

InsideOUT

PRODUCED BY THE DENVER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

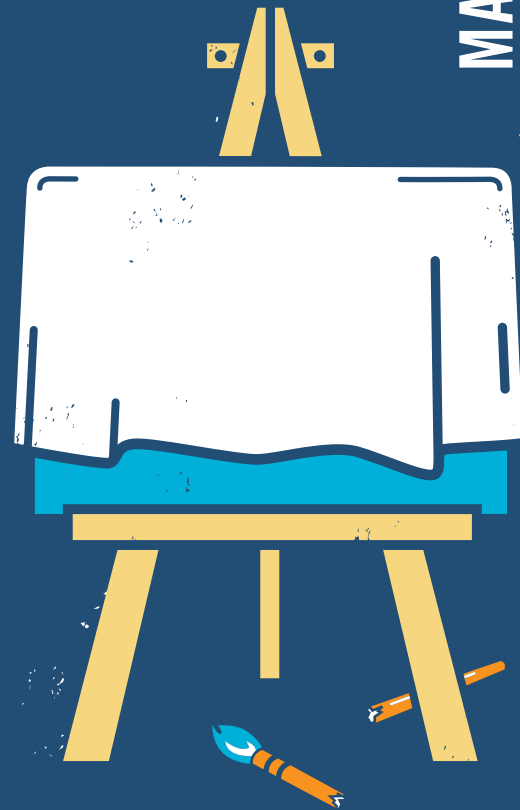
March - May 2010

MARIELA IN THE DESERT

MARIELA IN THE DESERT
BY KAREN ZACARIAS
THE RICKETSON THEATRE

APR 2
THROUGH
MAY 15

WHO DOES IT
HURT WHEN
YOUR ART
IS SHROUDED
IN A LIE?



PRODUCING PARTNERS

Dr. Patricia
BACA
The Colorado Trust,
Directed Contribution

Marvin & Judi
WOLF

M. Ann
PADILLA & Bob
GRABOWSKI

DENVERCENTER.ORG

Box Office 303.893.4100

SEASON
SPONSORS



STEINBERG
CHARITABLE TRUST



MEDIA
SPONSORS



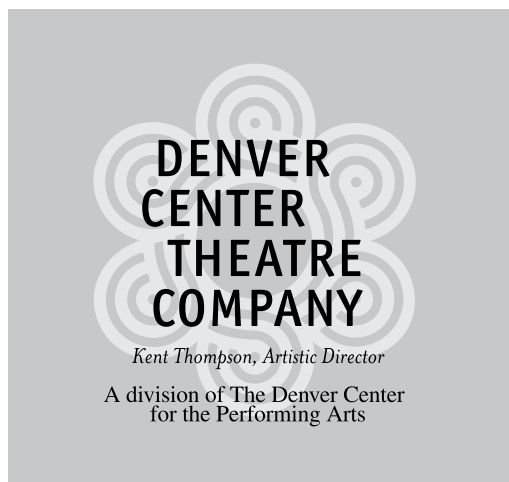
THE DENVER POST
COMMUNITY

Use of study guide materials for publication requires permission from the Marketing Department of The Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

©2009 Denver Center Theatre Company

InsideOUT

Douglas Langworthy Editor
Joelle Parrott Contributing Writer
David Saphier Education Contributor
Tina Risch Community Services/Group Sales Manager
Jeff Hovorka Director of Media & Marketing
Seth Holt Designer



Administration 303.893.4000
Box Office 303.893.4100
denvercenter.org

Special Thanks to our Arts in Education Sponsors



Synopsis

José and Mariela Salvatierra, along with José's sister Oliva, live on an isolated ranch in the northern Mexican desert in 1950. José is very ill and Mariela has sent a telegram to their daughter Blanca, a university student in Mexico City, to encourage her to come home and visit her family.

Both José and Mariela are painters, although only José ever received public recognition for his art. In Mexico City in the 1920s and 1930s, the two worked and socialized with the famous Mexican artists of the Mexican Renaissance, including Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo. In the late 1930s, José decided to move with his wife Mariela and their two young children, Blanca and Carlos, to this ranch in order to create a commune where their artist friends could visit and paint, inspired by the stark beauty of the desert.

José's dream did not come true. Artistic inspiration ran dry, and a tragedy resulted in Carlos's death and Blanca's departure for Mexico City. Now there is only one painting in José and Mariela's home, and it is shrouded in mystery.

Plays by Karen Zacarías

The 13th Summer of William and Pilar
The Bare-Chested Man
Blue Buick in My Driveway
The Book Club Play
Chasing George Washington
Choosing Nine
Cinderella Eats Rice and Beans
Einstein Is a Dummy
Ferdinand the Bull
How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents
Legacy of Light
Looking for Roberto Clemente
The Magical Piñata
Mariela in the Desert
A Rope through the Fixture
The Sins of Sor Juana

The Mexican Revolution

In 1910 Mexico celebrated the centennial of its independence from Spain, and Mexican president Porfirio Díaz presided over a glittering centennial celebration. Díaz had taken office in 1876 and initially declared that no president should serve consecutive terms. However, he violated his own policy and won successive elections, gradually becoming the dictator he'd warned against. While president, Díaz promoted industry, improved infrastructure and attracted foreign investment; however, his land and labor policies exploited workers, farmers and peasants. When Díaz ran for re-election to the presidency in 1910, he faced serious competition from Francisco Madero and even had Madero jailed on election day. Díaz was declared the winner by a landslide, but this obvious lie was for many Mexicans the last straw and the impetus for the Mexican Revolution.

Madero declared the Díaz regime illegal and called for revolution. His vague promise of agrarian reform drew many Indian peasants to his side; others joined Madero merely because they opposed Díaz. Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata led peasant armies against Díaz's federal army. Madero called for a new election in late 1911, which he won easily; however, he was not able to consolidate his power. After Madero refused to agree to social reforms calling for better working hours, pay and conditions, he lost the support of the rural working class. Intense fighting took place in Mexico City in mid-February 1913, called *la decena tragica* (the Ten Tragic Days), culminating in a coup d'état and Madero's assassination.

General Victoriano Huerta took power, although incoming American president

Woodrow Wilson refused to recognize Huerta's government. With the secret support of the United States, Venustiano Carranza led the opposition to Huerta; Alvaro Obregón, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata fought with him. However, when Carranza became president in 1914, Villa opposed him. In the winter of 1914-1915, Villa and Zapata's troops entered and occupied Mexico City. Later in 1915, Obregón defeated Villa in the Battle of Calaya, one of the bloodiest of the revolution. Carranza returned to Mexico City and gained the support of the people with a program of social and agrarian reforms. He oversaw the creation of the new Mexican Constitution of 1917. However, Obregón and other generals overthrew and assassinated Carranza in 1920. Obregón and Villa reached an agreement in 1920, and Villa ceased fighting. Villa was assassinated in 1923, presumably to prevent his running for president. Over two million people died during the Mexican Revolution, which was generally considered to have ended in 1920 with the ascension of Obregón to the presidency, although sporadic fighting continued well into the 1920s.

The Cristero War

The Cristero War (also known as the *Cristiada*) was an uprising or counterrevolution in Mexico, the people's reaction to the government's persecution of Catholics and of the Catholic Church. Like the 1857 constitution before it, the Mexican Constitution of 1917 sought to secularize the country and included several restrictions on religious organizations: monastic orders were outlawed, public worship or any other religious activity outside the church building was forbidden, religious education was prohibited and religious organizations' rights to own property were restricted. Priests and bishops were denied the right to vote, wear religious garb, criticize the government or create any political organization. Under Presidents Venustiano Carranza (1914-1920) and Alvaro Obregón (1920-1924), anti-religious provisions of the 1917 constitution were rarely enforced.

However, this changed with the 1924-1928 presidency of Plutarco Elías Calles, a strident atheist who preferred to strictly enforce all anti-clerical laws. In 1926, he passed the Law for Reforming the Penal Code, commonly called the Calles Law, providing specific penalties for violators of the 1917 Constitution's Article 130, which called for separation of church and state. For example, wearing clerical garb in public was punishable by a fine of 500 pesos; priests criticizing the government could be imprisoned for five years. The Calles Law provoked an immediate reaction from the Mexican public.

After some skirmishes in 1926, the rebellion began in earnest on New Year's Day 1927. The rebel fighters called themselves Cristeros because they felt they were fighting for Christ. Their battle cry was "Viva Cristo Rey! Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!" (Long live Christ the King! Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe!) Many of those who fought were the rural poor, deeply religious and disadvantaged by the government's recent land reforms. The Cristeros fought well against rural militias, but were often defeated by federal troops guarding

larger cities. In the summer of 1927, the first brigade of female Cristeros was formed. By early 1928, roughly 10,000 women were involved in the fighting; that number grew to 25,000 by the war's end. Women smuggled weapons, gathered information, traveled with and supported the troops, cared for the wounded and also fought as soldiers themselves.

In Mexico City, the United States ambassador Dwight Whitney Morrow initiated a series of breakfast meetings with Mexican president Calles to discuss the religious uprising and other issues; American newspapers nicknamed him the "ham and eggs diplomat." Finally in June 1929, Morrow helped bring the Mexican government and the Cristeros' representatives to an agreement. The government retained ownership of the church's property, but the church regained the right to use and live on this property. Religious instruction would be allowed in churches, though not in schools. Most anti-religious laws stayed on the books, but the government agreed to enforce them leniently or not at all. The Church then withdrew its support of the fighting rebels. Most of the rebels themselves had not been consulted in the negotiations and felt betrayed; many continued to fight the government, sometimes for reasons other than religious freedom. However, when the Church threatened the rebels with excommunication, the rebellion died out. Many Cristeros – perhaps as much as five percent of Mexico's population – fled Mexico and resettled in America. The Cristero War had claimed the lives of approximately 90,000 people: 56,882 on the federal side, around 30,000 Cristeros and myriad civilians and Cristeros killed in anticlerical raids after the war's end. Before the rebellion, approximately 4,500 priests lived in Mexico; by 1934 there were only 334 priests serving Mexico's population of 15 million.

The Mexican Renaissance

General Alvaro Obregón became president of Mexico in 1920 after the decade-long Mexican Revolution. Seeking to solidify his power, Obregón embarked on an ambitious plan to reorganize war-torn Mexico, modernize its structures and improve the lives of its people. Education Minister José Vasconcelos, appointed by President Obregón, directed a vigorous cultural policy that included expanding the country's educational system, including arts in school curricula, and commissioning large, didactic public murals portraying Mexican history. Because these murals were on the walls of large public buildings, the Mexican people (most of whom were illiterate) could see them for free and learn from them about their country and its culture. Previously, art in Mexico had usually imitated that of Europe, but Vasconcelos's commissions resulted in the Mexican Mural Renaissance, a flowering of Mexican art celebrating and glorifying the country's pre-Hispanic heritage and Mexican Indian culture. Although dozens of artists received work from Vasconcelos's education ministry, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros were considered the "Big Three" of the Mexican Mural Renaissance.

Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo

Diego Rivera was born in 1886 in Guanajanto. He was a sickly toddler, and the doctor recommended he be sent to the country; Rivera thus lived for two years in a mountain village with the Mexican Indian family of his nurse, Antonia. Rivera and his family moved to Mexico City when he was seven years old, and he soon enrolled at San Carlos Academy, one of the best art schools in Mexico. Rivera left Mexico in 1907 and traveled to Europe to study painting in Spain, France and Italy. He returned to Mexico in 1921 after the Mexican Revolution, when Education Minister José Vasconcelos commissioned Rivera and other Mexican artists to complete a series of public murals celebrating Mexican culture. In 1922, he began painting a mural at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, where Frida Kahlo, 21 years his junior, was a student. Rivera traveled to Moscow in 1927 to participate in the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the creation of the Soviet Union; he was expelled from the country the following year for anti-Soviet activities.

Frida Kahlo was born in a suburb of Mexico City in 1907, although she always said she'd been born in 1910 in order to be associated with the 1910 Mexican Revolution. Her father was a German immigrant, and her mother was of Mexican Indian and Spanish descent. At age six, Kahlo contracted polio, which left her right leg and foot small and deformed. As a student at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria in the early 1920s, Kahlo was one of only 35 female students in a class of 2,000. She joined a group called the Cachuchas (named for the peaked caps they wore), who devoted themselves to literature and supported the socialist-nationalist ideas of José Vasconcelos.

In September 1925, Frida Kahlo was riding a bus home from school when it collided with a trolley car. The trolley continued moving and pushed the bus against a wall until the bus shattered. The injured and the dead lay scattered among the rubble, covered with blood and some gold paint a passenger had been carrying. At first the doctors were doubtful that Kahlo would survive her injuries. The accident had broken her spinal column, collarbone, multiple ribs and pelvis. Her right leg and foot were crushed, and an iron handrail had pierced her abdomen and uterus. Pain plagued her for the rest of her life. During her initial recovery from the trolley accident, Kahlo turned to painting to occupy her time as she lay bedridden in a full-body cast. A mirror was placed under her bed's canopy so that she could serve as her own model. Throughout her life, nearly half her paintings were self-portraits, often symbolically portraying her physical and emotional pain. She explained, "I paint self-portraits because I am alone most of the time, because I am the person I know best." When told her art was surreal, she answered "I do not paint dreams. I paint my reality."

Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo were married August 21, 1929 (they divorced in 1939, but remarried in 1940). Rivera received several commissions to paint murals in San Francisco, Detroit and New York City; he and Kahlo lived in the United States from 1930 to 1933. Rivera was fascinated with the United States, but Kahlo was homesick for Mexico and ambivalent toward what she called Gringolandia. New York's Museum of Modern Art offered an exhibition of

Rivera's work in 1931. In 1932, Rivera painted murals praising industry in the Detroit Institute of Arts; while in Detroit, Kahlo suffered a miscarriage. After Rivera refused to paint over the face of Vladimir Lenin in his 1933 mural at the Rockefeller Center in New York City, Rockefeller released Rivera from his contract and destroyed the mural. After they returned to Mexico, Rivera and Kahlo petitioned Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas to grant asylum to Leon Trotsky, exiled from his native Russia and later expelled from Norway. Trotsky and his wife Natalia arrived in Mexico City in January 1937 and lived in the Kahlo family home until April 1939; Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico City in 1940.

Frida Kahlo's work was featured in a solo exhibition in New York City in 1938. Never having painted with the public in mind, she mused, "I don't know what they see in my work. Why do they want me to have a show?" Kahlo's intensely personal and explicit paintings broke early-twentieth-century taboos by representing the female body, female sexuality and the physical and spiritual pain she suffered as a result of her miscarriages and the many surgeries attempting to repair her broken body. Diego Rivera called Kahlo "the first woman in the history of art to treat, with absolute and uncompromising honesty, one might even say with impassive cruelty, those general and specific themes which exclusively affect women." When American actor Edward G. Robinson purchased several of her works for \$200 each, Kahlo began to see the possibility of economic freedom her painting could offer her.

Frida Kahlo traveled in 1939 to Paris, where she was the first Mexican artist to exhibit her own work at the Louvre. Her painting *The Frame* was the first work by a 20th-century Mexican artist to be purchased by the prestigious museum. Kahlo received a 5,000-peso prize for her painting at the 1946 Annual National Exhibition in the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City; also that year, she was one of six artists offered an annual government painting fellowship. In 1953, Frida Kahlo finally received a solo exhibition in Mexico City, shortly before her death on July 13, 1954.

At Mexico City's Hotel del Prado in 1947 and 1948, Diego Rivera painted a mural including a person holding a placard reading "God does not exist," a slogan from the Mexican Revolution. In the ensuing scandal, the archbishop refused to bless the building, prompting Rivera's suggestion that "the archbishop bless the building and damn me." In 1949, the National Institute of Fine Arts in Mexico City presented an exhibition of 50 years of Diego Rivera's work. Rivera, along with José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo, exhibited in the Mexican pavilion at the Venice Biennial in 1950. Rivera died in 1955 at age 71.

José Clemente Orozco

José Clemente Orozco was born in Jalisco in 1883 and began to paint in 1909, despite having lost his left hand in a childhood accident while playing with gunpowder. He studied at the Academy of San Carlos under Dr. Atl (born Gerardo Murillo, he adopted the Aztec name “Atl” after his European and Chinese travels). New World artists had long traveled to Europe to study classical art; it was widely believed that the best possible way to create art was to imitate the past masters. Orozco later declared, “Atl, the agitator, finished all this, and the Mexican painters began to paint Mexico. It was the end of bourgeois civilization.”

Between 1923 and 1948, Orozco painted murals in Mexico City, California, New Hampshire and the Mexican states Jalisco and Michoacán. Like Diego Rivera’s work, Orozco’s paintings promoted the political causes of peasants and workers. However, Orozco was more critical than Rivera of the Mexican Revolution, and his work often portrays human suffering. His 1928 exhibit in New York of drawings of the revolution was a critical success. His 1930 fresco of Prometheus at Pomona College in Claremont, California, however, provoked controversy. Conservative members of the college were appalled by the naked Prometheus, but students put money into a passing plate at mealtimes to help pay for Orozco’s work. Playwright Arthur Miller declared, “Many people have been out to Claremont to see the fresco growing. Some are thrilled, some are disturbed, but none see it and remain passive. A master of dynamic composition, Orozco’s picture is powerful beyond anything one can anticipate.” Miller continued, “The esthetic experiments of modern Paris are trifling matters compared to the Mexican wall paintings of the last nine years.”

In 1947, Orozco received the 20,000-peso prize presented to Mexico’s outstanding proponent in all areas of art and science. He died in Mexico City in 1949.

David Alfaro Siqueiros

David Alfaro Siqueiros was born in Chihuahua in 1896. At the Academy of San Carlos in 1910, he participated in the student strike and was jailed briefly for throwing stones. In the Mexican Revolution, Siqueiros fought for Venustiano Carranza, who served as president from 1914 to 1920; Siqueiros’s military travels throughout Mexico during the revolution exposed him to Mexican culture and to the sufferings of the workers and the poor. When Carranza became president, he rewarded Siqueiros with a post as military attaché in Madrid and Paris. Siqueiros also studied art while in Europe; he met Diego Rivera in Paris and the two traveled through Italy studying Renaissance frescos. Education Minister José Vasconcelos lured the two back to Mexico in 1921 to take part in his planned mural renaissance.

In 1923, David Alfaro Siqueiros helped create a union, the Syndicate of Revolutionary Mexican Painters, Sculptors and Engravers. He advocated the

idea of collective art serving as propaganda to educate the masses; he sought to overcome bourgeois, individualist art. The Mexican government took exception to the activities of the union and threatened to cut off the funds for the mural projects unless the union ceased publication of its paper *El Machete*. Diego Rivera left the union in favor of artistic opportunity; Siqueiros sided with the union's right to publish and was let go from his Department of Education post. Deeply involved in various labor activities through the union and the Mexican Communist Party, Siqueiros was jailed and briefly exiled from Mexico.

Siqueiros was deported from the United States in 1932 for political activities; nonetheless, in 1936 he was back in New York, where he was honored at a contemporary arts exhibition at the St. Regis Gallery. He ran a political art workshop there in preparation for the 1936 General Strike for Peace and May Day Parade; a young painter named Jackson Pollock attended the workshop and helped build floats for the parade.

Siqueiros traveled and painted in many countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, France, Peru, Spain, Uruguay and the United States. Siqueiros returned to Spain in 1938 to fight with the Republican Army against Francisco Franco's fascist dictatorship. A Stalinist, Siqueiros was involved in 1940 in an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Leon Trotsky, then living in Mexico City. He declared in 1947 that "it is easier for me to paint in the United States than in Mexico where the *políticos* push me into political work." In 1950 Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and Rufino Tamayo represented Mexico at the Biennial Exhibition at Venice; Siqueiros won second place honors of all painters in the exhibition.

Siqueiros was again arrested in 1960 for political activities in Mexico. His imprisonment sparked myriad protests, including a *New York Times* appeal supported by several famous artists and writers. Siqueiros continued to paint while in prison; upon his release in 1964, he immediately resumed work on the murals he'd begun before his arrest years earlier. His final work, *The March of Humanity on Earth and toward the Cosmos*, is the largest mural ever painted; it is in a hotel in Mexico City and was completed in 1971. Siqueiros died in Mexico in 1974.

Rufino Tamayo

Born in Oaxaca in 1899, Rufino Tamayo resisted the political tendencies of Mexican painting in the 1920s. His work was similarly inspired by indigenous Mexican culture, but without political overtones. Also, he continued easel painting and a style of art called School of Paris, which many other Mexican artists considered bourgeois and passé. Tamayo did not paint his first mural until 1933. Feeling he could not freely express his art in the political environment that pervaded painting in Mexico, Tamayo moved to New York in 1926 and to Paris in 1949. He frequently returned to Mexico to teach and paint, but did not move back to Mexico permanently until 1959. After Tamayo's work appeared (along with Diego Rivera's, José Clemente Orozco's and David Alfaro Siqueiros's) at the 1950 Venice Biennial, a *New York Times* art critic declared "his marriage of School of Paris painting with the dark mystery and jungle-dreams of indigenous Mexico...rare, fresh, and imaginative." Tamayo died in Mexico City in 1991.

Tina Modotti

Tina Modotti was born in Italy in 1896. At age 16, she immigrated to the United States and became active in the performing arts community in San Francisco; she worked as an artist's model as well as acted in several plays and silent movies. She moved to Mexico City with photographer Edward Weston in 1923. Modotti became politically active and joined the Mexican Communist Party in 1927. She learned the art of photography, and her photographs of Mexican workers and peasants appeared in mainstream and Communist publications. She also documented the work of the Mexican muralists, including Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco. The National Library exhibited her photography in a solo show in December 1929, calling the show "The First Revolutionary Photographic Exhibition in Mexico."

Tina Modotti's political activity brought her under the scrutiny of both the Mexican and Italian political police. She was questioned regarding the 1929 assassination of Julio Antonio Mella and a failed assassination attempt on Mexican president Pascual Ortiz Rubio. Modotti was expelled from Mexico in 1930, but she was able to avoid detention by the Italian fascist police. She settled in Moscow in 1931; she moved to Spain in 1936 and worked in support of the Republican Army opposing fascist general Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War until their defeat in 1939. Modotti then returned to Mexico and lived there under a pseudonym until her death in Mexico City in 1942. Diego Rivera, among others, suspected her death was actually murder.

Jackson Pollock

Paul Jackson Pollock was born in 1912 in Wyoming; he was raised in Arizona and California. In 1930 he moved to New York to study art. Pollock first encountered Mexican artist José Clemente Orozco in New York; he was later impressed and influenced by Orozco's murals at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. Pollock attended a New York workshop in 1936 by another Mexican muralist, David Alfaro Siqueiros; at this workshop, Pollock first experimented with the liquid paint medium he would use a decade later for his new pouring technique of creating art. During the Great Depression, Pollock worked as a painter for the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project from 1935 to 1943. Pollock struggled with depression and alcoholism, but his brother Sande wrote in 1941 that if Jackson could "hold himself together his work will become of real significance. His painting is abstract, intense, evocative in quality."

In the early 1940s, Pollock was in an exhibition pairing new American artists like himself with established painters such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Henri Matisse. The exhibit also included Lee Krasner, whom Pollock married in 1945. Pollock and Krasner moved to Long Island in 1946; their home is now the Pollock Krasner House and Study Center. There Pollock developed the spontaneous pouring technique that made him world-famous. Instead of painting on a wall or an easel-mounted canvas, Pollock placed his canvas on the

floor, where he was able to pour, drip and fling paint onto the canvas from all four sides. *Time* magazine later dubbed him “Jack the Dripper” because of his unique painting method. Pollock was profiled in *Life* magazine in August 1949; the article debated whether Pollock was the greatest living painter in the United States. His art and his process drew both praise and criticism. Some considered his paintings pointless and disordered; others found them mesmerizing and forceful. His artistic methods and style continued to evolve, but depression and alcoholism still plagued him. He died in a drunk driving accident in 1956.

Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a metabolism disorder involving deficiency or impairment of the body’s ability to produce or use insulin. Insulin is normally created by the pancreas as needed to aid the body in the absorption of glucose from digested food. In a diabetic person, either the pancreas is unable to produce insulin as needed or other hormones or enzymes in the body neutralize the insulin that is created. A tendency to the condition is hereditary, but the disease itself is not. Excessive food intake, physical inactivity and the resulting obesity may cause a person genetically predisposed to diabetes to develop the disease.

When there is excessive glucose in the bloodstream, the body excretes it via the urine, which also causes excessive thirst and loss of essential body nutrients. Diabetes also causes degeneration of the blood vessels, which can cause gangrene in the extremities, cardiovascular disease and retina disease leading to blindness. If uncontrolled, a diabetic’s high blood-sugar content will cause diabetic coma and death. There is no cure for diabetes, but most cases can be treated with dietary regulation and insulin injections. Before insulin’s discovery in 1921, most diabetics died within a few years of diagnosis.

Glossary

Absolution: a series of prayers said over the body of a dead Catholic in hopes that the person’s soul will not have to suffer in purgatory

Cabrón: Spanish for “rascal,” used in reference to artist Diego Rivera

Gringo: Spanish for “foreigner,” used especially in Latin America to refer to an American or English person, sometimes disparagingly

Guggenheim Fellowship: a scholarship fund set up in 1925, offering annual grants to individual scholars and artists so they may further their research and knowledge

King Kong: a 1933 movie in which Hollywood moviemakers on Skull Island encounter a giant gorilla named Kong and take him back to New York City

Linda: Spanish for “pretty one”

Louvre: a prestigious museum of art in Paris, France, which originated in 1546 with Francis I’s art collection and has been collecting great works of art from around the globe ever since

Mi’jo: abbreviation for *mi hijo*, Spanish for “my son”

Monterrey, Mexico: the capital city of the northeastern Mexican state Nuevo León, an important industrial and business center and the third-largest city in Mexico (after Mexico City and Guadalajara)

Phantom pains: or “phantom limb sensations,” the feeling of pain in an absent body part following amputation

Scorpion: any of thousands of species of arachnids of the order Scorpionida, which live in warm, dry regions and have a venomous stinger on the tail

Sources

Albers, Patricia, et. al. *Tina Modotti: The Mexican Revolution*. Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 2000.

Diego Rivera Web Museum, www.diegorivera.com

Frida Kahlo Corporation, www.fkahlo.com

Kettenmann, Andrea. *Frida Kahlo 1907-1954: Pain and Passion*. Köln: Taschen, 2003.

Pollock Krasner House and Study Center. www.sb.cc.stonybrook.edu/pkhouse

Sabbeth, Carol. *Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera: Their Lives and Ideas*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2005.

Stewart, Virginia. *45 Contemporary Mexican Artists: A Twentieth-Century Renaissance*. Stanford: University Press, 1951.

Tina Modotti Virtual Gallery, www.modotti.com

Pre-Show Questions

- 1) What happens to our creativity if we do not practice it? How do we stifle our own creativity? How do we stifle someone else's creativity?
- 2) Define a healthy relationship. Are our relationships based on lies or do they contain lies? Is there a sliding scale for lies? What does this say about us?

Post Show Questions

- 1) How would you describe the Salvatierra family? Marilea's marriage to Jose? Mariela's relationship with her daughter, Blanca?
- 2) What is the purpose of Blanca's boyfriend, Adam? Why did the playwright make him a foreigner and an art professor?
- 3) Why did the family move to the desert and leave Mexico City?
- 4) Why do Olivia and Mariela give Jose flan? Are they trying to kill the diabetic Jose or are they trying to make him happy?
- 5) Is Jose jealous of Mariela's painting skills? How does he show that he is or is not?
- 6) How would you describe the paintings of Mariela and Jose? Although we don't actually see any of the paintings in the play, how do the other characters describe Mariela's and Jose's work?
- 7) How did Carlos die? How does the family cope with the death of the young boy?
- 8) Why does the painting of "The Blue Barn" have a shroud over it? Were you surprised when the painting was revealed?

Activities

Art Critiquing

1. Using the internet, look at some of Frida Kahlo's paintings, Diego Rivera's murals or another artist's artwork.
2. Pick one of these images and critique it.
3. Start with describing the painting. Make a list of what you see in the painting. Do not add any judgments; just list your observations and the facts.
4. Next, analyze the painting. Make a list of specific elements in the painting or expand the descriptions that you made earlier. What colors are used? What shapes are used? What textures are used?
5. Next, interpret the painting. What do you think the artist was trying to say? How do you feel when you look at the painting? What do you think it means?
6. Then, make a judgment about the painting. Why do you like or dislike the piece? If you had an art gallery, would you be able to sell it? Does it have artistic value for you or others? Explain why you believe the artwork is successful or unsuccessful?

Visual Art 5: Students analyze and evaluate the characteristics, merits, and meaning of works of art.

Two Truths and a Lie

1. A student steps forward and tells us three statements about themselves that they are willing to share. Two of the three statements are true and the third is a lie.
2. The other students decide which statement they believe to be false.
3. Discuss which lies were easy to spot and which were more difficult. How were people able to mask their falsehoods?
4. Variation One: Two truths and a wish
 - a. The student tells two truths and a wish; something that they wish was a true.
5. Variation Two: The student tells two lies and a single truth.
6. What are some of the lies that are told in *Mariela in the Desert*? Are there consequences to these lies?

Theatre 1: Students develop interpersonal skills and problem-solving capabilities through group interaction and artistic collaboration.