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THE PRINT AS PROTEST

LESSON 2

Level: High School

Title: The Print as Protest

Time Frame: Approximately Five Weeks

Goal: The students should gain an understanding of the Mexican Revolution and the role artists played in the politics of the time period.

Objectives:

1. For students to understand the history of the Mexican Revolution.
2. For students to understand the reasoning behind why artists chose to get involved in the Revolution.
3. For students to learn about three of the main artists: José Guadalupe Posada, Leopoldo Méndez and David Alfaro Siqueiros.
4. For students to learn how to create a woodblock or linoleum print.

National Standards:

Visual Arts Content Standards 1 – 6 <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm>

Foreign Language Standard 2.1 <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3392>

Geography Standard 1 <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/standards/matrix.html>

World History Standard 8 <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/SubjectTopics.asp?SubjectID=6>

Technology Standard 3 <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/topicsDetail.asp?topicsID=1376&subjectID=19>

Essential Brainstorming Questions:

1. What is the difference between Prints and Paintings?
2. How are Prints made? How they are used? What materials are needed?
3. Why do individuals create politically based art?
4. How much artwork should be done for free or cheap as propaganda versus high- priced fine art prints for sale at galleries?
5. What are the positive and negative aspects of being a member of a group of working artists who run a workshop?
6. Why did the Mexican Revolution occur?

Background Information (for Teacher):

FIRST AND FOREMOST YOU MAY NEED TO USE AN ONLINE LANGUAGE TRANSLATOR TO UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION THAT IS ONLINE FOR THESE ARTISTS!!!!!!!

<http://translate.google.com/#>

Mexican Printmakers – focusing on 1920-1950

The first printmaking press in the New World was established in Mexico City in 1539; just twenty years after Hernan Cortes conquered the Aztecs. (W. Michael Mathes, *La Ilustracion en Mexico Colonial Zapopan, Jalisco: El Colegio de Jalisco*, 2001, p.18) Many of the 16th Century Mexican woodcut and engraving prints were commissioned by the Church or the vice regal government and were used as book illustrations. Jose Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913) and Gabriel Vincent Gahona (Picheta) (1828-1899) were the two main printmakers whom the modern Mexican artists looked to for guidance and inspiration. Their work focused on Mexican Themes, Ideals, and Politics and was published in various newspapers and magazines. For awhile the Academia had made an effort to bring Mexican art up to international

standards, and the revolution refocused and intensified Mexico's drive to modernism in all aspects of its culture: industry, politics, education, and art. (*Mexico and Modern Printmaking, A Revolution in the Graphic Arts, 1920-1950*, p. 8). Jose Vasconcelos, who was appointed as minister of education in 1920, was integral to the arts because he believed through the arts one could educate the masses about their heritage and the future of Mexico. Jose Vasconcelos' view that art should be made available to all, not just the elite, led to the development in the 1920s of both the muralists movement and modern printmaking schools. The Modern Mexican Printmakers were conscious about their communities and felt empathy toward the world. They chose Printmaking as their main medium because it was cheap, could be done fairly quickly, they could make multiples, and non-artists could easily read them. The modern Mexican Printmakers also felt it was their duty to help individuals define what it meant to be Mexican. Printmaking was an immediate form of communication where the artists could convey their political ideals to the Mexican and world audience.

El Taller de Gráfica Popular (TGP) – Popular Graphic Arts Workshop

The TGP began in 1937-1938 with a group of established and emerging artists who made a conscious decision to use their art to promote social change. Most of the artists of the TGP were members of the Mexican Communist Party who were against Fascism. Their main media was black and white linoleum prints and woodcuts, although sometimes they produced colored prints. "The subject matter includes land reform, progressive electoral candidates, anti-war and anti-imperialist movements, opposition to fascism in Japan and Germany, solidarity with foreign struggles, folk life, labor and trade unions, Mexican revolutionary history and heroes, and other progressive causes."

<http://www.docspopuli.org/articles/Bancroft/TGP.html>

They used three main formats for their works: posters, fine art prints, and volantes, which are handbills on thin colored papers. Several artists from around the world looked to the TGP, and several U.S. artists (such as Elizabeth Catlett, Pablo O'Higgins, and Mariana Yampolsky) produced work there.

José Guadalupe Posada

Posada was one of the leading artists and social critics during the Mexican Revolution, and is often credited as the founder of modern Mexican art. Posada is credited with educating the general population concerning the political injustices of the day that ultimately culminated in the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

He was born in Aguascalientes, on February 2, 1852. His older brother Cirilo, a country schoolteacher, taught him reading, writing, as well as drawing. As a young teenager he worked in the workshop of Trinidad Pedroso, where he learned lithography and engraving. His first illustrations were for Pedroso's radical weekly *El Jicote* (*The Wasp*, 1871), but after 11 issues the authorities closed down the magazine, and Posada was forced to flee with his employer to Leon in Guanajato. Here he taught and published lithographs, and in 1888 was able to set up his own print shop in Mexico City. Together with Antonio Vanegas Arroyo he created "hojas volantes" (flying leaves) which were one-page papers or broadsheets, distributed on the city streets for a penny apiece. These printed one-page documents covered a whole host of topics, ranging from moral stories to high-society gossip to songs that were illustrated (corridos). In 1895 he began to etch on zinc, which became his preferred medium. - From *The Bulfinch Guide to Art History*

Posada's imagery included natural disasters such as floods, storms, and earthquakes, satirical commentary concerning politics and the common people, ballads, heroes, accidents, assassins, executions, tragedy, miracles, death, urban myth (women giving birth to animals or turning into fireballs) and revolution. Posada is known for his Calaveras prints- skeletons come to life to critique social ills. One of his most famous is the *Calavera of the Female Dandy*, who with her feathered hat represents vanity and the transience of earthly beauty. He died quietly in the year 1913, alone and penniless and was buried in a common grave.

Leopoldo Méndez

Leopoldo Méndez was born on June 30, 1902 into a working class family in Mexico City and he died on February 8, 1969. Méndez: muralist, printmaker, painter, political activist, teacher, administrator, father and husband, was born in Mexico City in 1902, the youngest of eight children. At age fifteen, Méndez became the youngest student to enroll in the San Carlos Academy of Fine Arts, where he studied with Saturnine Herran, Leandro Izaguirre, Ignacio Rosas, German Gedovius, and Francisco de la Torre. Following his graduation, he continued his studies at Escuela de Pintura al Aire Libre (the plein-air Impressionist school founded by Alfredo Ramos Martinez), until 1922. To keep himself financially afloat while creating his art, he designed book jackets, taught drawing and printmaking in elementary and technical schools, and contributed drawings and prints to journals and liberal publications. In 1930, he made his first trip to the United States with a group of friends; while there, he was invited to illustrate a limited edition of Heinrich Heine's *The God's in Exile*. One of the founders of the League of Revolutionary Artists and Writers, Méndez is perhaps most well-known as the leader and co-founder of the Taller de Grafica Popular (TGP), a cooperative printmaking workshop dedicated to serving the needs of the Mexican people. He joined the Stridentists, a group of artists, writers and musicians whose goals were not unlike those of Dadaists and Futurists. He became known internationally for his art and activism, and received many awards and appointments for his works and accomplishments in both fields.

<http://www.annexgalleries.com/artists/biography/1575/Mendez/Leopoldo>

Méndez created seven original lithographs for his folio, "En Nombre de Christo", a tribute to more than 200 rural schoolteachers killed by fascists for teaching the people to read and supporting government land reform in Mexico in 1938.

David Alfaro Siqueiros

David Alfaro Siqueiros was by far the most politically active of the three Mexican muralists. He was a sophisticated political ideologist who was involved in the political conflicts of the Mexican Revolution serving as a protestor, demonstrator, and soldier. His radical political beliefs eventually got him expelled from Mexico. He spent many years in jail for his actions and this influenced his art greatly. Siqueiros often painted the sufferings of prison life. He too attended the San Carlos Academy; impressively he was admitted at the young age of 15. His travels to Europe brought him in contact with the artwork of Goya. The themes and images of war in their works are very similar. Classical art, Italian Renaissance art, and Italian Futurism also influenced him greatly. Siqueiros believed that "art must no longer be the expression of individual satisfaction (which) it is today, but should aim to become a fighting educative art for all." (Rochfort, Desmond, *Mexican Muralists* New York: Universe Publishing, 1993).

<http://www.wfu.edu/history/StudentWork/fysprojects/kmason/DvASiq.htm>

Materials:

1. 12" x 18" White Paper
2. Pencils
3. Erasers
4. Round Paint Brushes
5. Sharpie Markers
6. White Out
7. Carbon Paper
8. Bench Hooks
9. Gauges of various sizes
10. X-Acto Knives
11. Woodblock or Linoleum Block
12. Adobe Photoshop (optional)
13. India Ink
14. Wood putty
15. Sandpaper
16. Brayer
17. Glass Palette for Ink
18. Oil Based Printmaking Ink

19. Baron, Spoon, or Printmaking Press
20. Rice Paper or White Sulphite Paper for Printing Image
21. Mineral Spirits/Turpentine to clean brayer, Glass Palette, and Woodblock/Linoblock
22. Newspapers and Paper towels
23. Photocopier for enlarging drawings (optional)
24. Completed Webquest

Lesson Procedure:

Days 1 – 3:

1. Begin to have a discussion with students about the Print as Protest project using the Essential Questions. (20 minutes)
2. Break students into groups and have them complete the Webquest (attached). Let each group know that they will be reporting their information back to the class.

Day 4

3. Quick overview of types of events with entire class– natural tragedies, local laws being passed, world events, religious events, fair pay/benefits for workers, health care etc. Also discuss how to focus in on a particular important aspect of culture- i.e. corn is essential to the Mexican people. What is important to your culture?

Days 5 - 6

4. Students will have a choice to create a work of art (woodcut or linoleum cut) that is a form of political protest or that is focused on an important aspect of their culture. Students should create a list of ideas (5) and gather images for their top three ideas (homework assignment).
5. Discuss with each individual student their five ideas and have them choose one to work with. They should use two class periods to do the research for their project. Students should find and print out images that they will use to draw from. Show them examples of this project from past students.

Days 7 - 11

6. Students will be given one week to draw out their image.
7. Give students a demonstration on how to use images to create a strong composition. Review the Principles of Design and show students how to use them when creating a drawing.

Days 11 - 15

8. Once students have a composition sketched out they should create a final line drawing.
9. Copy this line drawing 3 times for each student.
10. Give students a demonstration on how to create a strong black and white design using their line drawing. Show students examples of these drawings in progress and finished. Ask students why they think different woodcut or linoleum prints (created by past students) work well or do not work?
11. Throughout the week work with students to help them refine their design.
12. Once students have a strong black and white completed drawing, show them how to use Photoshop to reverse their image. Remind students they have to transfer their image backwards onto their woodblock/linoleum plate.

Days 16 - 20

13. Students should tape a layer of carbon paper on their woodblock/linoleum plate and then tape their reversed drawing onto the carbon paper.
14. They should trace their drawing onto the woodblock/linoleum. Once they are finished they should remove the reversed copy and the carbon paper and then ink in the black areas of their drawing using India ink.
15. Give groups of 7-10 students a demonstration on how to use the different types of gauges and knives for woodcutting/linoleum cutting. Discuss SAFETY PRECAUTIONS first and stress the importance of using a bench hook and holding the tools properly. Show students how to properly hold the gauges and knives. If using linoleum remind students to heat up the back of their plate with an iron before they begin to cut. Show students using prints and

a completed woodblock plate or linoleum plate how different gauges produce different types of marks. Give students a scrap piece of wood or linoleum to practice on BEFORE they begin on their final plate.

16. Once students have practiced they should look at their plate and make conscious decisions on what type of gauge or knife they want to use for each section of their woodcut/linoleum cut.

Days 21 - 35

17. Students will have a minimum of three weeks to complete cutting their plate (linoleum or wood)
18. Give students a demonstration on how to fix any errors on their woodblock plate using wood putty.
19. Give students a demonstration on how to prepare a template so their final print will have even borders. Have students cut the paper for how many prints they plan to create. Define what an Edition is in printmaking and the importance of labeling each print.
20. Give students a demonstration on how to print their block using oil based printmaking ink. Students should do the following:
 1. Place their ink on a glass plate
 2. Roll their ink evenly onto their brayer
 3. Roll their ink onto the plate using their brayer; they may need to re-ink their brayer if they have a large block
 4. Students may use the printmaking press to print their block or use the traditional method of using a barren or spoon.
21. After students have pulled their first print (called an Artist Proof) discuss with each student if there are any changes they want to make. Give students three days to make changes.

Days 35 - 37

22. Have students print an Edition of 3 final prints and hang their prints around the classroom to dry.
23. Once everyone has completed an Edition of 3 prints, have a *group critique* of the prints answering the following questions:
 1. *How does the print use the Principles of Design?*
 2. *How successful is the print technically - can you read the image, is the print even in tone, and are the borders even and clean?*
 3. *Does the print get across the artist's concept?*

Lesson Extension:

Discuss how prints were used as protest in German Expressionism and compare the similarities and differences between German Expressionism and Mexican Prints in terms of style, exposure, why they were created etc.

Assessment:

Webquest/Discussion:

1. Participation in the group discussion
2. Webquest completion
3. Did the students pick a name for their group and topic that they are interested in protesting?

Print:

4. Good composition for woodcut/linocut drawing
5. Correct use of principles of design for the black and white design for final woodcut/linocut
6. Correct transferring of image and inking of block
7. Correct use of tools and bench hook
8. Correct use of a variety of gauge sizes
9. Correct inking procedure
10. Correct template preparation and paper rip
11. Completion of Artist Proof or Test Print first and then make corrections

12. Creation of 3 print edition
13. Proper clean-up
14. Good use of class time
15. Neatness and effort in carving and printing

Resources:

Books

Caplow, Deborah. *Leopoldo Méndez: revolutionary art and the Mexican print*. Austin: University of Texas P, 2007.

Ittmann, John W., Innis H. Shoemaker, James Wechsler, and Lyle W. Williams. *Mexico and modern printmaking: a revolution in the graphic arts, 1920 to 1950*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006.

Miliotes, Diane Helen. *José Guadalupe Posada and the Mexican broadside*. Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2006.

Orozco, V. , Clemente., and José Clemente Orozco. *José Clemente Orozco: graphic work*. Austin: University of Texas P, 2004.

Posada, José Guadalupe. *Jose Guadalupe Posada: my Mexico*. Honolulu, HI: The Gallery, 2001.

Posada, José Guadalupe, Roberto Berdecio, and Stanley Appelbaum. *Posada's popular Mexican prints; 273 cuts.*. New York: Dover Publications, 1972.

Rochfort, Desmond. *Mexican muralists: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998.

Siqueiros, David Alfaro., and Lorna Scott. Fox. *Portrait of a decade: David Alfaro Siqueiros 1930 - 1940*. Mexico, 1997.

Stein, Philip. *Siqueiros: his life and works*. New York: International, 1994.

Websites

Mexican Revolution

<http://www.casahistoria.net/mexicorevolution.htm#Background>
<http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/2824-the-mexican-revolution-1910>

Timeline of History of Mexico

<http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/3148-mexico-history-time-line-overview-resource-pagehtm>
<http://www.vivatravelguides.com/central-america/mexico/mexico-overview/history-and-politics/>
<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?groupid=1833&HistoryID=aa79>rack=pthc>

Print as Protest

<http://www.docspopuli.org/articles/CaplowReview.html>
<http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/1063-printmaking-from-revolution-to-establishment>
http://www.colormagazineusa.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=40%3Aentertainment&id=236%3Aaviva-mexico-artwork-inspired-by-the-mexican-revolution&Itemid=67
<http://www.mfa.org/exhibitions/sub.asp?key=15&subkey=7949>
http://www.boston.com/ae/theater_arts/articles/2009/06/05/vida_y_drama_works_retain_their_feel_of_mass_impact/?page=1
<http://www.slowart.com/articles/mexmus.htm>
<http://core.libraries.wright.edu/handle/2374.WSU/3717>
<http://www.princeton.edu/main/news/archive/S19/36/73M04/index.xml>
<http://www.nytimes.com/1998/07/03/arts/art-review-nation-building-with-prints.html>
<http://www.docspopuli.org/articles/Bancroft/TGP.html>
<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/book-news/comics/article/2192-politics-art-and-activism-in-oaxaca-.html>

El Taller de Gráfica Popular (TGP) – Popular Graphic Arts Workshop

<http://www.graphicwitness.org/group/tgp.htm>
<http://commonsense2.com/2009/04/americas-hidden-history/tgp-a-mexico-city-pilgrimage-dra>
<http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/radicalism/tgpjimenez.shtml>
<http://www.docspopuli.org/articles/Bancroft/TGP.html>
<http://www.princeton.edu/main/news/archive/S19/36/73M04/index.xml>
<http://diglib.princeton.edu/view? xq=pageturner& type=& doc=%2Fmets%2Fgc061.mets.xml& inset=0& filename=gc061%2F00278.jpg& start=1& index=1& count=1&64=1&div1=64>
<http://www.graphicwitness.org/group/tgpricker2.htm>

José Guadalupe Posada

<http://www.melodymock.com/posada/posada.html>
<http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/285-mexico-s-daumier-jos%C3%A9-guadalupe-posada-1852%E2%80%931913>
http://moma.org/collection/artist.php?artist_id=4707
http://www.artchive.com/artchive/ftptoc/posada_ext.html
<http://www.mexonline.com/jose-guadalupe-posada.htm>
http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/ChicanArte/html_pages/PosadalssOutl.html#artmaker
http://artmuseumjournal.com/calaveras_of_jose_guadalupe_posada.aspx
<http://www.carnaval.com/dead/posada.htm>
<http://www.banderasnews.com/1004/art-joseguadalupe.htm>
<http://web.stcloudstate.edu/oolivares/diadelosmuertos.htm>

Leopoldo Méndez

<http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/excerpts/excapleo.html>
<http://www.ralphmag.org/ES/mendez-woodcuts.html>
<http://www.printdealers.com/content/node/1501>
http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=es&u=http://sepiensa.org.mx/contenidos/h_mexicanas/s.xx/arterev/mendez1.htm&ei=iG5sTOH_FMOB8gbM2dSeCw&sa=X&oi=translate&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CCUQ7gEwAjqK&prev=/search%3Fq%3DLeopoldo%2BM%25C3%25A9ndez%26start%3D10%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26sa%3DN%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official%26prmd%3Dio
<http://www.annexgalleries.com/artists/biography/1575/Mendez/Leopoldo>
http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/166019/En_Nombre_de_Cristo/image/22675/image

David Alfaro Siqueiros

<http://www.museumsyndicate.com/artist.php?artist=647>
<http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/309-the-artist-as-activist-david-alfaro-siqueiros-1896%E2%80%931974>
<http://www.abcgallery.com/S/siqueiros/siqueiros.html>
<http://www.amazon.com/Siqueiros-Artist-Warrior-David-Alfaro/dp/0780022599>
<http://www.biography.com/articles/David-Alfaro-Siqueiros-9485144>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Alfaro_Siqueiros
http://www.all-art.org/art_20th_century/siqueiros1.html
<http://biography.yourdictionary.com/david-alfaro-siqueiros>
<http://www.wfu.edu/history/StudentWork/fysprojects/kmason/DvASiq.htm>

José Clemente Orozco

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/jose-clemente-orozco/orozco-man-of-fire/82/>
<http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/305-tragedy-and-triumph-the-drama-of-jose-clemente-orozco-1883%E2%80%931949>
<http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/results.html?searchTxt=&bSuggest=1&searchNameID=17072>
<http://www.biography.com/articles/Jos%C3%A9-Clemente-Orozco-9429586>
http://stendhalgallery.com/?page_id=2318
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0PAL/is_494_157/ai_107277552/?tag=content;col1
http://www.all-art.org/art_20th_century/orozco1.html

José Chavez Morado

<http://www.graphicwitness.org/group/tgpchavez.htm>

Isidoro Ocampo

<http://www.graphicwitness.org/group/tgpocampo.htm>

Rufino Tamayo

<http://www.adanigallery.com/Tamayo/main.html>
<http://www.artchive.com/artchive/T/tamayo.html>
<http://www.mexonline.com/history-tamayo.htm>
<http://www.s9.com/Biography/Tamayo-Rufino>
<http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/1076-rufino-tamayo>
http://20thcenturyart.suite101.com/article.cfm/rufino_tamayo

<http://www.biography.com/articles/Rufino-Tamayo-9501667>
http://www.cassiel.net/English/Art/rufino_tamayo.htm

Print as Protest: Mexican Printmakers Webquest

Answer the following questions, using the websites provided. Please understand that sometimes you might actually have to *read* what's on the website to answer the questions!
☺ Also, there may be more than one website to look at for each question!

Neatly write your group's answers on the hardcopy answer sheet provided.

1. When and why did the [Mexican Revolution](#) occur?
2. What is the [El Taller de Gráfica Popular \(TGP\)](#) and [why was it formed](#)? What [kind of artwork](#) did TGP produce and why?
3. How did the *Taller De Grafica Popular* maintain it's [financial stability](#)?
4. What is the definition of the [woodblock print process](#) and where did it begin?
5. [Where and when](#) did the woodcut process begin in earnest [in Mexico](#)?
6. During the Mexican Revolution what [kind of images](#) did printmaking artists use and [what format](#) were these prints?
7. Who is [José Guadalupe Posada](#)? When and where was he born? When and where did he begin studying art? [What](#) did he [protest](#) with his art?
8. Look at Posada's print [Calavera Revolucionaria](#). What can you determine about [how this artwork was used and why](#)? *Hint: click on Contextual Information link and look for Functional Context heading.*

What can you determine about what people [thought, believed, or did in the culture](#) in which the artwork was made? *Hint: click on the Contextual Information link and look for Cultural Context heading.*

9. Who is [Leopoldo Méndez](#)? When did he [enter art school](#)? What did he [do to make money](#) so he could continue to make political prints? What did he believe [art should do](#)?

Look at all seven of the prints in Méndez's [En Nombre de Cristo](#). Why did [Méndez create](#) this series of prints?

10. Who is [David Alfaro Siqueiros](#)? In 1923, Siqueiros founded [what and why](#)?

Look at Siqueiros' [Echo of a Scream](#). What [experience is the artist](#) illustrating?

Print as Protest: Mexican Printmakers Webquest Answer Sheet

Group Member names:

Period: _____

_____	_____
_____	_____

Neatly write your group's answers below.

1. When and why did the [Mexican Revolution](#) occur?
2. What is the [El Taller de Gráfica Popular](#) (TGP) and [why was it formed](#)? What [kind of artwork](#) did TGP produce and why?
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