

# **Carmen Lomas Garza**

## **TEACHER RESOURCE BOOK**

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## ***Pedacito de mi corazón***

“A little piece of my heart” is how Chicana artist Carmen Lomas Garza characterizes her work, in which she depicts personal memories and experiences of her childhood in a rural South Texas barrio. Intentionally rendered in a naïve style for simplicity and clarity, a strong sense of familial and cultural pride emerges from her *monitos* (little figures). These narrative paintings, dating from the mid-1970s to the present, picture everyday activities and long-standing traditions of her Mexican-American community, including *cumpleaños* (birthday parties), *bailes* (dances), *posadas* (Christmas processions) and *curanderismos* (faith healings).

In fact, Garza herself has been called a “*visual curandera*” (healer) for her ongoing commitment to the Chicano Movement. By reaffirming and celebrating the positive influences of life - family, ceremony, community, and tradition, her art has the capacity to heal the wounds of racism and discrimination. Although Garza depicts her own experiences and cultural heritage, her work strikes a universal chord, making powerful connections to all cultures.

Garza also works in the areas of installation and cut-paper or *papel picado*. Garza has refined and expanded the artform to create fascinating and complex compositions magically sliced from a single sheet of paper.

The culmination of Lomas Garza's *papel picado* work is realized in a large-scale steel cutout titled *Ofrenda para Antonio Lomas* (1995-96), the centerpiece of a dramatic *homenaje* (homage) to her departed grandfather. The central image of her grandfather watering his victory garden poignantly illustrates Garza's main interest — to provide the visitor with nourishment for the soul.

### **About Carmen Lomas Garza**

San Francisco artist Carmen Lomas Garza was born in Kingsville, Texas in 1948, the second of five siblings. At the age of thirteen, Garza made a lifelong commitment to become an artist, teaching herself to draw when art classes were not offered in school. The public education system in this rural South Texas town had other shortcomings. Mexican-American children faced racial discrimination on a daily basis. For speaking Spanish, they were physically punished by the teachers and verbally abused by their classmates.

Such blatant mistreatment compelled Garza's parents to join the American GI Forum, a World War II Veterans' organization of Mexican Americans campaigning for civil rights. Their activism inspired Garza to join the Chicano Movement, of which she first became aware when the United Farm Workers marched in Kingsville in 1965.

Garza was attending Texas Arts & Industry University (now Texas A & M) and involved with the Mexican American Youth Organization, when she began to formulate the philosophy of her art. Affirmation, rather than resistance, became her agent for change.

Since then, her artistic focus has been to celebrate and take pride in Mexican-American communities, families, history, and culture, drawing strength as well from the feminist movement.

After graduating with a B.S. in 1972, Garza earned her M.Ed. from Juarez-Lincoln/Antioch Graduate School in Austin, Texas in 1973. In the mid-1970s, she moved to San Francisco to work at Galeria de la Raza, and in 1981 earned an M.A. from San Francisco State University. She has had solo exhibitions at San Francisco's Mexican Museum; the Laguna Gloria Art Museum in Austin, Texas; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Her work is widely collected and most recently, she was commissioned to make *Baile/Dance* (2000), a large-scale copper cutout, for the new International Terminal at San Francisco International Airport.

## **Who are Chicanos/as?**

Contemporary Chicanos/as are descendants of the Mexican peoples who decided to remain in lands north of the United States/Mexico border as it was formed by the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe, when Mexico conceded more than half of its territory to the United States. With the treaty, these folks became second-class citizens in the regions they had known, in some cases, for more than two and a half centuries.

The term *Chicano/a* has evolved from a geographical and ethnic marker into a term bearing broad social, cultural, political, economic, ethnic, and personal significance. It signals a relatively new ideological position of self-affirmation that took shape with the *Raza* movement that began in the 1960s. Parallel to the political reforms sought by African Americans in the civil rights movement, the Chicano movement grew out of a 1963 protest against agricultural working conditions to become a unified concern for the preservation of cultural identity.

The term *Chicano/a* has been defined and redefined since the 1960s. Although for years many Mexican-Americans objected to the term, since the labor revolt led by Cesar Chavez in the 1960s, Mexican-Americans have chosen to call themselves Chicanos as a symbol of pride and solidarity with *la raza*—the people. In essence, the Chicano/a feels connected to both the deep indigenous traditions that form part of the *mestizo* (mixed Spanish and Indian) psyche of Mexico and to a unique and unprecedented experience among the many immigrant populations in the United States.

*Chicano/a* culture is characterized by a tenacious will to affirm, resist, and survive. *Chicano/a* artistic practices nurtured continuity and tradition through alternate narratives of the artist's self and community at large. These include oral traditions; popular and religious theatre; altars and offerings for the Day of the Dead; and family and community rites of passage and celebration.

Carmen Lomas Garza situates herself physically and ideologically within the *Chicano/a* culture. She is *Chicana* by heritage, and she works within the political framework of the Chicano movement.

## **Autoretrato/Self-portrait**

Image 1  
**Autoretrato/Self-portrait**, 1980  
gouache  
8 1/2 X 7 1/2

Carmen Lomas Garza says that when she graduated from high-school in 1966, she was “confused, introverted, and angry.” As a Mexican American growing up in the 1950s, she suffered the pains of discrimination. By the time she graduated from college, Garza had decided to use her painting as a healing tool: the Carmen Lomas Garza we see in *Autoretrato/Self-portrait* bears no traces of the angry teen she once was. The artist introduces herself to us in a three-quarter **self-portrait**, in which she looks the viewer straight in the eye. Her large dark brown eyes capture our attention right away. Her direct gaze is calm and assertive, characteristic of someone who is confident about her own identity.

Garza poses against a wall-papered background, with a solid mass of black hair framing her slim face. There is a wealth of detail in the folds of her white blouse and light shines discreetly off her silver hoop earrings.

### **What do you see?**

*What can you tell us about this person you see? What do you think Carmen Lomas Garza wants us to know about her? What do you see that makes you say that?*

*What can you say about the colors in this painting?*

*What do you think Garza is thinking about? What do you see that makes you say that?*

### **About self-portraits**

The first self-portraits in European art developed during the Renaissance, when artists depicted their own faces staring out from crowds in the backgrounds of narrative scenes. The first artist to systematically chronicle his own features in portraits was German painter Albrecht Dürer, whose self-portraits include a remarkable drawing of himself in the nude and a powerful portrait, *Self-Portrait* (1500), in which he presents himself as Jesus Christ. Northern European artists Rembrandt van Rijn and Vincent van Gogh produced an unusually large number of self-portraits. As a genre, self-portraiture grew steadily in importance after the 17th century.

Why do artists make self-portraits? Originally it may have served as a cheap alternative to hiring models. But self-portraits have evolved into attempts by the artist to discover his or her own character. Can he/she reveal to the viewer the inner spirit that affects the gleam in the eye and the curl of the mouth? Although he/she might flatter him/herself in the process, the artist on the whole, may be searching for his/her true identity.

With *Autoretrato/Self-portrait*, Carmen Lomas Garza claims a rightful place for herself and other Mexican-American artists within the art historical tradition.

## Questions for Further Discussion

“A portrait is a painting with something a little wrong with the mouth.”  
John Singer Sargent (1856-1925),  
American painter of many portraits.  
What did Sargent mean?  
Why do artists still make portraits,  
in the age of photography, video, and  
digital images?

## Vocabulary

**Self-portrait** – A portrait an artist makes using himself or herself as its subject.

## Activities

### Arts

Research other artists who became well-known for their self-portraits, such as Frida Kahlo, Vincent van Gogh, and Alice Neel. Collect and photocopy several sets of self-portraits by such artists. In small groups, compare the images and determine criteria for sorting and categorizing the self-portraits, such as gender, age, time of production, emotions conveyed, etc.

After such discussion have students create a classroom chart called “What is a Self-portrait?” They should list the characteristics of self-portraits and add to the list as appropriate.

Ask students to look at themselves in the mirror, and then create self-portraits in pencil, crayons or poster paint. Ask students to consider the following as they create their self-portraits: What is in the background? What will you wear? Will you have props? How will you use composition (the combination of lines, colors, texture, etc.) to reveal your character?

Older students could create two self-portraits: one of how they see themselves, and another which shows how they think other people see them.

### Language Arts

Ask students to write a few paragraphs about themselves. Compare and contrast the texts with the artworks. What can one reveal that the other doesn't? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? With which form would you be more comfortable? Why? Would you rather have expressed this in a poem or a dance? Why? Is this the same for everyone?

## Tamalada/Making Tamales

*This is a scene from my parent's kitchen. Everybody is making **tamales**. My grandfather is wearing blue overalls and a blue shirt. I'm right next to him with my sister Margie. We're helping to soak the dried leaves from the corn. My mother is spreading the cornmeal dough on the leaves and my aunt and uncle are spreading the meat on the dough. My grandmother is lining up the rolled and folded tamales ready for cooking. In some families just the women make tamales, but in our family everybody helps.*

Image 2

### **Tamalada/Making Tamales, 1988**

oil on linen mounted on wood  
24" X 32"

Carmen's large family is seen in their roomy kitchen, involved with the assembly of tamales. Each man, woman, and child is busily engaged in a specific task, and a quality of calm happiness and harmony pervades this domestic scene. Tamales are a traditional Christmas dish in Mexican and Mexican-American culture. (See recipe on page 15)

As viewers we can look at this scene from an advantageous viewpoint: we observe the family ritual of preparing tamales from high above, looking down. Garza altered the **perspective** of the composition so that we can see the top of the table where the tamales are being prepared, the large bowl on top of the fruit crate full of corn husks, and the countertops. "I learned that from children's artwork, where linear perspective is disregarded."

### **It's a Family Affair!**

Carmen Lomas Garza focuses much of her work on the importance of family interactions from her childhood recollections. The artist found support and nurturing within her family at a time and place where racism was/is prevalent. The solace of family life inspired her documentation of family ritual activities. As in many other cultures, family plays an important part in Mexican and Chicano culture: it is the source of stability and constancy throughout life.

### **What do you see?**

*What is going on in this picture? Do you think this is an everyday scene in the home where the artist grew up? If not, what visual clues suggest it depicts a special occasion? How many different mini-scenes can you find within this painting? What cooking utensils can you find?*

### **About Tamales**

Tamales are one of the favorite foods during the Christmas holidays in Garza's native Texas and in Mexico. Tamales existed in Mexico well before the Spaniards had discovered the country. The word is believed to have come from the **Nahuatl** word "tamalii." The cooking ingredients and method almost certainly comes from the Aztec belief that corn is the source of life.

Although the basic tamal recipe calls for minced meat in a **masa** dough steamed in a corn husk - there are many varieties of tamal. In fact, culinary authorities claim more than 80 varieties, filled with everything from fruit to hog's head, ranging in size from 3 inches to 3 feet.

Savory tamales are the most popular in the United States, but many cooks in Mexico also serve sweet tamales, usually filled with fruit.

## Questions for Further Discussion

What Christmas traditions do you share with those depicted in the *Tamalada/Making Tamales*? What are some traditions you see that are different?

## Vocabulary

**Masa** – Masa means "dough" in Spanish, but in Mexico it is generally understood as "corn dough." It is made by boiling corn kernels in powdered lime, washing them and then grinding. Enough water is then mixed into the meal to make a dough. Smoother, soft masa is required for tortillas, and coarser, stiff masa is used for tamales.

**Nahuatl** – [naa-waa-t'l ] The language of the Nahuatl people, Native Central American people who live in southern Mexico and Central America. The Nahuatl include the ancient Aztecs. It belongs to the Uto-Aztecan family of languages, and is spoken by over one million people.

**Perspective** – Artists represent depth or space in pictures by trying to create the illusion of three-dimensional space on a flat surface, as one might see in a natural landscape. This space appears to go backward in depth from "behind" the front surface of the canvas, which is referred to as the picture plane. At different times in history and in different cultures several methods have been used to create the illusion of depth on a two-dimensional surface.

**Tamale** – [tuh-MAH-lay]  
From the Nahuatl word (tamalii), the tamale is a popular Mexican dish that consists of various fillings (such as finely chopped meat and vegetables) coated with a **masa** dough and wrapped in a softened corn husk.

## Activities

### Art

Research artists that are known to depict various families such as Francisco Goya, Alice Neel, and Faith Ringgold. Compare and contrast those images with *Tamalada/Making Tamales*. What are the common elements? What are the differences? Are those images of daily scenes or of special occasions?

Have students choose a special family celebration to depict through a painting, drawing, or collage, or even a three-dimensional diorama.

### Language Arts

Ask students to ask parents about a special family recipe, preferably one made for a family celebration or holiday. Then students will write a story about the recipe, its history, when, how, and why it is made. Students can share these recipes and stories with the class. Afterwards, the class collects all the recipes and stories in an illustrated cookbook that kids take home to their families.

### Math

The production of corn, one of the main ingredients of tamales, is measured in bushels. How many pounds are in a bushel? If an ear of corn has approximately 800 kernels, how many kernels are in a bushel of corn?

### Science

Did you know that corn is the largest crop in the United States? Research how and where it is grown in the U.S.. Why is corn good for you? Research the nutritional value of corn.

### Social Studies

Native Americans call corn *mahiz* (maize), which meant "our life." Research myths and legends associated with corn.

## **Guacamole**

In contrast with *Tamalada* (Image 2), where we see the collaboration of several of Garza's family members bustling in the kitchen, *Guacamole* is a **portrait** of Garza's mother as a solitary figure in the act of preparing the traditional Mexican dish of **guacamole**. Again, as in so many of her paintings, Garza combines food acts as a connecting aspect of family life. In this quiet tribute to her mother—the heart of the family—Garza depicts her directly facing the viewer, eyes cast down, poised with a stoic serenity. The making of the guacamole serves as a kind of meditation of the daily ritual that sustains the family household.

Image 3

**Guacamole**, 1989

gouache

9" X 5 1/2"

Laid out before her are all the ingredients necessary to make guacamole. In the beginning stages of her preparation, with a calm deliberation, she is skillfully scooping out the soft and fleshy insides of an **avocado** - the most essential ingredient of this dish. (See recipe on page 16)

### **What do you see?**

*What is the woman in this painting doing? What is her mood? What different kinds of foods do you see? If you didn't know the title of this painting, based just on what you see, what would you think Garza's mother is making?*

### **About Avocados**

Called *ahuacatl* by the Aztecs, avocados grew wild throughout Central America and Mexico as early as 900 AD. In fact, archeologists have found pottery with images of avocados from this time period. Some early cultures ate avocados more for sustenance than taste, believing them to be bland, tasteless fruits. During colonial times, however, the status of avocado changed when experiment-minded Spanish women and members of Spanish religious orders invented much of today's sophisticated Mexican gastronomy by blending their recipes with Indian cookery and locally found ingredients. In addition to guacamole, nuns pioneered such now-traditional Mexican foods as *chiles rellenos* (chilies stuffed with cheese, beef, and pork), *escabeche* (marinades) and the candy called *cajeta*.

## Questions for Further Discussion

Many of Garza's paintings that represent food preparation do so within the context of large family gatherings or show at least two family members in the image. Why do you think, in this painting, she chose to show her mother as a solitary figure? Do you think a mother's role is the same in different cultures?

## Vocabulary

**Avocado** - A thick skinned, pear-shaped fruit, yellowish green to purplish black, with a single large seed and yellow buttery flesh - also known as the alligator pear. From the original three distinct varieties - Guatemalan, Mexican and West Indian - over 400 varieties of avocados have since evolved.

**Guacamole** - [from Nahuatl *ahuacamolli* - *ahuacatl* (avocado) + *molli* (sauce, paste)] A thick paste of mashed avocado, often combined with citrus juice, tomato, onion, and seasonings and usually served as a dip or in salads.

**Portrait** - A painting of a person intended to convey a likeness of character or appearance.

## Activities

### Art

In *Guacamole*, Garza portrays her mother preparing food. This act represents the nurturance that she provides for her family. Have students create a portrait of a family member doing something that is symbolic of their role in the family. This portrait can show a father working in the yard, or a grandmother crocheting a blanket. Have students share their portraits with the class.

### Math

Measuring is an important part of following a recipe. If the guacamole recipe below can serve 10 people, have students figure out how much more ingredients are needed for 15, 20 or 30 people. Have students rewrite the measurements accordingly.

### Social Studies

Avocados are native to the Americas and apricots were first cultivated in China. The skins of pomegranates were used to dye wool in Persia. Have each student pick five kinds of foods like rice, yogurt, pancakes, chocolate, or watermelons, for example. Have them research the origins and various uses of these foods (other than eating). Students share findings in an oral report to the class.

### Science

What is the difference between fruits and vegetables? Sometimes it is hard to tell. For example, avocados are considered fruit and so are tomatoes. Have students research the technical definition of fruits and vegetables.

## **Barbacoa para Cumpleaños (Birthday Barbecue)**

*This is my sister Mary Jane's birthday party. She's hitting a piñata that my mother made. My mother also baked and decorated the cake. There she is, bringing the meat that's ready to cook. My father is cooking at the barbecue, which he designed and built himself. My grandfather is shoveling in the coals of mesquite wood.*

*Underneath the tree are some young teenagers, very much in love. My great uncle is comforting my young cousin, who was crying, and encouraging him to hit the piñata. My grandmother is holding a baby. She was always holding the babies, and feeding them, and putting them to sleep.*

Image 4  
**Barbacoa para  
Cumpleaños  
(Birthday Barbecue),**  
1993  
Alkyd on canvas

Garza's precise and minutely detailed **monitos**, which act like an oral tradition in visual form, provide a glimpse into the rich and vibrant lifestyle of the largest Spanish-speaking cultural group in American society.

In this work the *monitos* form a circle around Garza's sister, the birthday girl, who is playing a popular party game of trying to break a **piñata**. Each person is involved in his or her own moment of either watching, cooking, or socializing. The totality of their actions gives the viewer a sense of a harmonious and festive gathering.

Garza gives us many visual clues that this is a celebration: a *piñata* in the center of the **composition**, hanging **banderitas** made from **papel picado** in the background, a birthday cake, her father and grandfather working on the barbecue and the very bright and colorful clothes of the *monitos*. To the clothes, she has added detailed **patterns** that compliment the intricate cutout designs of the *banderitas*.

### **About the Piñata**

The *piñata* that usually reminds us of Mexican and Hispanic heritage actually originated from China. Shaped like farm animals and used for agricultural ceremonies, the Chinese *piñatas* were filled with five different kinds of seeds. The Chinese struck the *piñatas* with colorful sticks and then burned them. The saved ashes were considered to bring good luck for the year. It is thought that Marco Polo introduced the *piñata* to the Italians where it was called *pignatta*, and where it became very popular. This Italian custom spread throughout Europe. Along with other traditions, customs and the religion of their homeland, the Spanish Conquistadors brought the Christmas tradition of the *piñata* to Mexico. Mexicans adopted these traditions and the *piñata* soon became one of their own. Mexican artists found other ways of making *piñatas* using *papier mache* and cardboard.

### **What do you see?**

*What are the people in this painting doing? What is the central figure doing? Where are they? How many people do you see? What words would you use to describe the colors used in this painting? Why do you think the artist chose these colors? How about the patterns? How would you describe them?*

## Questions for Further Discussion

Celebrations are a way for families to create collective memories. What kind of celebrations has your family shared? Bring some photos of celebrations you and your family have participated in together. Discuss how people of different cultures celebrate universal events like weddings, birthdays and holidays.

## Vocabulary

**Banderitas** - *Papel picado* banners, strung together and hung up for special occasions such as Christmas or *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead).

**Composition** - The art elements in an artwork are organized in such a way to satisfy the artist's expressive content.

**Monitos** - Little figures in Spanish language. Garza also uses the term to describe her paintings of family activities.

**Papel picado** - punched paper in Spanish language, *papel picado* is the traditional Mexican folk art of cut paper. Artists use a hammer and chisel to punch designs out of stacks of layered tissue paper-up to 40 layers thick. Garza's *papel picados* are made one at a time with scissors. Designs can portray people, animals, flowers and lettering. Individual banners are strung together to create festive and colorful decoration for the celebration.

**Pattern** - An overall, decorative design, usually involving the repetition of one or more motifs.

**Piñata** - A clay or *papier mache* container of various forms and shapes, hung from the ceiling on certain festivals or special occasions like birthday parties. It is broken in a game by a blind folded person with a stick so as to release its contents of toys and candy.

## Activities

### Art

Garza's art serves as a visual narrative in an oral tradition style. Have students retell a story of a personal experience with their family or friends by creating a composition of their own *monitos* in a painting or a drawing. Have students include visual clues of the location, activity and event they are conveying in the artwork.

### Language Arts

Now have students write a narrative description about the artwork they have created. Who are the characters and what are they doing?

### Science

*Papel picado*, the traditional Mexican folk art of cut paper, can be found at all Mexican festivals and celebrations. What is paper made from? Research the process of how paper is made.

### Social Studies

*Piñatas*, along with other traditions, customs and religion were brought over to Mexico by the Spanish Conquistadors. European settlers influenced much of what makes up Mexican culture today. Research the people and region of Mexico and its surrounding area before the coming of the Spanish.

## The San Jose Museum of Art

Image 4

### San Jose Museum of Art

1892 (W.J. Edbrooke)  
1991 (Skidmore, Owens, and Merrill, and RMW)

This is the San Jose Museum of Art, located in downtown San Jose. The museum is located on Fairmont Plaza, which was the center of the Old Pueblo of San Jose established in 1777 by Lieutenant Jose Moraga in the name of Charles III, King of Spain. This plaza became the seat of the Municipal Government of Pueblo San Jose de Guadalupe in 1778, and it served as the meeting place for the people. It was the site of many bullfights, rooster snatchings, cock fights, church processions, town crier announcements and even hangings. Although Pueblo San Jose was primarily a Spanish town, a large Chinese population also settled in the area.

At first glance, the two buildings that make up the San Jose Museum of Art (SJMA) seem to have very little in common. They are two different structures built with different shapes and details. However, these two buildings share a surprising number of similarities in form and function.

The historic structure was built in 1892 of thick, rough-cut sandstone (from the Levi Goodrich Quarry located about eight miles south of San Jose in the Almaden Hills) in the **Richardsonian Romanesque** style. It has a very rounded, full feeling with many windows, a variety of shapes and heights, and a traditional atmosphere of **columns, arches**, and a clock tower. The building was designed by the architect W.J. Edbrooke to become the first post office for the City of San Jose. No expense was spared in this building's construction. The finest and heaviest glass available was used in both interior and exterior windows. The metal work in the interior was done with ornately embossed copper. The sandstone is of premium quality and has a beautifully consistent color that remains unchanged by time or weather. From 1937 to 1970 it housed San Jose's Main Library. It has been the home of the San Jose Museum of Art since then.

Look carefully at the exterior of the historic building of the SJMA. The entryway is flanked by the very traditional columns of the Romanesque era, but a pointed **pediment**, forcing your eye upward, caps the door. Also notice the number of windows piercing the thick sandstone blocks—a good deal of sunlight is constantly flooding into the building.

The new building, built nearly one hundred years later in 1991, has a light, smooth exterior with an array of geometric shapes, a unique pattern of small windows, and a notable absence of ornate decoration. The 45,000 square foot wing was designed by the architectural firm of Skidmore Owens and Merrill (SOM) in the **International Style**. SOM designed an addition in keeping with the Museum's mission as an institution devoted to art of the twentieth century and beyond. The architects gave the building a sense of place by giving it architectural details that would allow a smooth transition from the Historic Wing to the New Wing: they wanted to create a structure that would not “distract from the original museum.” Look carefully at the image. Notice some common elements between the two buildings such as the use of sandstone as a building material and the repetition of windows, arches and columns.

Art museums make an interesting study in architectural design because they are works of art themselves which are designed to display other works of art. The architects at SOM met with the Museum staff to take into consideration the Museum's needs concerning its collections, types of exhibitions, and public spaces.

## Vocabulary

**Arch** – structure in the shape of an inverted U around an opening.

**Columns** – decorated, vertical pillars that support curved arches or horizontal and diagonal beams. Unlike plain posts, columns have both decorative and structural functions.

**International Style** – Architectural style that dominated new urban construction in much of the world after World War II. Stripped almost completely of decoration, the new architecture emphasized an aesthetic based on proportion and building materials. Architects designed “glass box” skyscrapers which dot the landscape of cities all over the world. “Less is more” was their motto.

**Pediment** – gable-like triangular decorative or architectural element, as over the door of a building.

**Richardsonian Romanesque** – H.H. Richardson (1838-86) was the architect responsible for the American re-interpretation of the European Romanesque style popular in the Middle Ages. Based on ancient Roman buildings, these medieval structures, usually churches and cathedrals, were constructed with very heavy, dark stones cut into large blocks. Thick columns and low, sturdy, rounded arches supported these stone blocks. Fortunately, over the years, architects were able to improve the original Romanesque design giving this Romanesque revival a much more airy, light, and uplifting atmosphere.

## Questions for Further Discussion

What are museums? What are museums for? What is the difference between art museums and other museums such as history or science? What is architecture?

## Activities

### Art

Divide the class in teams of architects, clients, and contractors to design a new museum for kids. Each team should decide on what the museum will display (art, baseball cards, cars, historical artifacts, etc.), and then work together to come up with a design. Draw a floor plan or make a maquette of the new kids’ museum.

### Language Arts

Name the new kids’ museum and write an article for the neighborhood paper about it. Include information about the opening date and some of the events on that day.

### Science

The columns of the San Jose Museum of Art are made of sandstone. Have students identify the most common material used for columns. Why are columns usually made of bricks, stone, cement, or some kind of metal? What would happen to the column if it were made of a different material such as wood, plastic, or aluminum? Anchor samples of building materials outside a window at school to see how building materials weather over time.

### History

The San Jose Museum of Art is located on Fairmont Plaza which was the center of the Old Pueblo of San Jose established in 1777. Research the history of the neighborhood where your school is located. What was there before? How old is it?

# Tamales

- 5 cups shredded beef chicken or shredded pork filling
- 1 package (8 ounces) dried corn husks
- 2/3 cup lard or shortening
- 4 cups masa harina flour (Mexican corn masa mix)
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 3 cups broth from filling or water
- 1/3 cup lard or vegetable shortening, melted

Sort corn husks, setting aside any torn ones. Soak intact husks in warm water for at least 1 hour or until softened and easy to fold.

Beat 2/3 cup lard in large mixer bowl until creamy. Combine masa harina and salt in medium bowl. Alternately add masa harina mixture and broth to lard, mixing well after each addition. Gradually add melted lard, mixing until consistency of thick cake batter (masa).

Spread 1/4 cup masa, using back of spoon, to form a square in the center of one husk. Place about 1/4 cup meat filling in center of masa square. Fold right then left edge of husk over masa. Fold up bottom edge. Repeat with remaining ingredients.

Place vegetable steamer in pot with lid; add water to just below steamer. Arrange tamales upright in steamer rack. Cover top of tamales with reserved dry husks and a damp towel; cover. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low. Steam, adding water as needed, for 2 to 2 1/2 hours or until masa pulls away from husks.

Yield: about 2 dozen tamales

Adapted from: <http://www.ortegafoods.com/recipes>

## **Nel's Legendary Guacamole**

2 large ripe avocados, peeled and mashed  
1 small ripe tomato, diced  
1/2 small onion, chopped (1 full tablespoon)  
1/2 cup of lemon juice  
1/2 cup of your favorite salsa  
1/2 tablespoon of green Tabasco  
1 tablespoon of dill (secret ingredient)  
Dash of salt and pepper to taste

Mash avocados into a medium bowl into a semi-creamy consistency. Keep some lumpiness. Mix in all other ingredients.

Recipe by Nelya Maryakhin, SJMA Education Coordinator.

# Pinata

Large, Round Balloon  
Newspaper  
Paper Mache Paste\*  
Masking Tape  
Cardboard  
Paint  
Crepe Paper  
String or Yarn

Make sure you cover your work surface well. It is usually a good idea to set down newspaper first and then wax paper on top of the newspaper.

Tear several newspaper pages into strips. You will want them 1 inch wide and about 6 - 8 inches long. Set them aside.

Use a large bowl to prepare your paper mache paste (Pick a recipe here). The paste will be sticky! Use a bowl that is easy to soak and clean (glass perhaps) or even a disposable bowl.

Blow up the balloon and tie it closed. Now you are ready to start with the paper mache! (To hold your balloon while you are working on it, you might want to try to set it in a cup or bowl that is covered with plastic wrap.)

Dip the newspaper strips into the glue and spread them onto the balloon. Completely cover the balloon, leaving a small hole at the top to remove the balloon and fill the pinata. Let the first layer dry.

Add two more layers of paper mache to your balloon. Allow each layer to dry completely before putting on the next layer. Once it is dry, pop the balloon and remove it through the opening you left at the top.

You can now decorate your pinata. The fastest way is to paint it with bright designs. After the paint is dry, you can hang some crepe paper streamers from the bottom. To hang your pinata, poke 4 small holes evenly spaced around the larger hole in the top. Thread a piece of string, yarn, or even fishing line through each hole and tie them together at the top. Tie a longer piece of string onto these.

You can also decorate your pinata using 3 inch squares of tissue paper. Spread some glue on your pinata. Hold the 4 corners of your tissue paper square together and then stick the center of the tissue paper square onto the glue. The 4 corners should not touch the glue, they should remain sticking up.

\*old news paper torn in odd pieces - 2 inches square; 1 cup of flour - or more as you need extra paste; 1/2 cup of water and flour. Make your paste with the flour and the water until you have the consistency of Elmer's glue and then add the torn newspaper pieces.)

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### **Web Sites:**

Carmen Lomas Garza's webpage:  
<http://tlaloc.sfsu.edu/~clgarza/>

Hispanic Research Center at Arizona State University:  
[http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/ChicanArte/html\\_pages/garza17.html](http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/ChicanArte/html_pages/garza17.html)

Kemper Art Museum:  
<http://www.kemperart.org/clgm.htm>

North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts:  
<http://www.art.unt.edu/ntieva/artcurr/latino/clgarza.htm>

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Tamalada/Making Tamales image on-line:  
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An interview with Carmen Lomas Garza in Silicon Valley Magazine:  
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### **Videos:**

*Homenaje a Tenochtitlan: an Installation for the Day of the Dead* I.V. Studios, 1996  
(To purchase a copy call (510)528-8004 or write to: I.V. Studios P.O. Box 8123 Berkeley, CA)

Gregory Nava, *My Family/Mi Familia*, 1995. Starring: Edward James Olmos, Jimmy Smits, Esai Morales.

A Mexican-American writer (Olmos) looks back at his family's colorful history since immigrating to L.A. in the 1920s. Evocative, well-cast, multigenerational saga indulges in melodrama at times, but never seems false, and redeems itself with a healthy sense of humor. (Copyright© Leonard Maltin, 1998) Rated R.

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