Mexican Art

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Lesson Plans for Educators

March 10, 2010

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Introduction to Mexican Art

This lesson packet is based on the exhibition *Las Artes de México: From the Collection of the Gilcrease Museum*. *Las Artes de México* explores the richness of Mexican art and culture across many eras and regions, from the ancient work of the Mayans and Aztecs to groundbreaking modernist painting of the twentieth century. This exhibition offers a dynamic look at Mexico's ancient, folk, and modern art, examining the historic roots that have become the cultural landscape of Mexico today.

The region of modern-day Mexico has been home to highly developed cultures and urban civilizations for over 4,500 years. In ancient times, the people of Mesoamerica built spectacular pyramids and temples, developed sophisticated agriculture, and exchanged goods across a vast trade network. While the Spanish invasion (1519-1521) destroyed many aspects of the ancient civilizations, new forms of cultural production grew from the merging of native and Spanish traditions.

Modern Mexico was born in 1821, at the end of an eleven year struggle for independence from Spain. The stories of the people of Mexico are a crucial part of the history of our Western hemisphere, and represent a mosaic of traditions founded in antiquity that extend into our own time.

The Art of Ancient America

The people of ancient Central America created a vast range of art objects, from fine jewelry and ceramic vessels to stone carvings and sculpture. The earliest objects in this exhibition were created by the Olmec (2500 BCE-300 CE), who made elaborate carvings from jade. Considered to represent the very spirit of life, jade stone was brought through trade from the mountains of eastern Guatemala.

Each civilization built upon the achievements of earlier cultures. The Classic period (300-900 CE) was the era of Teotihuacan and the Mayas. Pottery was one of the oldest skills in the Americas. Mayan pottery was made by hand, without the use of a potter's wheel. The Mayans created clay figurines decorated with intricate appliqué depicting warriors, chiefs, and gods. The Toltec and Aztec empires arose in the militaristic Post-classic period (900-1521 CE) that followed.

Religious Art of the Mesoamericans

Mesoamerican people built temples and pyramids as monuments to honor their gods. Religion was the focus of much daily life. From the mass human sacrifices at the great Aztec temple at Tenochtitlan, to the simple votive offerings made by Indians of the northern frontier, the people of ancient Mesoamerica worshiped to ensure their physical well being in life and their spiritual success in the afterlife. Almost all native belief systems include a strong emphasis on rituals as a means to obtain the favor of deities.

After the Conquest

Within a few years of their arrival in 1517, the Spanish overcame the powerful Aztec empire to establish the colony of Nueva Espana, which endured for the next three hundred years. After the Spanish Conquest, Roman Catholicism became the official religion of the colony and Spanish authorities sent missionaries into remote areas to convert the Indians, often through harsh methods.

Over time, elements from the native religions and from Catholicism entwined to create a range of beliefs and practices unique to Mexico. While many indigenous Mexicans today are Catholic, ancient religious mythology and practices still play an important role in Mexicans' cultural identity. Traditional beliefs continue to be practiced by many indigenous populations throughout Central America.

Cultural Traditions

The Spanish invasion destroyed ancient civilizations, but new cultures grew from the merging of Indian and Spanish traditions. In ancient Mesoamerica, music and dance were often dedicated to the gods, with masked dancers assuming the forms of mythical forces and figures. Today masks are important items in the tourist markets, and often are excellent examples of traditional artistic styles and techniques.

Weaving is also rooted in an ancient tradition. The practice has endured with little change since its beginnings, helping to preserve much information about the ancient cultures. The ancient people of Mesoamerica believed that the gods taught women to weave at the beginning of time, and as such, weaving was solely the domain of women. In pre-Conquest times, women at all levels of society were expected to weave. Considered a sacred duty, the tools, materials and designs used in weaving were regarded as holy. It was an indispensable part of people's lives, because textiles were necessary for clothing, for trade, and for payment of taxes.

Modernism in Mexico

The Agrarian Revolution of 1910-20 instigated a civil war in which peasants, intellectuals, and artists rose up against dictator Porfirio Díaz, who supported the country's landowners and foreign investors. In 1920, the inauguration of President Alvaro Obregón, a former revolutionary leader and supporter of the arts, introduced an era of optimism and renewal. The postrevolutionary government worked with artists to establish cultural reforms aimed at empowering the Mexican people to participate in a new national self-definition. Rather than focusing on the colonial past, the government and collaborating artists emphasized their shared heritage in popular history and native traditions and folklore.

Many artists became mural painters, working in a medium long associated with pre-Hispanic art. The muralists favored a figurative realist style, and focused on subjects like Mexican heroes and working people. Yet even as the mural movement emphasized native Mexican influences, it was also engaged with developments in European modern art. The muralists were keenly aware of avant-garde movements from Cubism to Expressionism to Surrealism, and many artists spent time in Europe, absorbing the ideas of the most advanced painters and political thinkers. David Alfaro Siqueiros met Diego Rivera in Paris, where they discussed international revolutionary ideas.

This new generation of artists was driven by a desire for social emancipation, economic change, and cultural revival. They endeavored to communicate radical political ideals to illiterate audiences in order to educate them and invite their participation.

Zapatistas — *José Clemente Orozco*

José Clemente Orozco was born in Ciudad Guzman, Mexico in 1883 and died in 1949. He worked as a muralist and as a printmaker and was an important leader, along with Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros, in the Mexican Mural Movement. The Mexican Muralist Movement of the 1930's was led by a group of like-minded artists- Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and David Siqueiros, who were referred to as *Los Tres Grandes*.[1] While there were of course differences in style, content and ideology between the artists in the movement, there were some common concerns and approaches. This print depicts Zapatistas. The word zapatista refers to men who fought under Emiliano Zapata during the Mexican Revolution. They were primarily farmers.

[1]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_muralism

José Clemente Orozco (1883 - 1949) Mexican
Zapatistas, 1928
Lithograph / Litografía
Collection of / Colección de Gilcrease Museum
L1447.157

Zapatistas
Artist as Activist Lesson

written by Megan Hallett

Common Themes:
- re-interpreting history
- socio-political commentary
- national identity
- Mexican heritage

Art as Education:
Muralists ask the viewer to understand art as education. Murals are educational in nature, in the public space, creating a visual conversation and frequently a variety of conversations. As a visual teaching tool murals can speak to large numbers of people, and to unlimited types of people. Orozco was not interested in decorative arts or art for the few, he saw himself as engaging in education, illustrating his community's beliefs and ideals.

Activity:

Students will analyze a print by Orozco, entitled *Zapatistas*; discuss three different types of identities – personal, social and political: and then use these ideas about identity as inspiration for a socially or politically engaged art project.

Step 1
Have students look closely at the reproduction of *Zapatistas*. The word zapatista refers to men who fought under Emiliano Zapata during the Mexican Revolution. They were primarily farmers.

- What do you see?
- What are the questions that come to mind as you look at this?
- What do you want to know about it?
- What are the figures in the print doing?
- Compare and contrast facial expressions of the figures and then differences in dress between the three figures on the left side and the crowd of men.
- This artwork is referred to as a "print," meaning that the artist used printmaking to create it. Although there are many different printmaking methods, linocuts allow for the artist to make multiple copies of an artwork.
- Just as murals are intended to be viewed by multitudes of people, being able to make multiple prints allowed Orozco to distribute his artwork. How is this approach to art making different than making a painting or sculpture that is intended to be in a gallery or a private home?

Step 2
Discuss with your students these three different types of identity- personal, social, and political.

Personal- of, pertaining to, or coming as from a particular person; individual; private
Social- of or pertaining to the life, welfare, and relations of human beings in a community
Political- of or relating to views about social relationships involving authority or power

- Name examples in your own experience when you are operating with these identities. Examples with in your school?
- In what ways might they overlap?
- Do any of these identities feel more comfortable with your personal artistic pursuits? Any uncomfortable?

Have students write about these different types of identities. From their writing they should choose a theme or a specific event or identity that is important to them and can serve as inspiration for their artwork. It may work well for some students to be given the option of generating a symbol for something in their work instead of being required to do a detailed visual narrative. But they should understand that they are trying to communicate to others through this piece, so they should think about how to do so with visual clarity and ways they might reference everyday imagery in order to communicate to their peers.

Step 3
Printmaking activity-where students experiment with creating artwork that engages issues of social and political identity.

Materials:
Printing foam
Water-soluble printing ink
Brayers
Wooden spoons
Acrylic sheets 6" x 12"
Paper
Envelopes
Ballpoint pens

Useful Terms:
Relief Printing- The process by which raised surfaces are inked and pressed onto paper.
Printing Plate- The surface from which the image is printed.
Edition (\E*di"tion\,)- A series of identical prints taken from the same plate and numbered in a particular way.
Brayer (\Bray"er\)- A roller used to apply ink to the printing plate
Burnishing tool- Any smooth flat object used to press the paper against the printing plate to transfer the image onto the paper. (ex. barren or wooden spoon)
Barren- A smooth surfaced device used to transfer the image from the printing plate to the printing surface by applying pressure
Inking sheet- A flat piece of plastic used to evenly spread ink on the brayer.
Printers Ink- Thick, sticky, ink used for printing.
Signed- A signed print is one signed, in pencil or ink, by the artist and/or printer.

Introduction:
The introduction should provide students with a basic overview of the activity and introduce students to basic printmaking terms. By using the printmaking tool sheet provided you can provide the class with visual and verbal definitions.

Introduce the Process:
Today we will be relief printing. Relief printing is printing from a raised surface. A simple example of relief printing is a rubber stamp pressed into a stamp pad and pressed onto a piece of paper. The rubber stamp is

similar to what we will be calling our printing plate. The printing plate is the surface with our original markings that we will use to print. Printmakers use many kinds of printing plates such as wood, clay, plaster, stone, metal, cardboard, plastic and Styrofoam. Our printing plates are Styrofoam. The artist prepares the printing plate by drawing an image onto the plate. A roller - called a brayer - is used to spread ink on the plate. Then a sheet of paper is placed on top of the plate and the image is transferred by pressing or rubbing the paper against the printing plate. Artists call this burnishing. After you press the paper against the inked printing plate you remove the paper by pulling it off of the printing plate. Artists call this "pulling a print."

Step 1- Develop idea/concept for image

Instruct students to sketch a design for a print on scrap paper.

Step 2- Create image on the print foam

First tell students that

- Relief printing is a subtractive printing. This means that you are subtracting from the surface or taking away. The areas that you "take away" will be white on your print. When you draw on your print foam feel how some areas are raised. These areas will be in color on your print. So you want to draw the areas of the image that will not print and leave the remaining areas, which are to be printed, raised.

Have the students

- Look at the sketches they made and then draw their image directly on the print foam with a ballpoint pen or pencil. If you are going to use this method it is important to remember that the printing process will reverse the image. This is important if a student wants to use text.
- Instruct students to gently feel the surface of the print foam after they have drawn on it. They should be able to feel that the areas not drawn on are raised. Students may need to trace over their lines multiple times.
- For older children you may want to have them complete their finished drawing on a different piece of paper and then transfer the image to the print foam. This is done by placing the finished drawing on top of the print foam with the image facing away from the print foam and redrawing the image with a pen or pencil (pushing hard enough to indent the print foam). If the student does not want the image to be printed in reverse they can place their finished drawing facing towards the print foam.

Step 3- Prepare for printing

Instruct students to bring old clothes or aprons to wear while they print.

Setup your printing area. Be sure that all materials needed for printing are ready.

- Create a clean space for the blank paper you will be printing on, and a clean area to place the sheets of paper after they have been printed on (enough space for each print to be set separately until dry).
- You will need to set up the printing stations. Place the acrylic sheets, brayers, and burnishing tools (wooden spoons) in the same area. You may choose to cover the surface you are printing on with butcher paper or plastic for easier clean up.

Individual or Group Activity:

Demonstrate step 4 through step 8 to students. Then guide students verbally as they perform each step. To organize this activity it is recommended that you place the students in pairs.

Step 4- Prepare ink on plexi sheet

Apply ink, about 2-3 times as much as you use toothpaste to brush your teeth, to the acrylic sheet (instead of using the acrylic sheet you may use plastic trays, or waxed freezer paper taped to a table). Use the roller/brayer to roll the ink out evenly.

Tips for rolling the ink:

- Roll both ways to allow the roller to evenly pick up the ink. Roll until the ink comes up in little "points."
- Roll away from yourself slowly - to pick up ink.
- Roll toward yourself quickly - to remove excess ink.
- Make sure the ink is evenly distributed on the brayer. The ink should be rolled out to an even film on the plastic sheet.
- The ink should make a gentle hissing noise as you roll rather than a loud squishing noise.

Step 5- Ink the printing plate/foam

Once the ink has been properly prepared on the plastic sheet:
Roll the brayer over the printing plate (print foam), evenly distributing the ink onto the surface. After your image appears fully inked, stop. The areas you drew on should not be covered in ink. Be careful to not over ink your printing plate.

Step 6- Apply paper to inked print foam

Place the paper gently on top of the inked print foam. Once it is set, do not try to re-position the paper.

Step 7- Hand-burnishing

Place the paper on the inked print foam and burnish it, using either a barren, the back of a wooden spoon, or your hand. To burnish, use the smooth flat object to rub the back of the paper to transfer the ink to the paper. Hold the paper secure with your other hand so that it does not move on the plate.

Step 8- Pulling the print

To remove the paper, gently grab corners farthest from you and lift upward and towards yourself. Repeat steps 6-8 to create the number of prints in the edition (roll-on additional ink when needed).

Step 9- Allow prints to dry

Depending on how much ink you apply to your print foam the ink drying time will vary. For best results let prints dry overnight.

Step 10-Clean up

Talk about safety issues (see Safety listed below).
Have students

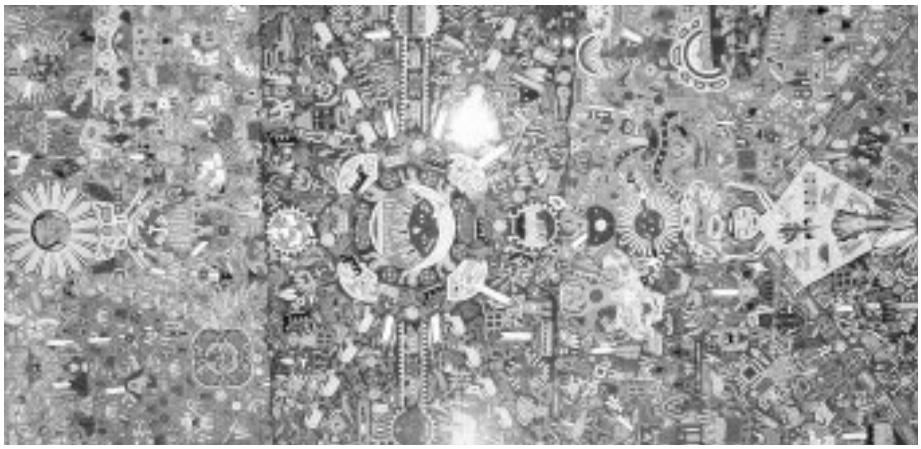
- Wash the brayers and wooden spoons in warm soapy water.
- Never use a knife to scrape ink off the brayer. Basic cleaning of the brayer can be carried out with newspaper and/or paper towels but be sure that there are no paper fibers left on the brayer.
- Use a spatula or scrap pieces of mat board to scrape up excess ink left on the plastic sheet. Wipe off the excess ink onto newspaper and/or paper towels and dispose of it carefully.
- Tightly close the lids on the printing ink.
- Put all tools and unused materials away.
- To prolong the life of the brayer never leave it resting on the rubber roller because it will develop a flat strip that cannot be removed.
- Wash hands thoroughly.

Step 11- Sign, title, and number Edition

- Printmakers sign, title, and number their prints. Along the bottom write from left to right, first your name, then in the center write the title of your image, and on the far right number the print by writing the print number over the edition number (i.e. 1/12 is the first print in an edition of 12).

Yarn Painting — *Huichol*

The Huichol (WEE-CHOL) Indians who made this yarn painting live in the Sierra Madre Mountains of west-central Mexico in small, scattered settlements called ranchos. Religion permeates all aspects of Huichol life, and many Huichol men become *mara'akame* (priests or shamans). By teaching the sacred traditions, shamans insure the survival of the Huichol religion. Peyote is one of its central elements and the annual pilgrimage to the desert to collect the cactus is the most important of the Huichol religious ceremonies. In this yarn painting, peyote is represented by the cactus, symbolizing life, health, and success.



Unknown Artist, Huichol
Yarn Painting (detail)
Pintura huichol de hilo, late 20th century
Wool yarn and beeswax / Hilo de lana y cera de abeja
Collection of / Colección de Gilcrease Museum
L9937.19

Yarn Painting

"The People": A Lesson Plan on Huichol Yarn Painting and the Huichol Relationship to the Natural World

written by Megan Hallett

Background:

The Huichol (pronounced Wee-chol) are an indigenous ethnic group descended from the Aztecs, primarily living in the Sierra Madre Mountains in west central Mexico. In recent history they have been farmers, but are also artisans and sell their yarn paintings and embroidered sculptures in order to support a traditional way of life. The Huichol people have struggled to maintain their religious ceremonies and culture in the face of increased modernization and development of the land around them.

- **What does indigenous mean?** It means- "originating in and characteristic of a particular region or country; native (often fol. by to): the plants indigenous to Canada; the indigenous peoples of southern Africa." [I]

The yarn paintings of the Huichol hold many stories, stories about the Huichol people's religious beliefs, their relationship to the natural world, and even tell stories about the changes in the Huichol culture over time.

Religion

The Huichol practice **Animism**- the belief that "souls or spirits exist not only in humans but also in other animals, plants, rocks, natural phenomena such as thunder, geographic features such as mountains or rivers, or other entities of the natural environment." [II]

The Huichol culture is also "shamanistic" meaning that they have practices in their community that allow members to act as messengers between the physical and the spiritual world.

The Huichol also refer to themselves as "the healers." It is their belief that their culture plays the vital role of keeping the natural world and the Earth healthy and balanced. They do this by performing ceremonies and rituals. [III] Yarn paintings are a modern version of a ritual artifact in the Huichol culture called the *nieli'kas*. A nieli'kas is usually a small tablet that is covered with pinesap and beeswax with colorful threads pressed into it.[IV] One of the ways that the Huichol are working to preserve their cultural traditions and also to maintain a traditional way of life is by creating and selling elaborate yarn paintings.

Originally the nieli'kas functioned as offerings to the natural world to ensure good harvests, ask for protection and strength, and to document their religious beliefs and spiritual experiences. Yarn paintings reference these functions today by including many important animal and plant symbols.

Activity #1: Symbols

Look for motifs (themes) in the reproduced yarn painting and discuss with your students how their personal, cultural, or religious beliefs about these animals and plants might compare.

- Snakes
- Eagles
- Deer
- Birds
- Jaguar
- Tatewari "Grandfather Fire" is a deity of the dry season
- Nakawe "Our Grandmother Creator" is the mother of all the gods, and the deity of the wet season
- Harvest or agricultural symbols
- Weather
- Plants
- Peyote- a small cactus that is eaten during religious ceremonies

Activity #2: Searching the Sierra Madre

(Locate the Sierra Madre Mountains for the students on a map of Mexico)

The Sierra Madre Mountains can refer to three different mountain ranges found in Mexico. Sierra Madre is Spanish for "mother mountain range." Most of the Huichol live in the Sierra Madre Occidental range in the Mexican states of Nayarit, Jalisco, Zacatecas, and Durango.

Have students research:

- Highest point in the Sierra Madre Occidental
- The Sierra Madre Pine Oak Forests
- Endemic species (species that are found here and nowhere else)
- The importance of biodiversity

- Discuss with students how their research about the Sierra Madre enhances how they think about Huichol culture and art production.
- What characteristics of the Sierra Madre region allowed their culture to be virtually undisturbed by outside influences until the last 100 years?
- How do they think where someone lives influences the subject matter and materials used in their artwork?

Activity #3: Making Yarn Paintings

This activity will allow students to experiment with creating their own yarn painting. By combining the previous two activities with this one enables the class to:

- Understand that using plants and animals in yarn paintings is not decorative, but has important spiritual and symbolic content.
- Understand art production by a culture in context with the history and geography of that culture.
- To think about the way in which their home culture and school culture might influence their own artwork.

Supplies needed: small cardboard scraps approx. 6 inch squares, brightly colored yard and glue sticks.

Step 1: Have students choose a plant or animal that has meaning to them or someone they know. Examples: school mascot, seagull, sunflowers.

Step 2: Have them sketch a simple outline of their plant or animal on a piece of cardboard and then trace with sharpie.

Step 3: Using short pieces of colored yarn and glue, slowly lay out string inside the object drawing, starting with the outside edge and working inward. An open paperclip may be helpful to finish off the middle.

[I] http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/indigenous
[II] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animism
[III] http://www.planeta.com/planeta/98/1198yarn.html
[IV] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huichol

Yarn Painting
Art Appreciation with Spanish Vocabulary Lesson

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written by Tracey Matthews

Objectives:
1. Students will use describe, analyze and interpret artwork.
2. Students will use Spanish vocabulary to discuss artwork.
3. Students will invent a story to explain what is going on in a work of art.

State Core Links:
3rd Grade Social Studies
Standard 2: Students will understand cultural factors that shape a community.
Objective 1: Evaluate key factors that determine how a community develops.
a. Identify the elements of culture (e.g. language, religion, customs, artistic expression, systems of exchange).

3rd Grade Visual Art
Standard 3(Expressing): The student will choose and evaluate artistic subject matter, themes, symbols, ideas, meanings, and purposes.
Objective 1: Explore possible content and purposes in significant works of art. b. Invent possible stories that may explain what is going on in these same works of art
Standard 4: Contextualizing: The student will interpret and apply visual arts in relation to cultures, history, and all learning.
Objective 2: Connect various kinds of art with particular cultures, times, or places.
a. Predict how a work of art or a craft can be connected to an ancient culture.

Materials:
- Image of Huichol Yarn Painting

The following items can be checked out from the UMFA Teacher Resource Center. Call 801-581-8336 to reserve.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe retablo
- Tiger Mask
- Dia De Los Muertos figure
- Oaxacan carving
- Chinkultic Disk reproduction

Background:
The Huichol Indians live in the areas of Nayarit and Jalisco in Mexico. They have continued to be proactive in their traditional beliefs and ceremonies. The Huichol reflect their belief systems in their artwork. Many Huichol religious beliefs are illustrated in beautifully designed yarn paintings called *nieli'kas*. The Huichol cover thin boards with a mixture of beeswax and pine resin and then press threads into the board in elaborate designs. The Huichol people communicate with the spirit through symbols and rituals and originally almost all Huichol designs had a specific religious or symbolic meaning.

Activity:

1. Show a Huichol Yarn Painting to students and have them view the object up close. Record the student's immediate response on the board. As a class answer the following questions:

What is it? What do you notice first? Where might you find this? When might you use this? How was it made? Who do you think made this? Do you like or dislike it? If this object was magical and could take you to any time or place, where would you go and what would you see?

Share with students more information about the Huichol Yarn Painting.

2. After recording the student's initial response give each student a copy of the "Activity #1" worksheet and instruct them to complete a description of the object using the Spanish vocabulary. Have students share their answers with a partner. Ask students if they noticed any Spanish words that reminded them of English words.

3. As a class define the word "story." Explain to the students that storytelling is an important tradition in Mexico. Have the students look at the object and imagine a story inspired by how it was made, the trip it made to the classroom or if the object could really talk what would it say. Have the students draw three pictures to illustrate their story. Next have student's pair up and tell their story to their partner. Now have all the students stand up and walk around the room in no particular direction. After a few moments of walking have students partner up with the person they are closest to and direct them to retell the story that was told to them by their partner. Repeat again but this time have the students elaborate on the story they are retelling. After, discuss how the students felt as they told stories.

4. Now explain that you will be looking at another example of Mexican art.

5. Show a Tiger Mask. Tell the students you are going to tell them a traditional story from Mexico. (Tiger and jaguar are interchangeable). If possible read each story on the suggested book list and put all objects on display.

Story: The Smiling Rabbit

An old man and his wife lived in a little house made of straw. They were very poor and all they owned were a rabbit and a young jaguar. When the old couple used up their last ear of corn, they decided to eat the rabbit and started heating water to cook him. The jaguar said to the rabbit "You won't get out of this one. The old people are going to eat you and they will give me a piece." "No, my jaguar friend, the old folk are heating water to make hot chocolate for breakfast," said rabbit. Jaguar replied, "That's not true. They are heating the water to cook you." "Not at all. What's more, I can prove it. Get into my cage and you'll see; they'll give you the first chocolate," said rabbit. The trusting jaguar went into the cage, the rabbit closed it and ran off. A long time went by and the jaguar became tired of waiting for the old people to bring him his chocolate. When he realized that the rabbit had tricked him, he broke the cage and went after him. After walking and walking, he found him in a cave. He was very angry and he showed his teeth as he said "I caught you, rabbit! I'm going to eat you." "What's the matter, my friend? What are you talking about? I don't know you. I have lived here for a long time. Now excuse me, can't you see I am very busy? My house is falling down," said rabbit. Jaguar said "Oh, so you are not the one who tricked me?" Rabbit replied "Of course not! But, please help me. Lean against this wall while I go get a log to hold it up and keep it from falling. And don't let go or it might crush you." So the jaguar stood on his hind legs and held up the wall. A long time went by and the jaguar was tired. When he saw that the wall didn't fall down, he realized that he had been tricked again. He took off after the deceitful rabbit, even angrier than before. This time he found him hanging from an elastic vine that made him

go up and down. The rabbit was so happy thinking of how he had fooled the jaguar that he didn't notice when the latter took a great leap, pulled on the vine with all his strength and then suddenly let go. The rabbit went up and up through the air holding his belly and laughing, and finally he reached the moon. That is why on nights when the moon is full and red you can still see the rabbit bending over holding his stomach with laughter.
http://folkloreandmyth.netfirms.com/index.html

Suggested Books:
Read *The Journey of Turni and the Blue Deer* by James Endredy when looking at the the Huichol yarn painting.
Read *The Lady of Guadalupe* by Tomie dePaola when looking at the Our Lady of Guadalupe retablo.
Read *Nino's Mask* by Jeanette Winter when looking at the Tiger Mask.
Read *I remember Abuelito/ Yo Recuerdo a Abuelito: A Day of the Dead Story* by Janice Levy when looking at the Dia De Los Muertos figure.
Read *Opuestos: Mexican Folk Art Opposites in English and Spanish* by Cynthia Weill when looking at the Oaxacan figure.
Read *The Flame of Peace: A Tale of the Aztecs* by Deborah Nourse Lattimore when looking at the Chinkultic Disk reproduction.

4. Show four other Mexican art objects and give each student a copy of "Activity #2" worksheet.

5. Encourage students to share about the languages they know or hear in their community, home or church. How many students in the class speak more than one language? How many students have family members who speak more than one language? Ask students to write a list of five reasons why it is important to learn more than one language. Discuss as a class some of those reasons. (Here are a few examples: talk to family members who speak that language, to practice religious beliefs, to travel to other places, to participate in global trade, and so countries can work together to make the world better.)

Activity #1

1. _____ is my favorite color in this artwork.
Why is that your favorite?_____.

2. I think this artwork is _____. Why do you think that?_____
_____.

3. This artwork is a little _____. Why do you think that?_____
_____.

4. I think the artist who made this was _____. Why do you think that?_____
_____.

5. The shapes in this artwork are _____. Why do you think that?_____
_____.

6. The lines in this artwork are_____. Why do you think that?_____
_____.

7. The mood in this artwork is _____. Why do you think that?_____
_____.

8. This artwork made me feel _____. Why do you think that?_____
_____.

English	black	blue	brown	green	orange pink	red
Spanish	negro	azul	marrón	verde	anaranjado	rosado rojo
Pronunciation	neh-gro	ah-sool	mah-rron	behr-deh	ah-nah-rahn-hah-do	roh-sah-doh roh-hoh

English	white	gray	purple	bright	dark	dull	light
Spanish	blanco	gris	morado	vivo	oscuro	apagado	claro
Pronunciation	blahn-ko	grees	moh-rah-doh	bre-boh	ohs-koo-roh	ah-pah-gahdoh	klah-roh

English	beautiful	bizarre	crazy	excellent	horrible	sad	lucky
Spanish	bonito	raro	loco	fantástico	horrible	triste	afortunado
Pronunciation	bo-nee-to	ra-ro	lo-ko	fan-tas-tee-ko	o-ree-ble	trees-te	a-for-too-na-do

English	great	interesting	old	religious	unique	expensive	small
Spanishc	ojonudo	Interesante	viejo	religioso	único	cara	pequeña
Pronunciation	Ko-kho-noo-do	een-te-re-san-te	vye-kho	re-lee-khyo-so	oo-nee-ko	ka-ra	pe-ke-nya

English	artistic	creative	trendy	ok	treasure	bold	calm
Spanish	artísticó	creador	moderno	hecho	tesoro	audaz	tranquilo
Pronunciation	ar-tees-tee-ko	kre-a-dor	mo-der-no	e-cho	te-so-ro	ow-dahz	trahn-kee-loh

Activity #2

Have you ever heard an old expression or saying? Below are some expressions from Mexico. Choose an expression for each art object and then explain why you chose that expression.

1.

_____

Why did you choose that expression? _____

2.

_____

Why did you choose that expression? _____

3.

_____

Why did you choose that expression? _____

4.

_____

Why did you choose that expression? _____

Estar Por las nubes (translates: to be sky high) Meaning: you think it is very expensive

Ser del montón (translates: to be of the heap) Meaning: you think it is common or mediocre

¡Chanclas! (translates: old shoes) Meaning: you were surprised

Consultar con la almohada (translates: to consult with the pillow) Meaning: you want to think about it

Estar de quitar el hipo (translates: to leave with the hiccups) Meaning: you were amazed or it took your breath away

No tiene madre (translates: it has no mother) Meaning: it's the best, there is nothing else like it

Pasarse de rosca (translates: to pass itself as a doughnut) Meaning: to go above and beyond

Bailar de coronilla (translates: to dance on one's head) Meaning: to do some very hard work

Bajado del cielo (translates: brought down from heaven) Meaning: it's perfect or excellent

¡Qué amaroso! (translates: how sweet) Meaning: it's really cute

Guadalupe Madonna Santo — *Mexican*

This piece depicting the Guadalupe Madonna Santo is a representation of a traditional Mexican *bulto*. Bultos are brightly colored sculptures of saints or other religious characters. An authentic bulto is carved from the wood of cottonwood trees, cottonwood roots, aspen, and pine. Bultos are commonly used for daily worship in Mexican culture as well as for decoration in churches.

This bulto specifically shows Our Lady of Guadalupe, a celebrated 16th-century icon of the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ. According to the traditional account of Guadalupe, the image of the saint appeared miraculously on the inside of a simple peasant's cloak.

In 1531 the Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego, one of the relatively few Indians to embrace Christianity after the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores, on a hill where a temple to an Aztec goddess once stood. Mary asked him in the Nahuatl language to approach Bishop Juan de Zumarraga to build a church in her honor there. The bishop did not believe the Indian, and asked him to bring back evidence. On December 12, the Virgin appeared and showed him a rosebush in full bloom atop the hill, a highly unusual event in the middle of winter. She instructed him to gather the roses to bring to the bishop as proof. When Juan Diego appeared before Zumarraga, he opened his cloak, called a *tilma*, to spread the roses onto the floor and discovered an iridescent image of the Virgin imprinted on the interior of the tilma. This same tilma can be seen today in a large reliquary behind the altar in the new Guadalupe basilica, built next to the site of the miraculous hill.

Today Guadalupe is perhaps Mexico's most popular religious and cultural image, and the focus of an extensive pilgrimage. The Virgin of Guadalupe has also symbolized the Mexican nation since the Mexican War of Independence. Multiple armies all marched beneath flags bearing the Our Lady of Guadalupe image which is generally recognized to be a symbol of all Catholic Mexicans.

Unknown Artist, Mexican
Guadalupe Madonna Santo
Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, 19th century
Wood / Madera
Collection of / Colección de Gilcrease Museum
L1236.14

Guadalupe Madonna Santo Religious Imagery Lesson

written by Virginia Catherall

Objectives:

1. Students will understand the iconography of the religious image Our Lady of Guadalupe.
2. Students will learn the importance of religious imagery in their community.
3. Students will explore and discover public religious art in their community.

State Core Links:

6th Grade Social Studies
Standard 1 Objective 2 Evaluate how religion has played a central role in human history from ancient times to today.
Standard III Students will understand how revolutions have had an impact on the modern world.
Objective 2 Analyze the impact of selected revolutions.

Life Skills
Social and civic responsibility is the commitment to exploring and promoting the common good and meeting the needs of individuals and society without infringing on the basic rights of others. This includes participating in democratic processes, recognizing our commonalities, valuing diversity, respecting others, promoting social justice, and supporting the use of research for the improvement of the quality of life.

Materials:

Images of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Notebook
Pencil

Background:

Our Lady of Guadalupe is a Catholic image of Mary, the mother of Christ who is the savior in the Christian religion. She is sometimes called the Virgin Mary because it is believed that she conceived a child miraculously by God. Our Lady of Guadalupe pertains to a specific time that Mary appeared to a man in Mexico in 1531. Images of Mary have specific symbols that tell us when she is being shown as Our Lady of Guadalupe. Our Lady of Guadalupe is depicted with a blue-green starry mantle, a belt, a body halo of light rays around her, a crescent moon at her feet, and an angel at her feet with outstretched arms. This is the story of how she appeared.

In 1531 the Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego, one of the relatively few Indians to embrace Christianity after the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores, on a hill where a temple to an Aztec goddess once stood. Mary asked him in the Nahuatl language to approach Bishop Juan de Zumarraga to build a church in her honor there. The bishop did not believe the Indian, and asked him to bring back evidence. On December 12, the Virgin appeared and showed him a rosebush in full bloom atop the hill, a highly unusual event in the middle of winter. She instructed him to gather the roses to bring to the bishop as proof. When Juan Diego appeared before Zumarraga, he opened his cloak, called a tilma, to spread the roses onto the floor and discovered an iridescent image of the Virgin imprinted on the interior of the tilma. This same tilma can be seen today in a large reliquary behind the altar in the new Guadalupe Basilica, built next to the site of the miraculous hill.

Today Guadalupe is perhaps Mexico's most popular religious and cultural image. The Virgin of Guadalupe has also symbolized the Mexican nation since the Mexican War of Independence. Multiple armies all marched beneath flags bearing the Our Lady of Guadalupe image which is generally recognized to be a symbol of all Catholic Mexicans.

December 12, the day she appeared to Juan Diego, is a feast day in Mexico for Our Lady of Guadalupe. It is called *Dia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*. On this day people from all parts of Mexico make their way to Mexico's chief religious center at the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe, located in Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo, a northern neighborhood of Mexico City. The Basilica holds the original tilma with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. There, they celebrate the *Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe* (Our Lady of Guadalupe) with a mass ceremony and a traditional fair in her honor. The *Dia de la Virgin de Guadalupe* became an national holiday in 1859.

Today, tens of thousands of people travel to Mexico City to visit the place where the Virgin appeared to the Mexican People. The holiday is a national fiesta that includes traditional music and attractions. Pilgrims bring presents to the Virgin, usually bouquets of flowers while other visitors perform dances and songs for her. Some pilgrims walk on their knees on the stone street leading to the Basilica, asking for miracles or giving thanks to the Virgin for a petition granted.

At the plaza the fiesta starts after the mass ceremony with delicious food, vendors selling crafts and clothes, along with many performances of music and dance. In other parts of Mexico, similar festivities are organized with some unique variations of the celebration. In some places, altars of flowers are built in her honor. Other parts have traditional food prepared like *buñuelos, raspados* and *tortas* as well as activities like parades, rodeos, and bullfights.

Activity:

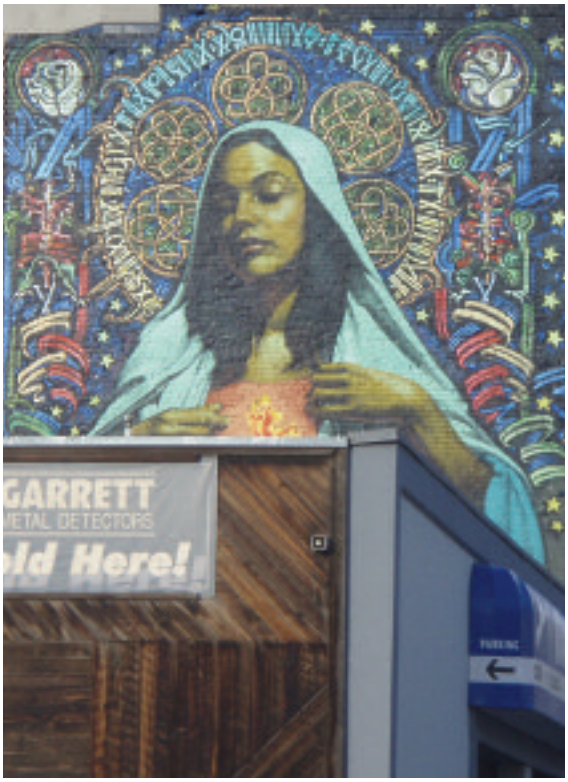
After learning about the history of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Show students the different images of Our Lady of Guadalupe (see attached sheet). Ask the students these questions:

- How do these images of Our Lady of Guadalupe respond specifically to the Mexican-Catholic faith?
- Why do you suppose armies used an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe as a banner during the Mexican revolution of 1810?
- Do you see a link between the significance of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Revolution?
- Can you think of any holidays celebrated in the United States that are similar to the Dia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe?

Our Lady of Guadalupe is a recognizable icon to Mexican-Catholics the world over. Many images can even be seen in Salt Lake City, Utah. Below are a few examples.

In 2007 Utah artist Ruby Chacon painted a mural for the Catholic Community Service building in Salt Lake City. It depicts many things including Our Lady of Guadalupe.

In May 1997, in a downtown Salt Lake City neighborhood, a city worker discovered an image of the Virgin Mary in a tree stump that had been struck by lightning. News of the image spread quickly throughout the largely Hispanic area, and a platform and stairs were soon erected by the city to accommodate the steady stream of worshippers. Thirteen years later, the faithful still find their way to the tree, and the area is festooned with rows of candles, objects of devotion, and a kneeling altar.



In Downtown Salt Lake City, a mural of the Virgin Mary was painted in 2010 on the side of a building. The two artists, El Mac and Retna, painted the mural using spray paint. Although not precisely Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Virgin Mary still has some of the same symbolism such as a blue cloak and a halo.

After discussing the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the various forms seen in public art in Salt Lake City. Prepare your students to search for religious images in their own community. As a field trip or as homework, have your students explore their community for images like Our Lady of Guadalupe. Do you have any in your community? Have the students look for any religious images in your community.

Give the students and notebook and pencil and have them take field notes about what they notice. Field notes include location, description of the art, sketches of the art, who notices or looks at the images, etc.

Back in the classroom, ask these questions:

- What are the religious images?
- What does it tell about the people who live in your community?
- Do you have a diversity of religions and religious images?
- Why is it important for people to show religious images in public?

Extension:

Invite leaders of various religious organizations in your community to talk about the importance of religious imagery in communities. Have them stress religious tolerance and the importance of religious diversity.

Additional Sources:

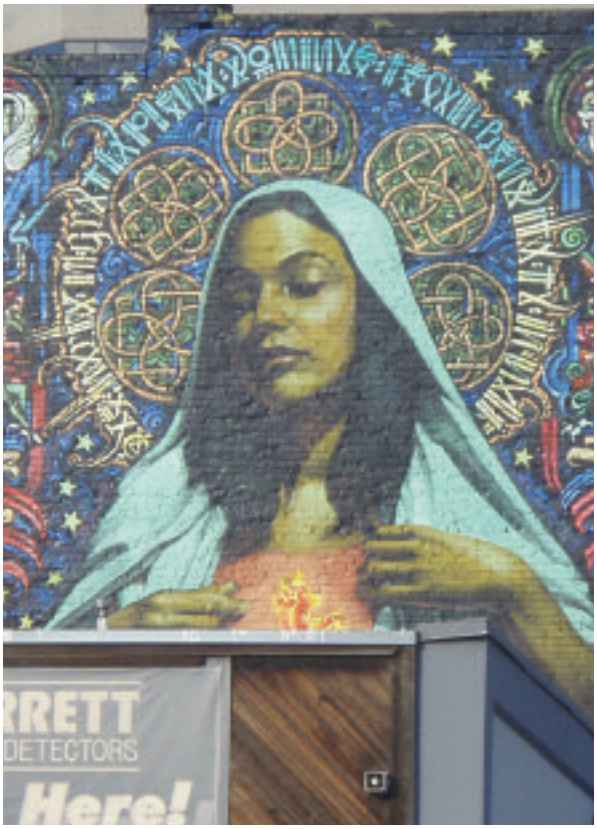
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_16_54/ai_90570243/
http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=740
http://www.mexonline.com/virginofguadalupe.htm

Images of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Images of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Ruby Chacon
Catholic Community Services Outdoor Mural, 2007
Acrylic on Aluminite
10' x 27'
300 S 745 E Salt Lake City
Public Mural Commissioned by Zions Bank

Our Lady of Guadalupe, 1531
Original Tilma of Juan Diego
at the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe



Mac and Retna
Virgin Mary Mural, 2010
Spray Paint on brick
160 E. 200 S. Salt Lake City

Our Lady of Guadalupe, 1997
The original image in the tree that was hit by lightning
in Salt Lake City

Ceramic Jar with Glyphs — *Maya*

A glyph is a drawing that symbolizes a thing or an idea. The Mixtecs, Teotihuacans, Toltecs and Aztecs all used glyphs to record historic events and important people. Study of their written language has identified approximately 750 glyphs representing numbers, dates, colors, and abstract concepts. Glyph symbols most often dealt with the calendar, numerical calculations, and the concepts of divinity, the life cycle, and movement.

Glyphs appeared in small groups, or pictograms, and were sometimes used solely for ornamentation. Mayan potters painted their pots with glyphs that were pleasing to the eye and could easily be recognized by the illiterate. Some glyphs were copied simply for their interesting shapes, not for their meanings, which the artists likely did not know. Popular images of monkeys, fish, or birds were often combined with designs totally unrelated to them.

Unknown Artist, Maya
Ceramic Jar with Glyphs
Jarra de cerámica con grifos, 300 - 900 CE
Earthenware / Barro cocido
Collection of / Colección de Gilcrease Museum
L5445.2069

Jar with Glyphs
Ancient Writing Systems Lesson

written by Tracey Matthews

Objectives:
1. Students will understand that there were different ancient writing systems in Mesoamerica

State Core Links:
3rd Grade Social Studies
Standard 2: Students will understand cultural factors that shape a community.
Objective 1: Evaluate key factors that determine how a community develops. d. Identify and explain the interrelationship of the environment (e.g. location, natural resources, climate) and community development (e.g. food, shelter, clothing, industries, markets, recreation, artistic creations).
Objective 2: Explain how selected indigenous cultures of the Americas have changed over time.
a. Describe and compare early indigenous people of the Americas (e.g. Eastern Woodlands, Plains, Great Basin, Southwestern, Arctic, Incan, Aztec, Mayan).
b. Analyze how these cultures changed with the arrival of people from Europe, and how the cultures of the Europeans changed.
c. Identify how indigenous people maintain cultural traditions today.

Materials:
- Image of Glyph Container
- Chinkultic Disk reproduction, this object can be checked out from the UMFA Teacher Resource Center. Call 801-581-8336 for reservations.

Background:
Excerpt from the National Parks Services – Archeology Program website: http://www.nps.gov/history/archeology/PUBLIC/kids/index.htm

"Archeologists are anthropologists, meaning they study people, but they are not geologists (who study rocks and minerals) or paleontologists (who study very ancient reptiles). Archeologists look at old things and sites to investigate how people lived in the past. A field crew is the team of people who excavate sites. Many archeologists on field crews have lots of experience and excavate as their job. They might have a graduate or doctoral degree in archeology. Many archeology projects have field crews who are new to archeology, like students and volunteers, who want field experience.

Contrary to what you might think, archeologists spend most of their time in artifact labs, not excavating. The lab is where archeologists get a close look at the finds from an excavation. Archeological collections are like a library full of objects. They can help you research lots of questions, such as: What did families do for fun before television was invented? Who lived in your state before you? Where did kids hang out?

Broken, chipped, but sometimes whole -- artifacts come in many forms. Excavators often find artifacts of pottery, glass, or stone, which last longer in the ground than food or leather. Durable materials and even dirt samples tend to be a big part of an artifact collection because they are better preserved over time. In the lab,

archeologists look at how often and where they found different types of artifacts. This information helps them understand what people did at a place and suggests what their activities meant to them.

Most artifacts are brushed clean with a toothbrush and water, then left to dry. Water harms organic and metal artifacts, so they need special treatment. Critters, bugs, and fungi-- these are the enemies of archeology conservators. Debugging and washing artifacts are the first steps to process a collection.

Cataloging identifies the artifacts and makes a record of them. To do the job well, archeologists need to know when and how things were made, and their names, styles, and uses. Each artifact gets a number coded with where archeologists found it. Artifacts go into archival plastic baggies. They are arranged in archival boxes by the unit and layer. Archival packaging helps preserve the artifacts.

Conservators use chemistry and other sciences to figure out how best to preserve collections so they won't corrode and disintegrate away. Protecting archeological collections from bugs, animals, and decay ensures that they will be useful for a long time. The conservation lab is where they take special care of fragile materials, like corroding hardware found in bays or boats from river bottoms.

To interpret a site, archeologists look again at their research and examine their excavation finds and notes. The collections show how people in the past spent their time. We can imagine them quenching thirst or eating at a party. We see that they, too, lost fancy buttons and see the small things in their pockets. Collections show us what people built with, and played with, but a lot of the total picture goes missing. What happens next to an archeological collection? Museums make exhibits, programs for kids, and help researchers to use them."

Activity:

1. Use the background information to explain to students what archeologists do. Inform students that they will research ancient cultures of the Americas to analyze the image of the Glyph Container and the Chinkultic Disk reproduction (from the UMFA TRC) to determine what culture these objects come from.

2. Divide students into five groups. Assign each group one of the following cultures: Incan, Mayan, Aztec, ancient people of the Arctic, and the ancient Pueblo people. Direct students to specifically research their writing system.

Inca-The Inca kept their accounts, their genealogy, their astronomical calculations, and (probably) their stories on a complicated system of cords and knots, called *quipu* (also spelled khipu).

Maya- Maya writing is made up of glyphs rather than an alphabet. Many of the glyphs have two or more meanings. Glyphs have been identified that correspond to verbs, nouns, and adjectives. There are about 800 glyphs that are known at this time.

Aztec- Aztec writing may have been derived from the Mixtec writing. This may have been an advantage since people who spoke many different languages could then read the glyphs. Similar to Maya writing it is not written in an alphabetic script but uses pictures and symbols to communicate information. Unlike the Maya Script, Aztec is not considered a true writing system because there was no set corpus of signs or set rules on how they were used. Instead, Aztec scribes created individual compositions, with each scribe deciding how to represent the ideas he wished to convey.

Ancient people of the Arctic- The Yupik languages were not written until the arrival of Europeans around the beginning of the 19th century. The earliest efforts at writing Yupik were those of missionaries who, with their Yupik-speaking assistants, translated the Bible and other religious texts into Yupik. Because the Inuit language is spread over such a large area, divided between different tribal nations, and originally reached by Europeans at different times, there is no uniform way of writing the Inuit language.

Ancient Pueblo people- Ancient Pueblo People or Ancestral Puebloans were an ancient Native American culture centered on the present-day Four Corners area of the United States, comprising southern Utah, northern Arizona, northwest New Mexico, and a lesser section of Colorado. Their beliefs and behavior are difficult to decipher from physical materials, and their languages remain unknown as they had no known writing system.

3. Based on their findings have each group determine if the Glyph Container and Chinkultic Disk reproduction are from the culture they studied. Allow students to examine the objects up-close and answer the following questions on each of the objects:

1. WHAT is it?
2. WHAT do you first notice about it?
3. WHERE would you find it (museum, nature, etc.)?
4. WHEN might you use this?
5. HOW was it made?
6. WHY do you like or dislike it?
7. IF this object were a time machine, where would it take you and what would you see?
8. WHAT story can this object tell?

4. Ask students if the Glyph Container and Chinkultic Disk come from the culture they studied. Have each group make an "educated guess" and write a short paragraph describing their reasoning. Ask each group to share their "educated guess" with the entire class.

5. As a class ask students to come to a final conclusion on what culture created the Glyph Container and Chinkultic Disk reproduction. Share with the students:

Glyph Container- This ceramic container was created by the Maya around the year 300-900. Maya ceramics are important in the study of the Pre-Columbian Maya culture of Mesoamerica. Through the years, the vessels took on different shapes, colors, sizes, and purposes. A potter's wheel was not used in creating this pottery. Instead, they used coil and slab techniques. The coil method most likely involved the formation of clay into long coiled pieces that were wound into a vessel.

Chinkultic Disk reproduction - The Mesoamerican ballgame was a sport with ritual associations played for over 3000 years by the pre-Columbian peoples of Mesoamerica. The Chinkultic Disk is a reproduction of a ball game marker used by the Maya. The Chinkultic (La Esperanza) disk was one of the first Maya ball court markers discovered. Before the Chinkultic Disk was recognized as a ball court marker, it was thought to be a calendar wheel of some kind, and the ball identified as the sun. This spawned some wild speculation about Maya astronomy.

Serape — *Mexican*

When Cortes arrived in Mexico in 1519, he was amazed by the brilliant red cotton robe worn by the Aztec ruler Montezuma. The dye responsible for this color was cochineal (KOH-CHIN-EEL), the most intense red colorant known to the ancient world. The farming of the cochineal insect, from which this dye was extracted, was a major industry for native Mesoamericans and the dye was often valued more highly than gold. The cochineal insect lives on prickly pear cactus. Only the females are used, since carminic acid, the chemical used to make the dye, comprises about ten percent of their body weight. It takes about 70,000 insects to produce one pound of dye. Cochineal became immensely popular in Europe, and by 1600 was second only to silver as the most popular Mexican export. Catholic cardinals used it to color their robes, Michelangelo and Tintoretto painted with it, and monarchs and nobles applied it to clothing. this red serape is an example of the brilliant red dye from the cochineal insect.

Unknown Artist, Mexican
Serape / Sarape, 20th century
Wool / Lana
Collection of / Colección de Gilcrease Museum
L9747.148

Serape
Mexican Weaving: Connecting Math, Science and Art Lesson

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written by Tracey Matthews

Objectives:
1. Students will understand how fabric is created and how it is an element of culture.
2. Students will make artistic decisions and create an original weaving inspired by Mexican weaving.

State Core Links:
3rd Grade Visual Arts
Standard 2: Students will understand cultural factors that shape a community.
Objective 1: Evaluate key factors that determine how a community develops.
a. Identify the elements of culture (e.g. language, religion, customs, artistic expression, systems of exchange).
b. Describe how stories, folktales, music, and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture.
Objective 2: Explain how selected indigenous cultures of the Americas have changed over time.
c. Identify how indigenous people maintain cultural traditions today.

3rd Grade Mathematics
Standard 1: Students will understand the base-ten numeration system, place value concepts, simple fractions and perform operations with whole numbers.
Objective 1: Represent whole numbers up to 10,000, comprehend place value concepts, and identify relationships among whole numbers using base-ten models and symbolic notation.
b. Demonstrate multiple ways to represent numbers using models and symbolic representations (e.g., fifty is the same as two groups of 25, the number of pennies in five dimes, or 75 - 25).

Materials:
- Image of Serape
- Cochineal insects (Can be checked out from the UMFA Teacher Resource Center Call 801-581-8336 for reservations)
- Weaving Sample (Can be checked out from the UMFA Teacher Resource Center)
- Yarn (various colors)
- Large sheets of Paper cut into strips
- Hanger (one for each student)
- Pieces of cardboard cut to 1"x 3"

Background:

Weaving is an important tradition for many of the indigenous peoples throughout Mexico. Home to many diverse Indian cultures such as the Maya, Zapotecs, Mixtec, and Huichol each with its own practices and designs, Mexico is known for its rich textile customs. Weaving is a craft practiced by men, women and children in Mexico and just about every fiber available is crafted into utilitarian objects such as placemats, baskets, hats and bags. Today many Mexican weavers combine Indian and Spanish elements and use an array of fibers. Prior to the Spanish arrival fabrics were woven exclusively on the backstrap loom. The back strap loom is made with sticks, rope and a strap that wraps around the weavers waist. The lengthwise threads are stretched from a fixed point and the weaver creates tension by backing away.

In the 19th century men often wore a large blanket cape, which is called a serape. This style of clothing stems from the clothing of the indigenous people of Mexico. One particular style of serape, the Saltillo-style, became very popular with vaqueros (cowboys) and other mestizo people of the countryside. Eventually the serape was worn by all classes of people. Today the serape is considered a symbol of Mexican culture.

Activity:

1. Explain weaving to students:

Weaving is a way of making cloth on a loom—a frame that holds the threads in place while the weaving is constructed. The weft threads, which run right to left, are passed over and under the warp threads, which run up and down. Weaving looms were used by many different cultures to create the fabrics and tapestry you have seen today.

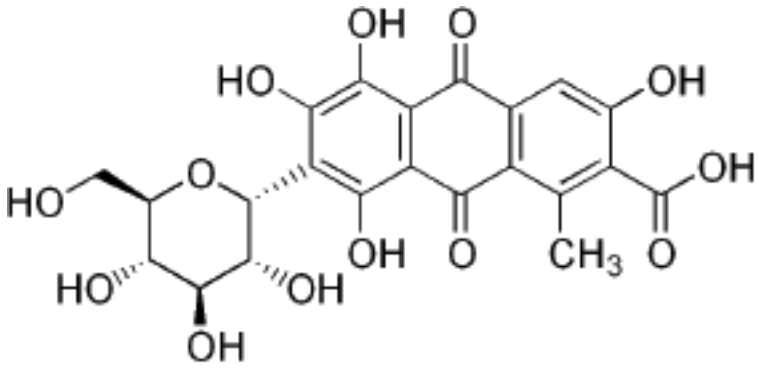
Review with students the back strap loom and how it is one style of loom used in Mexico today. To fully understand how a loom works have all the students work together to create a loom. Have almost the entire class stand in two parallel rows. Have each pair standing across from each other hold a string at least 10 feet long, this is the warp string. Have 3-5 students weave additional string, this is the *weft*, through the *warp*.

2. Point out to students that another way of thinking about the loom is to imagine that the warp stings are columns and the weft strings are rows. Relate this concept to multiplication. Guess what your weaving would look like if you used 10 warp strings and 50 weft strings? How about if you had 20 warp strings and 40 weft strings? What if you had 30 warp strings and 30 weft strings?

3. Explain to students that they will be making their own weavings and must decide how many warp and weft strings they will use. Then have students predict how many points their warp and weft will connect. (for example 10 weft and 50 warp will have 500 overlapping points).

4. Put on display the cochineal insects and sample weaving. Review the dyeing process and history of cochineal dye:

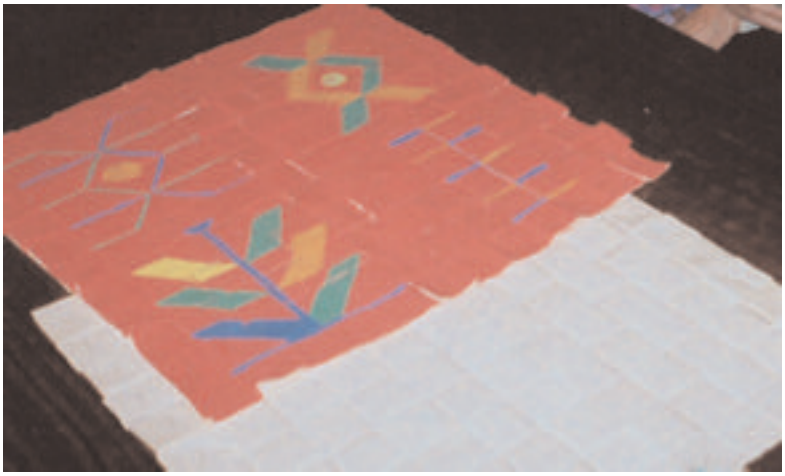
Cochineal dye was used by the Aztec and Maya peoples of Central and North America. Soon after the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire it began to be exported to Spain, and by the seventeenth century was a commodity traded as far away as India. For many years Spain and Portugal had a worldwide monopoly (via their New World colonial sources) on the cochineal dye industry, and the British desired a source under their own control, as the dye was important to their clothing and garment industries (it was used to color the British soldiers' red coats, for example). Cochineal is used to produce scarlet, orange and other red tints. It takes about 70,000 insects to make one pound of cochineal dye. Today, it is used as a fabric and cosmetics dye and as a natural food coloring, as well as for oil paints, pigments and watercolors. The coloring in cochineal comes from the chemical component, carminic acid (shown below). All dye molecules have three properties in common: they absorb the light from the color spectrum, they dissolve in water, and they bind to natural fabrics. The atoms are bonded together by electrons. In an acidic dye, there is a diminished supply of electrons which attracts the negatively charged electrons of the oxygen and nitrogen in the natural fiber linking them together. These links are called ligands by scientists.



5. Now that students are familiar with Cochineal dye and the science behind it, discuss how an artist might think of color differently from a scientist or businessman. Look at the image of the serape and discuss how the color makes them feel? Ask students to share what associations they may have with the color red. Explain to students that they will be using red in their weavings and that they need to decide on their color scheme. Review these options with them:

Monochromatic Harmony: Select various hues of red.
Complementary Harmony: Pair red with its opposite, green.
Analogous Harmony: Pair red with the colors adjacent to it on the color wheel, orange and purple.
Triadic Harmony: Pair red with the colors of equal distance to in on the color wheel, blue and yellow.

6. Have students plan their design by making a paper weaving first (see picture below). Print out the sheet of symbols for students to review. Discuss how these symbols express identity. Ask students to create their own designs inspired by these symbols. Create a loom by bending a hanger (see picture below). Have students attach the warp strings. Cut 1/2" x 2" pieces of cardboard and cut slits on one of the 2" sides (similar to a haircomb). Place the cardboard at the bottom of your warp strings and divide your strings into the slits.



Suggested Additional Resources:

All materials listed were purchased from the Museo de Ixhel in Guatemala, may be purchased by contacting info@museoixhel.org.

Museo de Ixhel website:
http://garbo.cc/clientes/ixchel/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=84&Itemid=81&lang=english

Sown Symbols
2007 Barbara Knoke de Arathoon. English. Translated by Jennifer Hope and Molly S. Hope. Soft cover. 24 pp. Color photos.
Q.70.00 US$20.00

Mayan Clothing and Weaving Through the Ages
1999 Barbara Knoke de Arathoon, Nancie L. González and John M. Willemsen Devlin, English eds. Transl. Jennifer de Keller, Linda Asturias de Barrios and Dina Fernández García, Spanish eds.
English. Soft cover. 172 pp. Color and b/w photos.

Educational CD, Interactive
2004 Siguiendo el hilo
Ana Luisa Santizo de Chang, Pascale Dementhon De la Roca, Sylvie Dupuis Breton and Fabiana Flores de Sáenz. Q 180.00 US$ 40.00

Children's Books
Una historia que contar
2001 Fabiana Flores de Sáenz. Spanish, soft cover, 20 pp. Color and b/w photos and illustrations.
Q 20.00 US$ 15.00

Una cinta que vuela
2001 Fabiana Flores de Sáenz. Spanish, soft cover, 20 pp. Color photos.
Q 20.00 US$ 15.00

Symbols of Mexico

All images are from Wikimedia Commons at Wikimedia.org.

The Apaches — *Manuel Álvarez Bravo*

Manuel Álvarez Bravo was a self-taught photographer who first began taking photographs while working at a government job at age twenty. A few years later, he won first prize in a local photographic competition in Oaxaca. After, he returned to Mexico City where he had been born, he met Tina Modotti, who introduced him to a intellectual and cultural community of other artists.

Álvarez Bravo taught photography at the San Carlos Academy in the late 1930s, documented the work of Mexican mural painters including Diego Rivera, and contributed images to the journal *Mexican Folkways*. His subjects have ranged from the nude form to folk art, particularly burial rituals and decorations. Bravo took this photograph in 1950 of Apache Indians. Historically Apachean peoples ranged over eastern Arizona, northwestern Mexico, New Mexico, Texas and the southern Great Plains. Now Apachean people live all over the United States.

Manuel Álvarez Bravo (1902-2002), Mexican
The Apaches, Scene at Carnival, Huetchozingo Pueblo, circa 1950
Gelatin silver print
Gift of the Dr. James E. and Debra Pearl Photograph Collection
Museum # 2001.22.31

The Apaches
Photography as Documentation Lesson

written by Erin Agrimson

Objective:
Children will develop visual literacy, which will aid in their understanding of the stories that are told through the medium of photography.

State Core Links:
Social Studies Elementary Core Standards:
Standard 2: Students will understand cultural factors that shape a community.
Fine Arts Elementary Core Standards:
Standard 1 (Making): The student will explore and refine the application of media, techniques, and artistic processes.
Standard 3 (Expressing): The student will choose and evaluate artistic subject matter, themes, symbols, ideas, meanings, and purposes.
Standard 4 (Contextualizing): The student will interpret and apply visual arts in relation to cultures, history, and all learning.

Materials:
Digital or Polaroid cameras

Background:
Mexico's diverse landscapes, ancient history, and various cultures have drawn the interest of photographers for years. During the 20th Century many renowned photographers such as Edward Weston, Tina Modotti, and Danny Lyon were all captivated by Mexico's uniqueness. Not only did they travel there to photograph, but they also interacted with local artists. Their impact affected the creative direction of the arts and inspired several to pursue photography. Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Mariana Yampolsky, and Graciela Iturbide are among the most important of Mexican photographers whose dedication and influences emerge directly out of Post-Mexican Revolutionary art theories and aesthetics.

As the Mexican Renaissance flourished, Álvarez Bravo managed to create imagery that captured the disparity between urban and rural realities. His photos not only depicted Mexico's modern life and its cultural differences but also its social contradictions. These characteristics hallmark Álvarez Bravo's photography.

Photographs have the unique ability to record a moment in time while telling a story. The scenes of everyday life on which Álvarez Bravo focused show the viewer a glimpse of Mexican history. The invention of photography transformed the way we are able to view the world. This technology opened up the world for discovery. It was the beginning of a global connection we now take for granted.

Activity:
Students will analyze a photograph by Álvarez Bravo, identifying the purpose photographs serve as documentation of a moment in history. Students will then apply their understanding by creating their own photograph.

Introduction:
Introduce the lesson with the phrase, 'A picture is worth a thousand words.'

Make Background Connection: Guide students toward the exploration of how picture books tell us information through a multitude of images and oftentimes with very little, if any, text.

Show the children *The Apaches* by Manuel Álvarez Bravo. Encourage children to make observations about the image. Ask them:

What do you see in this image?
What is the significance of the clothing?
Do you think they wear that clothing every day?
What do you think is happening in the image? (Guide students toward noticing that the photo appears to be a celebration.)
Do you think the people in the background are a part of the celebration?
Could they be spectators?
Who are "The Apaches"?

Encourage the children to speculate about why Álvarez Bravo would photograph Apaches, let alone, this particular 'celebration' of theirs.

How do we recognize celebrations in our own community?
How do we document those celebrations and why?
Why do we document celebrations with photography?

Individual Activity:

1. Brainstorm – Engage students in preparation for taking their own photographs. Brainstorm what you would like in the image and what you would like to communicate to the viewer. What moment in history would you like to document? Will there be people, what will they be wearing, where will they be, and what will they be doing? These are all important considerations in conveying your message to the viewer.

2. Candid vs. Staged - Consider if you would like to make a candid, natural photograph, in which you catch your audience off guard or if you would like to stage your image by posing your subjects. Everything in the image communicates something to the viewer and thus needs to be intentional.

3.Composing the image in the viewfinder -Think about what you want to be in the image and what is unimportant. For example, consider changing your framing to include the person in the portrait, but also to remove the bus in the background.

4. Making the Exposure –Use the automatic focus and exposure option on your camera for best results. Depending upon the equipment available, photos can be printed or viewed electronically.

5.Reviewing the Outcome - Does the image communicate your ideas? Have you successfully incorporated every element that you intended? Is there something that you would like to remove from the image? Add? If so, re-shoot.

Closing Activity:

Reflect upon the historical and cultural significance of photography. Photographs have the ability to capture a moment in time and preserve it nearly eternally. Envision a moment in the future when people are reading their photographic story. What story might your photo tell? Did you document a particular person, event, or celebration? How might someone in the future interpret your vision as an artist?

Evaluation/Assessment:
Assess students based on their participation and completion of the project.

Variation/Extension:

- Can you think of any rite of passage or initiation ceremonies we celebrate in America? (ex. Baptism, Communion, graduation, etc.)
- What other significant traditions or celebrations are important to us? (birthdays, holidays)
- Why are birthday celebrations often a cause for documentation?
- Do you take photos at your birthday celebrations?
- Ask children to think about the family members that might participate in their coming of age ritual or other celebration such as their birthday.

Graciela Iturbide's *Quince años, Juchitán* provides an additional form of photography as documentation that emphasizes a specific connection to birthday celebrations.

Background:
The *Quinceañera,* is a rite of passage for fifteen-year-old Latina girls. It is a community and family celebration full of tradition and meaning when a young girl is symbolically escorted into womanhood by her family and the event is witnessed by her community. The word itself comes from the Spanish quince, "fifteen," and años, "years." The origins of the Quinceañera are often attributed to the ancient customs of the Aztecs, but the ceremony and meaning behind it are similar to other ancient cultural initiation rites that occurred throughout the world. Traditions serve as a uniting force for cultures, communities, and families.

Graciela Iturbide (1942 -), Mexican
Quince años, Juchitán, 1986