useless Wonder Maps, Carlos Amoraes

Tan Lejos de Dios; Tan Cerca de los Estados Unidos, Luis Jiménez

Ritual

Compare these two gatherings of people in the prints below. What do you imagine the individual people in each print are experiencing? Write about it. What are they seeing, hearing, touching, and smelling? If relevant, relate your descriptions to personal experiences.

The Requiem, José Clemente Orozco

The Procession, José Guadalupe Posada

Work

The silver-mine worker had a dangerous job. Dangerous jobs still exist. Research dangerous jobs, and choose one to focus on. Are there ways to make the job safer for people and the environment? Write an essay arguing for changing the way the job is done to make it safer.

Silver Mine Worker, Francisco Mora

Artist's Imagination

In some ways, the prints below do not fit in well with the others in the group. What makes these prints different from the rest of the collection? What does the word imagination mean to you? Select one of these images and create an imaginative story that describes the setting (Where is this taking place? What does it smell like? What sounds do you hear?), characters (List at least five details you want readers to know about each of your characters), and plot (What is going on? What are the characters thinking about? What happened before? Next?). What will the title of your story be? What deeper meaning, if any, will your story communicate?

Music Is a Higher Revelation than Philosophy—Beethoven, José Luis Cuevas

Girl at the Door, Rufino Tamayo

Leon (Lion), Francisco Toledo

THE PROCESS OF PRINTMAKING

COURTESY HIGHPOINT CENTER FOR PRINTMAKING, MINNEAPOLIS | *Reprinted with permission.*

Printmaking is a process that typically allows artists to make multiple original works of art. In most cases, the artist creates an image on a matrix made out of metal, stone, wood, or other materials. The matrix is then inked, and the inky image is transferred to a piece of paper, often with a press, to create an original print.

Monotypes/Monoprints

The terms monoprint and monotype describe an image that can only be printed once in its original state, unlike other forms of printmaking. This technique is also the most painterly of the printmaking processes. Typically, the artist will use ink to paint an image onto a smooth surface such as plexiglass, a metal plate or cardboard coated with varnish. S/he will then lay a dampened piece of paper on top of the plate and run both through a press to create a unique, one of a kind print. The artist may also transfer the image by hand, using the back of a spoon to burnish the paper, instead of running it through a press.

Intaglio Printing

When making an intaglio (pronounced een/TAHL/yoh) print, the artist creates an image by using a variety of tools and/or acid to carve depressions in a metal plate (typically zinc, copper or brass). The artist inks the incised lines and recessed textures of the plate, and wipes the raised surfaces clean. S/he then places a dampened piece of paper on top of the plate and runs it through an etching press, which uses extreme pressure to force the paper into the inked crevices. The dampness of the paper also helps soak up the ink. Intaglio printing can achieve effects ranging from crisp, clear lines to large areas of deep, velvety blacks.

Engraving, drypoint, aquatint, and etching are the four primary intaglio techniques.

Engraving

This process is characterized by sharp, crisp lines that are created when the artist uses a steel tool, called a burin, to carve into a copper or brass plate. The deeper the cut, the thicker the line. Tonal areas are created by engraving cross-hatched or parallel lines. The image that results is clear and precise.

Drypoint

In this process, the artist scratches a drawing onto a metal plate with a sharp needle. Metal burrs that result from the scratching trap and hold the ink after the plate is wiped clean. This creates a soft, heavy line that is unique to this type of intaglio.

Aquatint

In this process the artist first dusts the metal plate with varying densities of an acid-resistant powder called rosin that adheres to the plate when heated. As the artist places the plate in an acid bath, the acid “bites” around each of the dusted particles—this technique creates various tones from light to dark when the plate is inked and printed.

Etching

In this process, a copper, zinc, or brass plate is covered with an acid-resistant ground made of asphaltum, beeswax, rosin and solvent. After the artist scratches an image into the ground with an etching needle or other sharp object, s/he submerges the plate in an acid bath. The acid “bites” into the areas where the ground has been scratched away creating clearly defined lines. The longer the plate is submerged in the acid, the deeper the lines will become; this results in heavier lines or darker prints. Photographic images can also be transferred and etched into a metal plate.

Collograph

The collograph plate is made up of various objects that are glued onto cardboard and then varnished. The plate is then inked and run through a press like any other intaglio plate.

Mezzotint

This process is known for the rich, velvety blacks that are created when the artist systematically presses a curved, serrated “rocker” back and forth over the surface of a copper plate. The rocking creates thousands of tiny indentations with raised burrs. After the entire surface is roughened, the artist can create highlights by using scrapers or burnishers to smooth out areas of the plate. This produces soft tones in the image ranging from dark gray to white.

Relief Printing

In a relief print, the image is printed from the raised portion of a surface area after the artist carves away areas s/he wants to appear white. It is the oldest form of printmaking, and these prints are often characterized by bold dark and light contrasts.

To make a relief print, the artist uses a sharp tool to gouge out areas from a material such as wood or linoleum. The areas that are removed will appear white in the final print, and the inked raised portions will create the image. The artist uses a roller to apply ink to the raised portions of the surface and places a sheet of paper on top of the inked surface. S/he transfers the image onto the paper by either rubbing the back of the paper (hand-burnishing) or by running the block and paper through a press.

Woodcut, wood engraving, and linocut are the three primary relief techniques.

Woodcut

In this process, the image is carved into wood blocks whose surfaces run parallel to the grain. Because the grain is resistant to cutting, detail is often difficult to achieve. However, with softer woods, the grain pattern itself is often visible and can be incorporated into the composition of the final print.

Wood Engraving

In this process, the grain is not apparent in the print because the image is carved into the end-grain surface of a wood block. This allows for much finer detail than woodcuts can offer.

Linocut

Here, the artist carves into linoleum which is usually backed with wood for reinforcement. Since linoleum does not have a grain, this method can achieve lines that are curvy and moderately detailed.

Screenprinting

Screenprinting uses a stencil method to create images. First the artist must build a screen by tightly stretching and attaching a finely woven fabric, usually a monofilament polyester, to a sturdy wood or metal frame. Then, the artist uses a material such as glue, paper, shellac, film stencils, or photographic processes to block out areas on the screen; the areas left open will print. The artist lays the screen on top of a sheet of paper or other material and squeegees ink across the entire screen. The ink passes through the open areas of the stencil to create the image. The artist can then make more stencils and can build images in layers with different colors and designs.

Lithography

The lithographic process enables artists to create images with a wide tonal range, which often results in a look that is similar to charcoal drawing or painting. In lithography, the artist uses a variety of greasy crayons or tusche to draw or paint onto smooth, leveled limestone or a fine-grained metal plate (like aluminum or zinc). The image is then chemically treated with a mixture of dilute nitric acid and gum arabic. This chemical process serves to fix the grease onto the stone and to prevent the other areas from receiving ink. The stone is then sponged with a thin layer of water. Only then is the stone inked. The water prevents the oil-based ink from adhering to the blank areas while the greasy areas readily accept it. The image is transferred from stone or plate to paper by the pressure of the lithographic press.

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Vida y Drama and Viva Mexico! Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2009. <http://educators.mfa.org/galleries/detail/3000>

What Is a Print? <http://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/interactives/57/featured>

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

The MIA's Department of Learning Resources offers workshops on a variety of topics and is available for custom consultations. Visit www.artsmia.org/teacher-resources for more information.

Print Study Room

The Herschel V. Jones Print Study Room offers individuals and groups the opportunity to examine up close the exceptional collection of the MIA's Department of Prints & Drawings, including the prints featured in this resource. Study hours, by appointment only, are Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to noon, and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Please call (612) 870-3105 for more information or to schedule an appointment. Because group size is limited when visiting the Print Study Room, consider dividing your class into groups of 15. Some students could view objects in the Print Study Room while others tour in the museum galleries, and then switch.

ARTS

1. Visual Arts – Artistic Foundations

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area.

Analyze how the elements of visual art including color, line, shape, value, form, texture and space are used in the creation of, presentation of, or response to visual works of art. 6.1.1.5.1

Analyze how the elements of visual art including color, line, shape, value, form, texture and space; and principles such as repetition, pattern, emphasis, contrast and balance are combined to communicate meaning in the creation of, presentation of, or response to visual works of art. 9.1.1.5.1

Analyze how the principles of visual art, such as repetition, pattern, emphasis, contrast and balance are used in the creation, presentation of, or response to visual works of art. 6.1.1.5.2, 9.1.1.5.2

Describe characteristics of Western and non-Western styles, movements and genres in art. 6.1.1.5.3

Analyze how the characteristics of Western and non-Western styles, movements, and genres in art contribute to the creation of, presentation of, or response to works of art. 9.1.1.5.3

2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable.

Demonstrate the characteristics of the tools, materials and techniques of various two- and three-dimensional media for intentional effects in original works of art. 6.1.2.5.1

Integrate the characteristics of the tools, materials and techniques of a selected media in original works of art to support artistic purposes. 9.1.2.5.1

3. Demonstrate understanding of the personal, social, cultural and historical context that influence the arts areas.

Compare and contrast the connections among visual works of art, their purposes, and their personal, social, cultural and historical contexts, including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities. 6.1.3.5.1

Analyze how visual works of art influence and are influenced by personal, social, cultural or historical contexts, including the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities. 9.1.3.5.1

Analyze the meanings and functions of visual art. 6.1.3.5.2

Synthesize and express an individual view of the meaning and functions of visual art. 9.1.3.5.2

4. Artistic Process: Respond or Critique

1. Respond to or critique a variety of creations or performances using the artistic foundations.

Analyze and interpret a variety of visual works of art using established criteria. 6.4.1.5.1

Analyze, interpret and evaluate works of visual art by applying self-selected criteria within the traditions of the art form. 9.4.1.5.1

Justify choices of self-selected criteria based on knowledge of how criteria affect criticism. 9.4.1.5.2

WORLD LANGUAGES

There are no state standards for World Languages.

This is a model. Each goal has a beginning, developing, and refining stage, which depends on how long the language is studied.

1. Communicate in Languages Other than English

- 1.1 Students will engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
- 1.2 Students will understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
- 1.3 Students convey information, concepts, and ideas to listeners and readers for a variety of purposes.

2. Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

- 2.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the perspectives and practices of cultures studied and use this knowledge to interact effectively in cultural contexts.
- 2.2 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the perspectives and products/contribution of the cultures studied.

3. Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

- 3.1 Students reinforce and further knowledge of other disciplines through world languages.

5. Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World

- 5.1 Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting for a variety of purposes.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Comprehension and Collaboration

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade (6–8) topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (6.9.1.1, 7.9.1.1., 8.9.1.1)

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade (9–12) topics, texts, and issues, including those by and about Minnesota American Indians, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. (9.9.1.1, 11.9.1.1)

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study. (6.9.2.2)

Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study. (7.9.2.2)

Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation. (8.9.2.2)

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source. (9.9.2.2)

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data. (11.9.2.2)

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6-12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. (6.11.4.4, 7.11.4.4, 8.11.4.4, 9.11.4.4, 11.11.4.4)

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (6.11.6.6, 7.11.6.6, 8.11.6.6)

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level' demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. (9.11.6.6, 11.11.6.6)

SOCIAL STUDIES

Citizenship and Government

1. Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote, and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills and take action to solve problems and shape public policy. 6.1.1.1.1, 6.1.1.1.3, 7.1.1.1.1, 8.1.1.1.1, 9.1.1.1.1, 9.1.1.1.3, 9.1.1.1.4
13. Governments are based on different political philosophies and are established to serve various purposes. 8.1.5.13.1

Economics

5. Individuals, businesses and governments interact and exchange goods, services and resources in different ways and for different reasons; interactions between buyers and sellers in a market determines the price and quantity exchanged of a good, service or resource. 6.2.3.5.1, 9.2.4.5.3

Geography

1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context. 6.3.1.1.1, 7.3.1.1.1., 8.3.1.1.1.1, 9.3.1.1.1
5. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic and political systems.) 8.3.3.5.2, 9.3.3.5.4
8. Processes of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of the earth's surface. 9.3.3.8.1, 9.3.3.8.2, 9.3.3.8.3

History

2. Historical inquiry is a process in which multiple sources and different kinds of historical evidence are analyzed to draw conclusions about how and why things happened in the past. 8.4.1.2.1, 9.4.1.2.1, 9.4.1.2.2
9. Hemispheric networks intensified as a result of innovations in agriculture, trade across longer distances, the consolidation of belief systems and the development of new multi-ethnic empires while diseases and climate change caused sharp, periodic fluctuations in global population. 9.4.3.9.6
10. New connections between the hemispheres resulted in the "Columbian Exchange," new sources and forms of knowledge, development of the first truly global economy, intensification of coerced labor, increasingly complex societies and shifts in the international balance of power. 9.4.3.10.4, 9.4.3.10.5
11. Industrialization ushered in wide-spread population growth and new migration, new colonial empires and revolutionary ideas about government and political power. 9.4.3.11.3, 9.4.3.11.6
18. Economic expansion and the conquest of indigenous and Mexican territory spurred the agricultural and industrial growth of the United States; led to increasing regional, economic and

ethnic divisions; and inspired multiple reform movements. 9.4.4.18.2

21. The economic growth, cultural innovation and political apathy of the 1920s ended in the Great Depression which spurred new forms of government intervention and renewed labor activism, followed by World War II and an economic resurgence. 6.4.4.21.1, 6.4.4.21.2, 7.4.4.21.2, 9.4.4.21.1
23. The end of the Cold War, shifting geopolitical dynamics, the intensification of the global economy and rapidly changing technologies have given renewed urgency to debates about the United States' identity, values, and role in the world. 6.4.4.23.1, 7.4.4.23.2

MATHEMATICS

Geometry and Measurement

Know and apply properties of geometric figures to solve real-world problems and to logically justify results in geometry. 9.3.3.1, 9.3.3.2, 9.3.3.3, 9.3.3.4, 9.3.3.7, 9.3.3.8

SCIENCE

The Nature of Science and Engineering

1. Science is a way of knowing about the natural world and is characterized by empirical criteria, logical argument and skeptical review. 7.1.1.1.1, 8.1.1.1.1, 9.1.1.1.1