



Tyler Museum of Art's Lesson: Heriberto Castillo Orta, *Tree of Life* (*Skulls*) *Candelabra*

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Lesson Plan: Heriberto Castillo Orta, *Tree of Life (Skulls)*

Candelabra



Heriberto Castillo Orta, *Tree of Life (Skulls) Candelabra*, c. 1999, Barrio de San Martin, Izucar de Matamoros, Puebla, Mexico. 18 x 24 ½ x 6 ¾, clay, wire, acrylic paint. Tyler Museum of Art, Gift of Laura and Dan Boeckman, 2010.01.480

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/BA36FB9E-A86E-4BD6-A609-555469063900>

Culture: Mexico

Subject: Fine Art, Folk Art, Art History

Collection: Tyler Museum of Art's Boeckman Collection

Grades: Middle School

Topics: Artistic Practices, Art History, Critical Thinking, and International Art

Art Vocabulary

Activity Vocabulary:

Heriberto Castillo Orta

- Heriberto Castillo Orta is a folk artist from Barrio de San Martin, Izucar de Matamoros, Puebla, Mexico. He makes many folk-art pieces such as trees of life, candelabra, women figurines and dolphins.
- He comes from a long line of artists and was taught everything he knows by his family.¹

Tree of Life

- The tree of life has taken many different art forms but has still withheld the same core meaning; to assist in their ancestor's journey to the highest point of the heavens, to their final resting place

Elements of Design²

Line:

- An element of art defined by a point moving in space. Lines may be two or three dimensional, descriptive, implied, or abstract.

Shape:

- An element of art that is two-dimensional, flat, or limited to height and width.

Form:

- An element of art that is three-dimensional and encloses volume; includes height, width and depth. Form may also be free flowing.

Space:

- An element of art by which positive and negative areas are defined or a sense of depth achieved in a work of art .

Color:

- An element of art made up of three properties: hue, value, and intensity.
- Hue: name of color
- Value: hue's lightness and darkness (a color's value changes when white or black is added)

¹ 2022. "Multicolored Clay from Izucar de Matamoros". *Copal, Mexican Folk Art at its best Online*.
<https://www.mexican-folk-art-guide.com/multicolored-clay.html#.Y1DW4C1h1QK>.

² "Principles and Elements," Massachusetts College of Art and Design, accessed 13 April 2022,
massart.edu/sites/default/files/Principles%20and%20Elements.pdf

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- Intensity: quality of brightness and purity

Texture:

- An element of art that refers to the way things feel, or look as if they might feel if touched.

Principles of Design²

Rhythm/pattern:

- A principle of design that indicates movement, created by the careful placement of repeated elements in a work of art to cause a visual tempo or beat.

Movement:

- A principle of design used to create the look and feeling of action and to guide the viewer's eye throughout the work of art.

Balance:

- A way of combining elements to add a feeling of equilibrium or stability to a work of art. Major types are symmetrical *and asymmetrical*.

Proportion:

- A principle of design that refers to the relationship of certain elements to the whole and to each other.

Variety:

- A principle of design concerned with diversity or contrast. Variety is achieved by using different shapes, sizes, and/or colors in a work of art.

Emphasis:

- A way of combining elements to stress the differences between those elements.

Harmony:

- A way of combining similar elements in an artwork to accent their similarities.

Bibliography: Resources for Vocabulary and Lesson Plan

"Multicolored Clay from Izucar de Matamoros". *Copal, Mexican Folk Art at its best Online*.

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Office of the Secretary of State. "§117.202: Art, Middle School 1, mAdopted 2013." *Texas Education Agency: Education*, updated 2013, accessed January 5, 2022, [https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=2&ch=117&rl=202](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=2&ch=117&rl=202).

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"Principles and Elements," Massachusetts College of Art and Design, accessed 13 April 2022, massart.edu/sites/default/files/Principles%20and%20Elements.pdf

Middle School Lesson Plans

Goals:

Middle School Students of all levels will be able to do the following:

- Identify the principles of design used in the artwork;
- Identify the elements of design used in the artwork;
- Students will describe what collage is in artwork;
- Students will identify and describe symmetry and rhythm within artwork;
- Students will identify and describe movement and balance within artwork;
- Students will Identify the Day of the Dead themes in Heriberto Castillo Orta's artwork
- Students will create a tree of life similar to Heriberto Castillo Orta's

Texas Middle School TEKS:

Texas Middle School TEKS:

Art 1, Art 2, Art 3

Art 1:

- §117.202.c.1.A / B / C / D
 - Foundations: Observation and Perception:
 - identify and illustrate concepts from direct observation, original sources, personal experiences, and communities such as family, school, cultural, local, regional, national, and international;
 - understand and apply the elements of art, including line, shape, color, texture, form, space, and value, as the fundamentals of art in personal artworks using art vocabulary appropriately;
 - understand and apply the principles of design, including emphasis, repetition/pattern, movement/rhythm, contrast/variety, balance, proportion, and unity, in personal artworks using art vocabulary appropriately;
 - discuss the expressive properties of artworks such as appropriation, meaning, narrative, message, and symbol using art vocabulary accurately.
- §117.202.c.1.A
 - Creative Expression:
 - create original artworks based on direct observations, original sources, personal experiences, and the community;
- §117.202.c.3.A / B / C
 - Historical and Cultural Relevance:
 - identify the influence of historical and political events in artworks;

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- identify examples of art that convey universal themes such as beliefs, cultural narrative, life cycles, the passage of time, identity, conflict, and cooperation;
- explain the relationships that exist between societies and their art and architecture;
- §117.202.c.4.A / B
 - Critical Evaluation and Response
 - create written or oral responses to artwork using appropriate art vocabulary;
 - analyze original artworks using a method of critique such as describing the artwork, analyzing the way it is organized, interpreting the artist's intention, and evaluating the success of the artwork;

Art 2:

- §117.203.b.1.A / B / C / D
 - Foundations: Observation and Perception:
 - identify and illustrate ideas from direct observation, original sources, imagination, personal experiences, and communities such as family, school, cultural, local, regional, national, and international;
 - compare and contrast the elements of art, including line, shape, color, texture, form, space, and value, as the fundamentals of art in personal artworks using vocabulary accurately;
 - compare and contrast the principles of design, including emphasis, repetition/pattern, movement/rhythm, contrast/variety, balance, proportion, and unity, in personal artworks using vocabulary accurately;
 - understand and apply the expressive properties of artworks such as appropriation, meaning, narrative, message, and symbol using art vocabulary accurately.
- §117.203.b.1.A
 - Creative Expression:
 - create original artworks that express a variety of ideas based on direct observations, original sources, and personal experiences, including memory, identity, imagination, and the community;
- §117.203.b.3.A / B / C
 - Historical and Cultural Relevance:
 - analyze ways that global, cultural, historical, and political issues influence artworks;
 - analyze selected artworks to determine contemporary relevance in relationship to universal themes such as belief, cultural narrative, life cycles, the passage of time, identity, conflict, and cooperation;
 - compare and contrast relationships that exist between a society's art and its music, literature, and architecture;
- §117.203.b.4.A / B
 - Critical Evaluation and Response:

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- create written or oral responses about personal or collaborative artworks addressing purpose, technique, organization, judgment, and personal expression;
- analyze original artworks using a method of critique such as describing the artwork, analyzing the way it is organized, interpreting the artist's intention, and evaluating the success of the artwork;

Art 3:

- §117.203.b.1.A / B / C / D
 - Foundations: Observation and Perception:
 - identify and illustrate concepts from direct observation, original sources, imagination, personal experience, and communities such as family, school, cultural, local, regional, national, and international;
 - evaluate the elements of art, including line, shape, color, texture, form, space, and value, as the fundamentals of art in personal artworks using vocabulary accurately;
 - evaluate the principles of design, including emphasis, repetition/pattern, movement/rhythm, contrast/variety, balance, proportion, and unity, in personal artworks using vocabulary accurately;
 - compare and contrast the expressive properties of artworks, including appropriation, meaning, narrative, message, and symbol, using vocabulary accurately.
- §117.203.b.1.A
 - Creative Expression:
 - create original artworks expressing themes found through direct observation; original sources; personal experiences, including memory, identity, and imagination; and the community;
- §117.203.b.3.A / B / C
 - Historical and Cultural Relevance:
 - analyze ways in which global, contemporary, historical, and political issues have influenced art;
 - analyze cultural ideas expressed in artworks relating to social, political, and environmental themes such as environment/nature, conflict and power, relationships to others, and reality/fantasy;
 - evaluate the relationships that exist among a society's art, music, theatre, and dance;
- §117.203.b.4.A / B
 - Critical Evaluation and Response:
 - create written and oral responses about personal or collaborative artworks addressing purpose, technique, organization, judgment, and personal expression;
 - analyze original artworks and portfolios using a method of critique such as describing the artwork, analyzing the way it is organized, interpreting the artist's intention, and evaluating the success of the artwork;

Middle School Art Activities:

Questions for Middle School Students:

1. Examine Heriberto Castillo Orta's *Tree of Life (Skulls) Candelabra*. Identify where each element
 - a. of art is located in the folk art.
2. Examine Castillo Orta's *Tree of Life (Skulls) Candelabra*. Identify where each principle of art
 - a. is located in the folk art.
3. Where did Heriberto Castillo Orta include Symmetry in his artwork?
4. Do you think that the artist included pieces that symbolize of the Day of the Dead? If so, where?
5. Do you think the artist included symbolism of life? If so, where?

Activity: Middle School Fine Arts

- **Activity Setting:** Classroom
- **Materials:** Air dry colored clay and acrylic paint
- **Subject:** Folk Art, Art History, Sculpture, 3D Composition, Shapes, Principles of Design, Elements of Design.
- **Texas TEKS:** Art 1, Art 2, Art 3
- **Duration:** Extended Project

After the students learn about Heriberto Castillo Orta and the Trees of Life, the students will make their own tree of life. Have the students create a symmetric tree of life, similar to Heriberto Castillo Orta's artwork. After the students create their tree of life, have them create small figurines and objects out of clay. These objects should be special and specific to each student. (Ex. If the child likes to play football, have them create a clay football and attach it to the tree of life. If their family has any traditions, have them make a clay piece symbolic of this). The tree of life should have a minimum of 6 clay symbolic pieces.

After all of the small pieces are made, have each student attach them to the tree of life. After this, they should then create a clay base so that the tree of life can stand up after it dries. Put the trees of life in a safe place to dry. Once dry, have the students create intricate patterns and designs on the tree of life, similar to the ones on Heriberto Castillo Orta's. Allow to dry. Finish by signing the bottom.

Activity: Middle School Art History

- **Activity Setting:** Classroom
- **Materials:** Pencil/ Pen on Paper or Word Document
- **Subject:** Art History, Folk Art, 3D Composition, Sculpture, Shapes, Elements of Design, Principles of Design.
- **Texas TEKS:** Art 1, Art 2, Art 3
- **Duration:** Single Day Project

Students will write a minimum of two paragraphs explaining their artwork and how it is similar to

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the artist's work. They should write about the elements and principles of design that are observable throughout the work. They then should explain why they chose the symbolic prices that they did and how they are important to them.