

ART MASTERPIECE: The Fair in Reynosa, 1987

by Carmen Lomas Garza



Pronunciation: Car-men Low-mas Gar-zuh

Keywords: Pattern, Folk Art, mood

Grade: 1st – 2nd

Activity: “CELEBRATION” Paper Plate Decorating

Definitions:

Pattern: the repetition of shapes, lines or colors in a design

Folk art: Subjects are taken from everyday life and surroundings. Usually subjects appear flat, or two-dimensional.

Mood: the feeling or emotion suggested or created in the viewer by a work of art.

Meet the Artist: (5 min)

- Born in 1948 in Kingsville, TX.
- Garza emigrated to the U.S. with her family.
- She is the second of five children.
- At an early age she wanted to pursue her dream of becoming an artist. Her family supported her. Her mother was also an artist.
- Carmen went to college and received her Masters degree from San Francisco State Univ.
- Most of her work focuses on the traditions and daily activities in Mexican-American culture. Family was extremely important to her and she painted many pieces depicting her family’s life experiences from her childhood memories. Her recounting of these activities established value and assurance of their continued importance and impact.
- Garza has exhibited across the U.S. and in other countries in both art galleries and museums. Including the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C.
- **Read the Artist Quote:** “I was thirteen years old when I decided to become an artist. I taught myself to draw by practicing every day. I drew whatever was in front of me – books, cats, my left hand, my sisters and brothers, chairs, chilies, paper bags, flowers – anything or anybody

that would stay still for a few minutes...I have three college degrees. When I was in high school I could hardly wait to graduate so I could go to college and study art...."

Discussion: (10 min)

Print: "The Fair In Reynosa"

The artist reflects her memory of taking a trip the fair with her friends across the border in Reynosa, Mexico. She recalls the artisans and entertainers that came from all over Mexico. Rich with detail, she added to the painting the many booths that were selling food and crafts. The man and his daughter are buying tacos for his family; they are waiting for them at a picnic table. Children are running and playing and music is being played while everyone celebrated.

- What do you see? What do you hear? How does this painting make you feel?
- Who has been to a fair like this one in the painting? What did you see, eat and hear while you were there? Did you enjoy yourself? Are the people enjoying themselves?
- Garza pays special attention to tiny details in her paintings. What details do you see? (Leaves of the tree, the banderitas (little banners) lined up across the booths, pattern in clothing, desert plants etc.)
- How do the colors affect the mood or feeling of the painting?
- This artist liked using pattern. How many different patterns can you find?
- Can you find the booth where the woman is selling her pottery? Mexican pottery is an art form passed down from one generation to another. What are these pieces of pottery used for? (Everyday and decoration, but alsoCelebrating!)

Project: Decorating a CELEBRATION Plate.

Supplies needed:

Heavy paper plates (Chinet style) one/child
Tempera paints in bright colors plus black and white
Q-tips
large easel brushes
small detail brushes
water cups
small plates or egg crate sections (plastic or paper) for paint
newspaper for desks
parent letter

Advance preparation:

Copy and cut parent letter

Mini lesson: (2min) Please do this mid-lesson when students are ready to embellish their design with dot motif. Illustrate this using the classroom document camera.

On a scratch piece of paper, have the children practice making designs and dots with paint and a Q-tip so they are familiar with the Q-tip as a painting tool. Next show them that using the blunt end of their paint brush they can also produce dots of a different size.

Process: (30-40 min)

Chandler Unified School District Art Masterpiece

- Before you begin the project, have the students glue the parent letter to the back of their plate.
- Begin with asking the student to think of a special family event in their home. They will design their plate for this event. (Holiday, birthday, general celebration.)
- Pass out the paper plates and the large easel brushes. Squeeze several colors of paint onto plastic plates, letting the kids share.
- Have students start by painting the background of the plate. They may divide it into sections of bright colors, or they may do one color over the whole plate.
- While the background paint is drying, have them wash their brushes. Talk with the students again about how the artist, Garza, used many different patterns to add interest and life to her paintings. Draw an assortment of patterns on the whiteboard to give them some ideas of different patterns. (Stripes, polka dots, swirls, dots, flowers, hearts, and triangles, etc.)
- Stop the class and conduct the **mini-lesson** noted about making dots patterns.
- Pass out the detail brushes (sm.) and Q-tips. Have students add a decorative design on top of their painted background. Design can be an all-over design or a border.
- Use black and white paint to add details that will stand out against the bright colors they have used.

****If time permits have the students take turns presenting their “Celebration” plate to the class. Be sure to ask them what special family event this plate represents.

Clean up:

In order to prolong the life of our supplies, please ensure that all the paints are securely closed and paintbrushes and water cups are thoroughly rinsed. Please store the paintbrushes bristles up to dry so they will not mold.



Parent Letter

Brief info about the artist:

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Brief info about the project:

Students were asked to consider a family tradition and paint a celebration plate to represent it.

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