



DENVER CENTER FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS
Theatre Company

INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

WORLD PREMIERE

LAUGHS IN SPANISH

Illustration by Kyle Malone



INSIDE OUT

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Laughs in Spanish

By **Alexis Scheer**

Directed by **Lisa Portes**

JAN 27 - MAR 12

SINGLETON THEATRE

Supported in part by the DCPA's Women's Voices Fund. This play is a recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New Play Award.

This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.



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THE PLAY

SYNOPSIS

Someone has stolen the art from the Studio Six, an art gallery Mariana (Mari) runs in Miami's Wynwood neighborhood. During the night, dozens of pieces disappeared, despite the gallery intern, Carolina (Caro), swearing everything was present and tightly locked up the night before and her police officer boyfriend, Juan, verifying her story. With only hours to go before Mari is supposed to host an opening night gala for Art Basel, an art festival where art connoisseurs and trend setters hope to scoop up pieces by the next rising stars of the art world, Mari's movie star mother, Estella, makes a surprise visit and promises to help make the evening a success.

Part crime-comedy, part telenovela, and 100% stylish and vibrant, this world premiere play offers a light-hearted look at the struggles many Latinas go through to gain entry into cultural and artistic spaces that have historically excluded them. It examines Latine representation in the media, the fears and uncertainties of adulthood, art as an industry, love, and family. And through it all, you won't stop laughing — or dancing — in your seat! **[A note on terminology: throughout this guide “Latine” is used as the non-gendered term for Latina/x/o people. For more information, please see pages the section on terminology.]**



Artist David Choe, via thewynwoodwalls.com

THE PLAY

CHARACTERS

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| MARIANA | female. late 20s. Half Colombian/Half Jewish. Born in Miami. Director of Studio Six, an art gallery. |
| CAROLINA | female. late 20s. Cuban-American. Born in Miami. A painter and intern at Studio Six. |
| JUAN | male. late 20s. Colombian. Born in Medellín. Miami-Dade police officer. Caro's boyfriend. |
| ESTELLA | female. mid 50s. Colombian. Born in Medellín. A movie star and Mari's mom. |
| JENNY | female. mid 20s. Caucasian-American. Born in Westchester. Estella's assistant. |

THE PLAY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Alexis Scheer

Alexis Scheer's breakout play was the Off Broadway hit *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* (WP Theater/Second Stage: *New York Times* Critic's Pick, John Gassner Award; LTC Carnival of New Latinx Work; Kilroy's List). Her other plays include *Laughs in Spanish* (Kennedy Center's Harold & Mimi Steinberg Award) and *Christina* (Roe Green Award; O'Neill finalist). Her work has been developed at the Kennedy Center, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, McCarter Theatre Center, Boston Playwrights' Theatre, and more. Television: "Pretty Little Liars: Original Sin" (HBO Max). Alexis is currently under commission by Second Stage, MTC, and Miami New Drama, and is developing a project with Salma Hayek's Ventanarosa.

Alexis was born and raised in Miami, Florida in a Jewish-Colombian household. Her mother is from the magical mountains of Medellín (yup, like *Encanto*) and her father is probably the great grandson of Motel, the tailor from *Fiddler on the Roof*. Alexis is a proud alum of New World School of the Arts and holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from The Boston Conservatory and MFA in Playwriting from Boston University. She also has an extensive acting background.

-via AlexisScheer.com

PLACES

WYNWOOD

Located about 2 miles from downtown Miami, Wynwood is known for its colorful outdoor murals showcasing the talents of internationally known street artists and is the setting for our play. For most of the 20th century, the neighborhood was predominantly working class and was a thriving manufacturing and garment district. In the 1960s there was an influx of Cuban and Puerto Rican immigrants that changed the ethnic makeup of the neighborhood as Anglo whites began to move to the suburbs. Over the last 30 years, the neighborhood has changed rapidly, and is now considered a site of international art consumption and leisure for the super wealthy. In his sociological research on Art Basel and the sociology of neighborhood change in the Wynwood neighborhood of Miami, scholar Alfredo García describes the history of the neighborhood and its current influence: García writes about the stark contrast between the "worldly" and wealthy

Wynwood residents and those who were being pushed out by new developments and soaring rent prices:

"The differences across the contexts in Wynwood [were] so stark that it was often difficult for me to reconcile the worlds that existed as neighbors. I would sit down to play bingo with locals on a Friday morning at the community center in the park where each entry went for 25 cents and the winnings would rarely top \$4, for instance, and then head to art gallery openings that very same evening where red dot stickers would be placed on the information placards of pieces sold in the tens of thousands of dollars. I would chat with men and women who were excited about making a little money by selling a bike or their prescription drugs before going on to hold conversations with property owners who were about to become millionaires by selling their decrepit property to real-estate speculators." (5-6).

PLACES

WYNWOOD cont.

García writes that the way the neighborhood has changed and taken shape is no accident. During his time researching the neighborhood, rather than seeing the “natural progression of a bohemian enclave,” he instead “saw the conscious effort of art enthusiasts and property developers working together to create a semblance of a bohemian enclave. But instead of constructing a neighborhood with a bohemian source—which is characterized by low economic capital but high cultural capital—the place shapers of Wynwood constructed the neighborhood around the goal of art consumption” (García 8). Property developers, uberwealthy art collectors and others that stood to gain financially from neighborhood changes made decisions based on economic incentive. Decisions were not being made with and through community but were instead made to benefit those consuming the art. As a result, Cuban, Colombian and other Latine immigrants that



The Wynwood Walls, an iconic street art museum known for its colorful outdoor murals painted by artists from around the world, via WanderingRedhead.com

lived in the neighborhood were priced out of their homes, were barred from participating in whitewashed gallery spaces, and the supposedly street art that decorated their streets was co-opted by gallery spaces and sold back to community members as inaccessible “high art.” For a more thorough history of gentrification, see “History of Wynwood’s Gentrification” and “History of Wynwood Miami.”

PLACES

MIAMI

According to the 2020 Census, 72.5% of Miami’s population is Hispanic with the largest ethnic group being white Hispanics at 53.9%. The top three most common birthplaces for Miami’s foreign-born residents are, in descending order of concentration: Cuba, Haiti, and Colombia. Miami has a large foreign-born population; in 2020, 58.1% of the city’s population was born abroad. This is more than double the rate in the state of Florida at 20.8%. According to the Jay Weiss Institute for Health Equity, over a third of those residing in Little Havana (a popular neighborhood that is considered one of the most densely populated Latine

enclaves in the United States) live below the Federal Poverty Level and the median household income of the neighborhood is \$23,000, “which is significantly lower than that of Dade County at \$43,100” (Tercero). Though these numbers indicate that Florida’s second largest city by population is mostly Latine, like most places in the United States, wealth and therefore economic power is largely concentrated among Anglo Whites. This uneven distribution of wealth and social influence has led to widespread gentrification and disenfranchisement in many Miami neighborhoods.

PLACES

COLOMBIA IN THE 1980S

Other than Miami, one of the most impactful places and times in this play is Colombia in the 1980s. Both in the play and in real life, the conflict in Colombia that spanned most of the 20th century has had a profound impact on how Colombians at home and abroad understand themselves, their culture and Latinidad. According to a report conducted by the Migration Policy Institute in 2015, most Colombian immigrants arrived in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, which coincides with a period of great civil unrest in the country. The report notes that during the past fifty years, “internal armed conflict and economic instability have driven much of Colombian immigration” (MPI). In addition, the report found that “Colombian immigrants in the United States are heavily concentrated within the greater Miami and New York metropolitan areas” (MPI).

During this time of extended conflict, Colombia was considered a dangerous place, with headlines appearing abroad after various drug-related or violent acts. Juan explains that he and his mother moved to the United States following the murder of the soccer player named Andrés Escobar in 1994. Known as *el caballero del fútbol* (the gentleman of football), Escobar played as a defender on the Colombia national team and was beloved by fans. During a 1994 FIFA World Cup game against the United States, Escobar accidentally scored a dreaded “own goal” against his team, handing the win to the U.S.

Following Colombia’s elimination from the World Cup, Andrés Escobar gave a statement to Bogota’s *El Tiempo* newspaper:

“Life doesn’t end here. We have to go on. Life cannot end here. No matter how difficult, we must stand back up. We only have two options: either allow anger to paralyze us and the violence continues, or we overcome and try our best to help others. It’s our choice. Let us please maintain respect. My warmest regards to everyone. It’s been a most amazing and rare experience. We’ll see each other again soon because life does not end here.”

Days after the game that cost Colombia the FIFA World Cup, Escobar was shot to death in a Medellín neighborhood in an apparent act of revenge for the Colombian team’s elimination. The high-profile and violent murder of a beloved public figure representing Colombia sent shockwaves through the country already in turmoil following the death of narcoterrorist and drug lord Pablo Escobar. In the wake of both Escobars’ deaths (no relation), the country found itself in a period of intense violence that led to mass immigration to the United States.

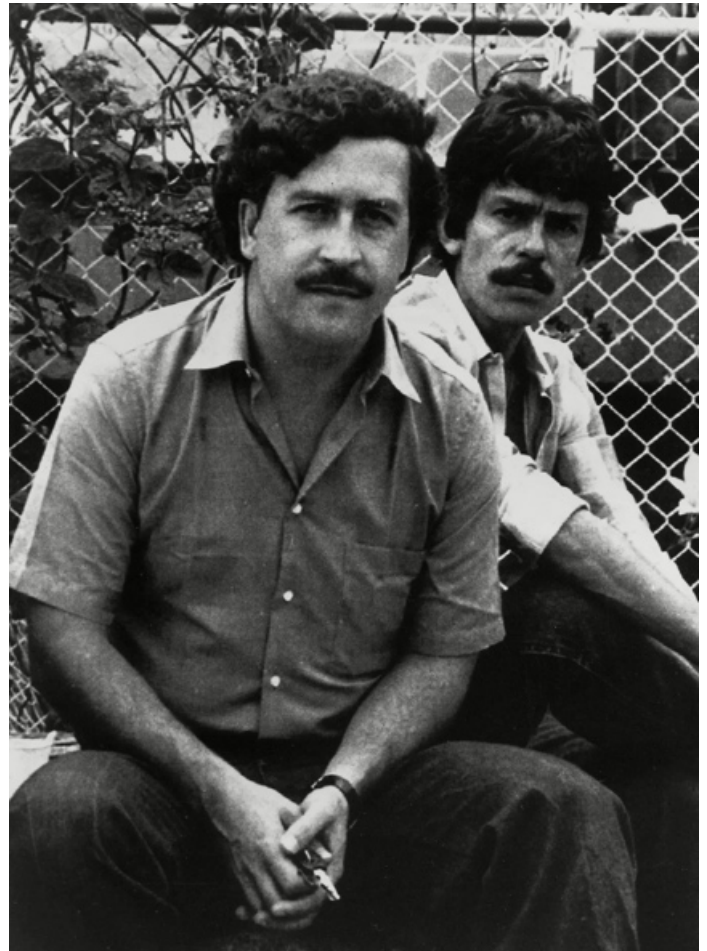


The Death of Pablo Escobar by Fernando Botero (1999), via Wikiart.org

PABLO EMILIO ESCOBAR GAVIRA

Pablo Escobar (1949 - 1993) was a Colombian drug lord, one of the richest men in the world and leader of the infamous Medellín during the late 20th century. At the height of his power in the 1980s, Escobar was said to control over 80% of the world's cocaine supply and was smuggling over \$500 million worth of cocaine into the United States every day. While he did use some of his incredible wealth to fund social projects to support common citizens (he built houses and hospitals for the poor), Escobar is perhaps most well-known for the brutal violence he waged in Colombia in an attempt to maintain his power and monopoly over the drug trade in the country. Though he engendered some goodwill among everyday citizens through his investment in public works projects, during the 1980s and 90s Escobar and the Medellín cartel "launched a full-scale attack on the country and waged an all-out war on the government as a way to force the government to join the cartels and share power with them. They bombed public facilities and newspaper offices. They kidnapped members of the country's prominent families. He is said to have been responsible for a bomb attack on the Colombian Supreme Court in which 11 of the 25 justices on the court were killed. He was also implicated in the bombing of Avianca Airlines flight 203 while in midflight in 1989, an apparent effort to kill one of his political opponents. When he was arrested in 1976 with 39 pounds of cocaine, the arresting officer was murdered. In 1992, he orchestrated a bombing campaign against government officials and rival gangs, setting off 300 devices, killing many people. In 1993, his men murdered 178 local policemen. It is rumored that he had thousands of people killed, including members of rival cartels, government officials, police, and innocent bystanders" (Drugs in American Society). Soon after Escobar's death in 1993 at the age of 44, the Medellín cartel collapsed.

Curiously, now 30 years after his death, Escobar's influence stubbornly endures in his home country and abroad. Escobar's infamous life of narcoterrorism, wealth and violence continue to spark controversy and inspire countless re-engagements with his life through art and history "converting his semblance into a timeless icon of notoriety" (Pobutsky 684). While Escobar is elevated to a near mythologized historical figure, Colombians worldwide have had to continue to grapple with the realities of his violence and how his life profoundly shaped those of his fellow citizens and those now living in the Colombian diaspora.



Pablo Escobar (L) with a bodyguard, via britannica.com

HISPANIC? LATINO? LATINE? CHICANO?

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

There are many terms used to describe folks who trace their heritage from Latin America or Spain. The terms people use to describe themselves depend on region, context and (to an extent) personal preference.

First, some definitions (terms, as defined from a 2017 GENIAL report):

- **Hispanic: Someone who is a native of, or descends from, a Spanish-speaking country.** Hispanic came in use officially in the United States in the early 1970s during the Richard Nixon presidency. The U.S. government decided to adopt Hispanic to have a universal term that could serve to include all Spanish-speaking groups in the United States. Typically, a person born in or who descends from Spain is referred to as Spanish or a Spaniard.
- **Chicano/Chicana: Someone who is native of, or who descends from, Mexico and who lives in the United States.** Chicano or Chicana is a chosen identity of some Mexican Americans in the United States. The term became widely used during the Chicano Movement of the 1960s by many Mexican Americans to express a political stance founded on pride in a shared cultural, ethnic, and community identity.
- **Latino/Latina: Someone who is native of, or descends from, a Latin American country.** The term Latino/Latina includes people from Brazil and excludes those who were born in or descended from Spain. Not all Brazilians identify themselves as Latino/Latina, but many do. Thus, Hispanic refers more to language, while Latino/Latina refers more to culture.
- **Latinx: A gender neutral term to refer to a Latino/Latina person.** The “x” replaces the male and female endings “o” and “a” that are part of Spanish grammar conventions. Though most of the above terms came into popular use during the last century, Latinx is the most recently coined (and perhaps most discussed) term. Often pronounced “la-tin-EX,” the emergence of the term coincides with an international movement towards gender-neutral terms in languages that use gendered grammatical constructions. It has been criticized for being grammatically difficult to integrate when speaking or writing in Spanish as the language uses masculine and feminine grammatical structures where the gendered ending of the noun must “agree” with the article attached to it, with a few exceptions (for example: fem, *la silla*; masc, *el piso*).
- **Latine** (pronounced la-TEE-neh, more like the pronunciation of its originating words), is **A gender neutral term to refer to a Latino/Latina person** often used in speaking to retain gender-neutral grammatical constructions.

The emergence of new terms does not automatically mean widespread use. According to 2020 Pew Research findings, most Latine adults have not heard of the term “Latinx” and only 3% use it to describe themselves. There is also evidence that there are generational differences in who has heard of and used the term: “Young Hispanics, ages 18 to 29, are among the most likely to have heard of the term – 42% say they have heard of it, compared with 7% of those ages 65 or older” (Noe-Bustamente et al.) The report also notes that “awareness of the term Latinx does not necessarily translate into use. Across many demographic subgroups, the share of Hispanics who say they use Latinx to describe their own identity is significantly lower than the share who say they have heard it. Use is among the highest for Hispanic women ages 18 to 29 – 14% say they use it, a considerably higher share than the 1% of Hispanic men in the same age group who say they use it” (Noe-Bustamente et al.). The sloughing off of gendered endings is a way to make linguistic space for LGBTQ+ persons who use nongendered- or neo-pronouns in English, but, as previously mentioned, does not mean even distribution among the folks that may, in fact, use them.

A report conducted by GENIAL (Generating Engagement and New Initiatives for All Latinos), notes that there are also regional differences in the usages of each term: “In California, generally, the terms Latino and Latina are most common, while on the East Coast and in Texas and New Mexico, Hispanic is more commonly used” (GENIAL, 2017). So, while these terms may have “technically correct” definitions, their everyday usage can vary for a variety of reasons, including the region in which they are used.

HISPANIC? LATINO? LATINE? CHICANO?

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY *cont.*

However, not everyone whose family hails from a Spanish-speaking country identifies with pan-ethnic labels. In a 2012 Pew Research Report, “When Labels Don’t Fit: Hispanics and Their Views of Identity,” researchers found that a majority of those interviewed for the survey (51%) reported that “they most often identify themselves by their family’s country of origin” while less than a quarter (24%) reported that “they prefer a pan-ethnic label” like Hispanic

or Latino in self-describing their identity. Because cultures and practices vary widely among Central and South American countries, some consider pan-ethnic labels flattening of difference or overly simplistic. What Latinidad means to a Bolivian immigrant versus a mixed-race Salvadoran raised in the Midwest versus first-generation Colombian raised in Miami might be barely recognizable to one another.

LATINIDAD ON CENTER STAGE

One of the most pressing questions of *Laughs in Spanish* is how characters perform and experience their Latinidad in and through the art they produce. How do Latines work to understand, reproduce and perform their identities for artistic consumers? And how do they do this in spaces that are often hostile to the idea that Latines can live complicated, three-dimensional lives as full up with joy, curiosity, and comfort as they are with exploitation, pain, and tragedy.

Though the lives and experiences of Latine peoples are as diverse as exist in any other culture, Latine actors are frequently limited to the roles of maids, gardeners, criminals or, in the case of Latinas, hyper-sexualized vixens. In 2013, actress Lupe Ontiveros created a satirical mashup video to commemorate the fact that she had played a maid on television 150 times. The actress, who graduated with degrees in social work and psychology, says that this pigeonholing represents Hollywood’s “continued perspective of who” Latines are and can be. She adds: “They don’t know we’re very much a part of this country and that we make up every part of this country” (Navarro). When Latine people are continually cast in the background and either have to support or be in servitude to white main characters we not only rob ourselves the opportunity to experience worlds of new stories, but we refuse to honor the lives of those whose stories we refuse to hear.

According to a 2022 report published by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, Latinx workers are severely underrepresented in the media workforce—which the study

defines as including print publishers; movies and music; radio and tv; and other information services. The study found that only 7% of workers in the media are Latino and less than half that are Latina. These findings represent acting roles as well as “behind the table” creative jobs. The report also notes that “on-screen opportunities for Hispanic actors are limited in both number and content...of the 100 top-grossing movies from 2007 to 2019 found...only 5 percent of speaking characters were Hispanic” (fn41 GAO). The GAO report was requested by Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas), chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus following the mass shooting in El Paso in 2019 in which 23 people (mostly Hispanic) were killed.

“You had a mad man who drove 10 hours to El Paso to kill 23 people and injured more than 20 others because he considered them ‘Hispanic invaders,’” Castro said. *“You ask yourself, how does somebody come to that conclusion? American media from hard news to Hollywood, has been running what I would consider a kind of negative ad over generations against the Latino community... Over the generations, Latinos have been disproportionately characterized as criminals, as gang members, as ex-convicts, Latinas as prostitutes, as hypersexualized on screen and on film. Those portrayals have been lopsided, they have predominated much of the media coverage.”* He said that this kind of representation affects how other Americans see Latines, *“and also, quite frankly, how [they] see themselves.”*

LATINIDAD ON CENTER STAGE Cont.



Rita Moreno, via NYTimes.com

This kind of discrimination does not stop once actors achieve conventional levels of success. In a 2008 interview with *The Miami Herald*, Rita Moreno, the first Latine actor to win an Oscar for her portrayal of Anita in the 1962 film adaptation of *West Side Story*, describes how winning the award impacted her career:

"I believed I had to be subservient to anybody who wasn't Latino. Before West Side Story I was always offered the stereotypical Latina roles. The Conchitas and Lolitas in westerns. I was always barefoot. It was humiliating, embarrassing stuff. But I did it because there was nothing else. After West Side Story, it was pretty much the same thing. A lot of gang stories."

Even when she attained a level of mainstream success that most actors can only dream of, Moreno was still relegated to the same two-dimensional roles steeped in exotified stereotype that she played at the beginning of her career.

Though these problems are glaringly obvious—perhaps to nobody moreso than Latine actors themselves—they are difficult to effectively combat on an individual level because of the too-often exploitive manner in which stories are created and produced. Take for example, how Estella describes the trajectory of her career. During a conversation with Juan, Estella explains that she has told her agent to turn down any roles where she would play a maid or drug trafficker. In her refusal to consider these roles, Estella is pushing back against what is almost certainly a deluge of offers in which she is asked to lean into racial and ethnic stereotype to continue to work.

And yet, Mari—through her repeated scornful questioning "WHAT ABOUT BATMAN?"—calls into question Estella's commitment to stated values. She straight up calls her mother a "sell out" for accepting a role as the (maybe unnamed?) radioactive maid in this fictionalized Batman movie because it paid well.

POLITICS AND ART

Throughout the play, Mari and Estella talk a lot about art's function. Even though Mari calls out her mother several times for "selling out" and derisively snorts that artists are divorced from the "real world," artists across all disciplines have demonstrated time and time again the profound impact artistic creation and stories can have on creating a better and more equitable world. Real

In 2021, Danish artist Jens Haaning was commissioned the equivalent of \$84,000 USD for a modern art piece by the Kunsten Museum of Modern Art in Aalborg. He ended up delivering two blank canvases to the museum and titled his piece "Take the Money and Run," which he explained was a commentary on poor wages for artists. Haanings pair of blank canvases sparked

considerable debate on whether or not his work could be considered art at all. While he did not produce something unique, per se, Haaning's work sparked conversations about artists' labor, compensation, and the often-exploitive relationships between living artists and their work. Perhaps Estella was referencing Haaning when she asked whether the blank walls were art?

Another notable example of this from recent years is Banksy, the infamous anonymous street artist known for his politically charged stencil drawings that have appeared on public structures around the world. In 2018, a print of one of his most famous image—"Girl with a Red Balloon"—was sold for \$1.4 million at an auction. Once the sale was completed, the print was

POLITICS AND ART Cont.

“The function of art is to do more than tell it like it is—it’s to imagine what is possible.”

-bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*

lowered through a shredder built into the frame. The print got caught halfway through the shredder and, is now estimated to be worth more than \$8 million dollars. Due to Banksy’s anonymity, we cannot interview him directly on his intentions and goals of this performance, but we can surmise his displeasure at the hyper-commodification of art and the ridiculousness of the exorbitant price tag on a piece of counterculture in one of the most monied institutions in the world.

Artists across all disciplines—Banksy, the Guerilla Girls, Tim Miller, Adrian Piper, Beatriz

González, Paz Errázuriz, Mónica Mayer to name a few—use their art to push for radical political and social change by challenging how visibility, authenticity, and the political use of art intersect.

One of the ways that artists push for change is through visibility. When she begs Mari to consider testifying on her behalf at the trial, Estella says that she’s “contributed to society through [her] film work,” by creating stories and taking up space in an all-too-often exploitive industry.

GENDER IS A CONSTRUCT

When Caro exclaims that gender is a construct as she and Juan squabble over baby business, she attempts to work through the problem countless feminists have tried to solve: even when you recognize that gendered norms, behaviors, and attitudes are socially constructed—totally made up—how do you escape? Or can you reasonably expect to escape at all in a world where behavior, clothing items, bathrooms, foods, razors, children’s toys (etc etc!) are so deeply gendered?

Another way of thinking of gender is to say it choreographs how we move through the world. In some ways it is intangible, but the cultural forces that dictate what “men,” “women,” and “the rest” are and do shape how we move through the world, can constrict which opportunities are available to us and **impact how we make choices about how we live our lives.**

The impacts of gender are perhaps no more visible than they are for mothers in the workforce. According to a report published by the American Association of University Women,

- “Mothers are 40% more likely than fathers to report that childcare issues harmed their careers
- 23% of working parents say they’ve been treated as if they aren’t committed to their work because they have kids.
- Dads with jobs remain more likely to work full time than working mothers: In 2019, 96% of employed fathers worked full time, compared with 78% of employed mothers. Among employed mothers, those with older children were more likely to work full time than those with younger children: 80% of employed mothers with children ages 6 to 17 worked full time, compared to 75% of mothers with children under age 6. Employed fathers with younger and older children were about equally likely to work full time.
- Having children limits parents from advancing in their careers: About one-in-five working parents, including 23% of working moms and 15% of working dads, say they have turned down a promotion because they were balancing work and parenting responsibilities...17% say they have been passed over for an important assignment and 16% say they have been passed over for a promotion because they have children. Mothers are more likely than fathers to report each of these experiences.”

GENDER IS A CONSTRUCT Cont.

Many studies have amply demonstrated the economic penalties for mothers working outside the home. Fathers, on the other hand, are across the board less likely to be professionally penalized by having children. This doesn't even take into account the fact that working mothers still bear the brunt of both parenting and housekeeping work even in more egalitarian heterosexual partnerships. The social expectations that mothers be constantly nurturing and emotionally available and responsive to their family's needs without substantial support from their partners, society, or the government is often too much for one person to handle. In a country where there is minimal financial support for families with young children, the choice to stay home and raise children is not one that many people can afford to entertain.

Pointing out the difficulties facing working mothers is in no way advocacy to transcend the role of "mother" or "motherhood" but is rather an acknowledgement of the realities that underscore the mother-child relationships we see in the play. Though Mari can understand on some level that Estella is more than her mother, she struggles to look beyond her mother's inability to show up for her throughout her childhood and young adulthood. Though her father also failed to support her, she can't get over the fact that Estella can't be vulnerable with or see her for who she truly is. It is not until Estella tells her daughter that she wants her to know her as more than her mother—as her own person with hopes, dreams, ambitions and flaws—can their relationship move forward in earnest.

GLOSSARY

ART BASEL

- An annual for-profit art fair staged in Basel, Switzerland; Miami Beach, Florida; and Hong Kong (Paris, France was part of the festival beginning in 2022). The festival began in Switzerland in 1970 with the goal of creating an international festival that would showcase work from around the world. According to the festival's website, over "16,000 visitors attend the inaugural show to see 90 galleries and 30 publishers from 10 countries." In the more than 50 years since its founding, the festival has expanded into a global brand attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors, art buyers, and students each year.
- For each festival cycle, galleries apply and **pay a hefty fee** in order to have their work be included in the festival. According to Observer.com, in 2019 Art Basel introduced sliding scale payment options because many smaller galleries were being priced out of participating. The fee for attending the three-day Miami festival is a substantial \$65 that grants visitors access to view (and potentially buy) hundreds of millions of dollars of artwork.



Art Basel Installation from 2022 via ArtBasel.com

BANKSY

- A pseudonym of the infamous English street artist and political activist whose identity remains anonymous. The themes in Banksy's work include anti-war, anti-fascism, anti-imperialism, and critique hypocrisy, greed and poverty. Banksy's work, with its characteristic stencil style, has appeared on public walls, bridges, and surfaces all around the world. Some of his notable works are pictured here.



Flower Thrower, Flower Bomber, Rage, or Love is in the Air, 2003, BEIT SAHOUR in the West Bank via Thursd.com

BRUJERÍA (56)

- Literally translating to "witchcraft," *brujería* is a practice of healing and intuition that is connected to the supernatural world. The practice is a fusion of different systems of beliefs that can be traced back to the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the Americas. In an attempt to convert indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans to Catholicism, the Spanish forbade engagement with indigenous religious practices or worship. As a result, there was a proliferation of syncretic religions among native and enslaved peoples that combined indigenous practices with Catholic imagery, though the distinction between religion and witchcraft has been blurred in the intervening centuries. Today, there are many regional forms of witchcraft with their own names and regional practices in the Caribbean, Mexico and Central and South America. In the United States, *brujería* is a diverse and widespread phenomenon practiced by many Latines and Latine communities. Scholar Antonio Zavaleta explains that in spaces where "many diverse Spanish-speaking cultures [interact] together it is not unusual for individuals to have multiple spiritual allegiances and follow a mixture of several practices and rites." Contemporary forms of *brujería* and spiritualism are highly individualized and often involve a blend of different forms and practices. For more information, see "Brujería Explained by Actual Brujas" by Amber C. Snider.

GLOSSARY Cont.

CALLE OCHO (11)

- A hub of Latin culture and art in the Little Havana neighborhood in Miami. Calle Ocho “is not simply a street that traverses” the Little Havana neighborhood writes scholar Stephanie Tercero, “it is a symbol of this neighborhood and hence the Cuban community in South Florida.” According to a 2015 report, 95% of the population of Little Havana is Hispanic—43% are from Cuba, 41% from Central America and 7% from South America. Each year as part of the Carnaval Miami celebration, the community hosts an annual Calle Ocho street festival with over 30 stages and hundreds of street vendors. The more than 1 million annual attendees “can expect to see people wearing colors of flags that show pride in their heritage. Calle Ocho celebrates the multicultural Hispanic community that Little Havana has become.”

CELIA CRUZ (1925–2003)

- One of the most popular Cuban-American singers of the 20th century. Known as the “Queen of Salsa,” Cruz’s music was a mixture of cha-cha, cumbia, merengue, bomba, rumba and guaracha. “Cruz embodied the spirit of *cubanidad*, or the essence of what it means to be Cuban, for millions of Cuban exiles worldwide. She brought international attention to popular Cuban music and in the process transcended racial and cultural stereotypes. As an Afro-Cuban woman, she was able to dispel misconceptions about women of Latino and African descent. Her song “*Latinos en los Estados Unidos*” (“Latinos in the United States”) illustrates Cruz’s vision of a united Latino community, focused on cultural similarities rather than differences. Her popularity coincided with a worldwide trend toward Latino ethnic pride.” (West) Some of her most popular songs include: “La vida es un carnaval;” “La Negra Tiene Tumbao;” “El Año Viejo;” “Ella Tiene Fuego.”



Celia Cruz in a studio shot from the 1950s, via NPR.org

COQUITO

- Described as “Puerto Rican egg nog,” Coquito (“Little Coconut”) is a traditional Christmas drink made with cream of coconut, rum, cinnamon and nutmeg. There rages a fierce debate on whether or not egg yolks should be included in the recipe.

GLORIA ESTEFAN (1957–)

- Seven-Time Grammy Award winning singer, Gloria Estefan is a Cuban-American actress and entrepreneur. Born in Havana, Cuba in 1957, her family immigrated to Miami. She began her career in Miami in the 1970s with the band Miami Sound Machine and was named as the third most successful Latina and 23rd Greatest Latin artist of all time in the US by *Billboard*. Some of her greatest hits include: “Conga;” “Como Me Duele Pederte;” “Hoy;” “Don’t Wanna Lose You.”



Gloria Estefan, via DOS.MyFlorida.com

GUAVA AND COLOMBIA (50)

- Guayaba (aka Guava) is a sweet fruit commonly used in Colombian cuisine to make pies, sweets and doughnuts. Other common fruits in Colombian dishes include Mango, Lulo, Tamarind, Tamarillo.

GUERRILLA GIRLS (5)

- An anonymous feminist group whose mission is to expose and fight racism and sexism in the visual art world, film, politics and pop culture. The group, which was formed in 1985 New York City, engages in “guerrilla” tactics in their fight for greater equity by staging surprise exhibitions, creating and distributing provocative posters and other community engagement tactics. From their website: The Guerrilla Girls “undermine the idea of a mainstream narrative by revealing the understory, the subtext, the overlooked, and the downright unfair.... We do...interventions and exhibitions at art museums, blasting them on their own walls for their bad behavior and discriminatory practices, including a stealth projection on the façade of the Whitney Museum about income inequality and the super rich hijacking art.”



THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN ARTIST:

Working without the pressure of success.
Not having to be in shows with men.
Having an escape from the art world in your 4 free-lance jobs.
Knowing your career might pick up after you're eighty.
Being reassured that whatever kind of art you make it will be labeled feminine.
Not being stuck in a tenured teaching position.
Seeing your ideas live on in the work of others.
Having the opportunity to choose between career and motherhood.
Not having to choke on those big cigars or paint in Italian suits.
Having more time to work after your mate dumps you for someone younger.
Being included in revised versions of art history.
Not having to undergo the embarrassment of being called a genius.
Getting your picture in the art magazines wearing a gorilla suit.

Please send \$ and comments to: **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD
Box 1050 Cooper Station NY NY 10022

Guerrilla Girls Posters via WomensHistory.
si.edu and <https://moed.online/exhibition/moed-x-guerrilla-girls/>

LAS MENINAS (13)

- Painted by Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez (-1599 - 1660), a significant painter of the Spanish Golden Age. Considered one of Velázquez’s masterpieces, *Las Meninas* is considered one of the most important pictures in Western art and depicts a scene from King Philip IV’s royal court. The most notable figure in the painting is the then-five-year-old Infanta Margaret Theresa, the first child of King Philip IV.

PASTELITOS

- Pastelitos are small Cuban pastries that are often filled with guava and cream cheese. They are often compared to empanadas but are smaller and use lighter dough.

PICADILLO

- Picadillo is a classic Cuban savory stew made with ground beef, fried potatoes



Las Meninas via https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Las_Meninas

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LAUGHS IN SPANISH

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

FURTHER READING

American Brujeria: Modern Mexican American Folk Magic by J Allen Cross

She is Cuba: A Genealogy of the Mulata Body by Melissa Blanco-Borelli

PRE-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. Why are we both attracted to and repelled by what our parents/guardians say to us? How do we find balance in finding our own path in the world and yet keeping true to their expectations?
2. What is code switching? What purpose does it serve?

POST-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. How do the scenic elements of set design, costuming, lighting, and sound help tell the story? Which are the most effective and why?
2. How do these characters find a way to define themselves? What obstacles do they face?
3. How does the celebration of Art Basel play a part in the play?
4. How would you characterize the relationship between Mari and Estelle? What do we learn about their relationship and how has their relationship changed over the years?
5. Compare the relationship between Juan and Caro and relationship between Jenny and Mari.
6. How do Juan and Caro challenge gender and societal norms? Do any of the other characters challenge gender and societal norms?
7. Why or why not is Estella a *bruja* (a witch)? Why do some of the characters think she may be a witch?
8. How does Estella's past reveal her present? Why will she not play the roles that "handle cocaine or cleaning products?"
9. What do you think happens to these characters after the play concludes?

LAUGHS IN SPANISH

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

ART CRITIQUING

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

Visual Art PG: Analyze, interpret, and make meaning of art and design critically using oral and written discourse.

Visual Art PG: Recognize, articulate, and debate that the visual arts are a means for expression.

COLLAGE AND CURATION

Materials: digital camera, scissors, glue or tape, magazines

1. Collect some objects. These objects can range from musical instruments to household items to various objects found in a classroom. Select one of the objects to use as the model.
2. Using a digital camera, take a series of pictures from different angles of the same object. The more angles, the better.
3. Print out these pictures. Select one of the pictures as the base or use a blank piece of paper or matte board.
4. Find pictures of the same object in old magazines and cut them out.
5. When you have many different pieces from the magazines and your own photographs, lay them out in a collage format to create an original cubist-inspired piece of art. When you are ready, affix these pictures to the base paper with glue or tape.
6. To present this original piece of art in a gallery, consider the following:
 - a. What **music** do you feel would enhance the presentation?
 - b. What **food or drink** should be served at the gallery opening?
 - c. Describe in detail what **clothing** you might wear to compliment the showing?

Visual Art PG: Explain, demonstrate, and interpret a range of purposes of art and design, recognizing that the making and study of art and design can be approached from a variety of viewpoints, intelligences, and perspectives.



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