

Google Arts & Culture

Learn Together: Murals in Latino Communities



[The Broadway Mural, John Valdez 1981, The Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles \(MCLA\)](#)

Using the lesson plan and Google Arts & Culture resources

This lesson plan is designed to support you as you explore Google Arts & Culture stories and exhibits related to the lesson topic. The images you will see here are just a sample of the media—texts, images, audio, and video—available to you on the Google Arts & Culture website. A parent or teacher might be guiding you through the lesson, or you might choose to complete it on your own.

All you need to access the lesson is an internet connection and a web browser. You may want to take notes, whether you do that digitally or with paper and pen.

The lesson plan has an **introduction**, which will describe the topic and provide some background information that will help you understand what you are seeing, hearing, and reading. Then the lesson will take you on a journey from one **Story** or **Exhibit** to another, fill in some details along the way, and pose **questions** that will help you focus on important ideas. Some lesson plans include a **project** related to the lesson topic. All end with a **quiz** and some **ideas for exploring the topic further**.

The lesson plan includes **questions** about the main stories and exhibits, and there is also a **quiz**. You will want to write answers to the questions in a notebook or on a piece of paper. Then you can check all your answers when you've finished the lesson.

Resources on the Google Arts & Culture website include Themes, Stories, Museum Views, items, and images.

- ❖ **Themes** bring together stories, exhibits, collections, images, audio, and video files that relate to a topic.
- ❖ In a **Story**, clicking on the arrow on the right side of a slide will move you forward. The arrow on the left side takes you back. Sometimes, clicking on the right arrow will zoom you in on an image. Just keep clicking to keep moving forward. Audio and videos on slides will play automatically. Clicking on an image title will take you to a page with more information about it.
- ❖ In **Museum Views**, you move through a 3D space. Click to move forward. Click, hold, and move the cursor left or right to turn.
- ❖ An **item** will take you to an individual **image**, where you can zoom in and sometimes read more about the artefact.



El Centro del Pueblo Handball Courts, Carlos Callejo
The Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles (MCLA)

In this lesson, you will learn about:

- ❖ how muralists from Mexico inspired artists in Latino communities in the US.
- ❖ how the shapes, colors, images, and words in murals transform walls and buildings.
- ❖ how muralists work with people in their communities to create murals.
- ❖ how artists use murals to convey big ideas, such as cultural identity, social justice, education, equality, and community empowerment.

You will:

- ❖ view some stories and exhibits about murals in Latino communities.
- ❖ answer some questions about what you have seen and read.

This lesson will take **30–45 minutes** to complete.

Learn Together: Murals in Latino Communities

In Latino communities across the United States, murals are far more than paintings on walls. They are expressions of an artistic heritage with ancient, global roots. Latino ancestors in Africa, Europe, and Mesoamerica all decorated their walls with pictures, patterns, and symbols painted in bright colors.

Modern mural painting began in Mexico, about a century ago. Diego Rivera and other artists created huge murals on public buildings in order to promote new ideas of social justice, racial equality, land reform, public health, and education. The images and ideas of the Mexican muralists are still strong influences on muralists in the United States. But US communities have added a vibrant element to mural-making: community organizing. People throughout the community, from building owners to students, work together to help artists make murals happen.

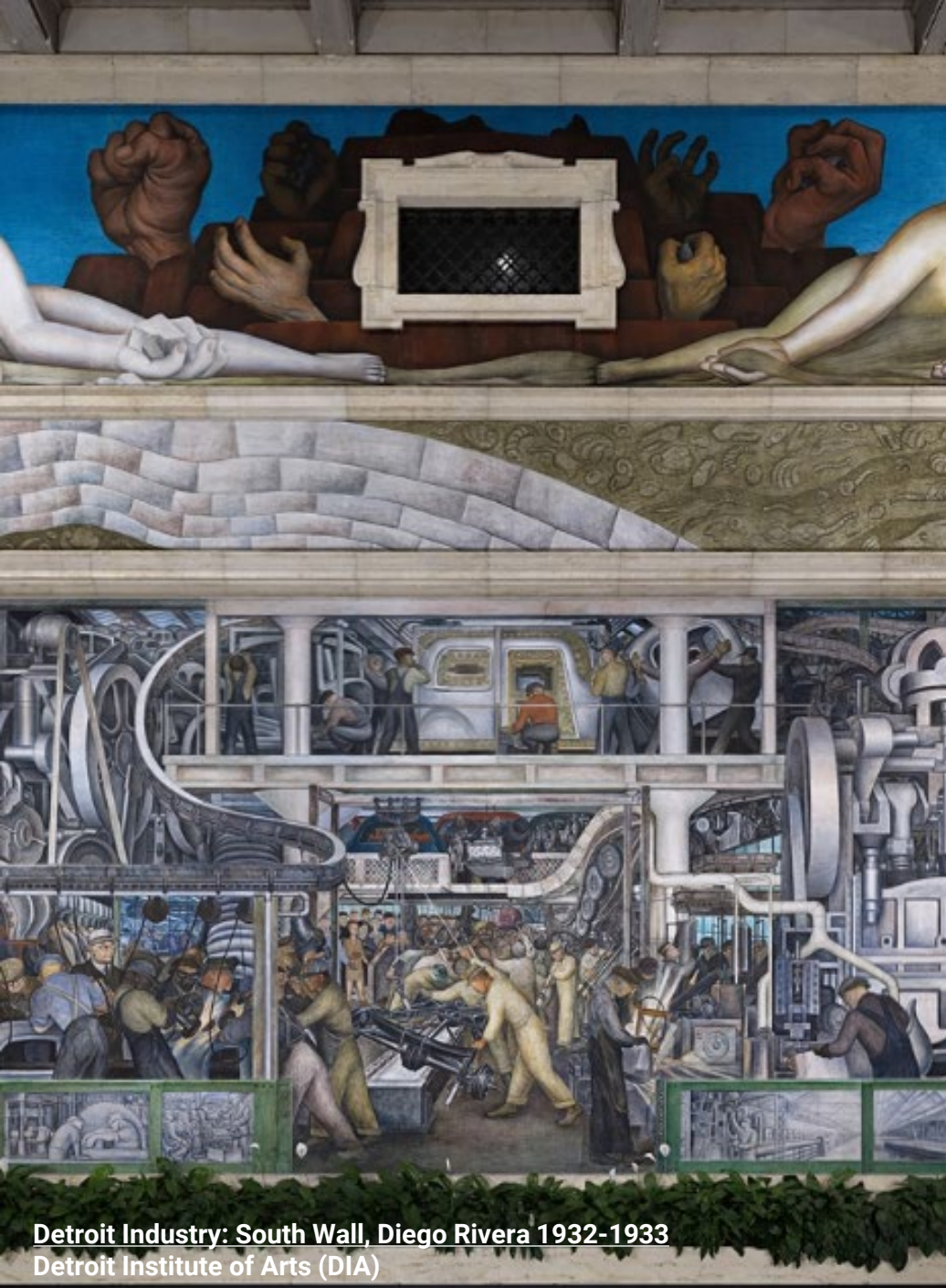
Murals in Latino communities celebrate Latino culture and identity. They tell stories from Latino history. They broadcast messages of hope and unity. They build support for causes like social justice, empowerment, and education. Murals—and the process of creating them—don't just transform buildings. Murals also change people and communities.

As you view the exhibits and stories in this lesson, think about these questions:

- ❖ What pictures, symbols, colors, shapes, and words appear on murals in Latino communities?
- ❖ What big ideas do the artists express in their murals?
- ❖ How do artists work with communities to create murals?



Aztec Pride, José de la Cruz 1992
The Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles (MCLA)



Detroit Industry: South Wall, Diego Rivera 1932-1933
Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA)

Diego Rivera's *Detroit Industry*

Mexican artist Diego Rivera (1886–1957) inspired muralists around the world, including the other artists in this lesson. Rivera painted huge murals on public buildings, promoting causes such as social justice, land reform, public health, and education. His murals contain hundreds of human figures and comment on universal themes, such as industry and nature. Rivera was especially masterful at matching his murals to their setting, so that the art and the building blend together. Rivera's murals at the Detroit Institute of Arts showcase this master muralist and his powerful imagery.

Click [here](#) to learn about Diego Rivera's *Detroit Industry*.

Then come back to answer these questions:

1. What colors and shapes did Diego Rivera use to portray the machines in *Detroit Industry*?
2. Look again at the industrial scenes. What details reveal which people are the workers and which are the bosses? From these details, what can you infer about Diego Rivera's opinions?
3. How did Rivera portray the positive and negative aspects of industry? What feelings about industry was Rivera trying to evoke? Support your opinions with details from the murals.

To learn about the making of *Detroit Industry*, click [here](#).



El Grito: The Cry for Freedom

Eduardo Carrillo (1937–1997) was proud to call himself a Chicano, a street term for Mexican American. Carrillo and other Chicano artists used their art to promote pride in their heritage and to call for social justice. In the late 1970s, Carrillo created a mural for Los Angeles, a city founded by people from Mexico. *The Cry for Freedom* celebrates an event that took place when California and Mexico were still part of the Spanish viceroyalty called New Spain.

Click [here](#) to learn about Eduardo Carrillo's mural, how it was made, and what influenced Carrillo's art.

Then come back to answer these questions:

1. What event does the mural *El Grito: The Cry for Freedom* commemorate, and why was that event a turning point in history?
2. What process did Carrillo follow to translate his design ideas into a finished mural? List the steps in the process. Base your answers on the pictures as well as the text.
3. What events and artists influenced the art of Eduardo Carrillo? Go back to the online exhibit and replay the video for clues to the answer.

To learn about Carrillo's art and legacy, click [here](#).



DC Latino Street Murals: A Virtual Tour

Washington, DC, is home to one of the most diverse Latino communities in the United States. El Salvador is the number one country of origin, followed by Mexico and other Central and South American countries, including Portuguese-speaking Brazil. The street murals in the city's Latino communities reflect that diversity. But the murals also reveal cultural unity. The art shows symbols and events from a shared history and scenes from shared everyday life. The messages on the murals express Latino artists' concern for social justice and dreams for the future.

Click [here](#) to learn about Latino street murals in Washington, DC.

Then come back to answer these questions:

1. What groups of Latinos are represented in the murals?
2. What scenes from Native American and Latin American history appear in the murals? List or sketch the visual details on which you base your answer.
3. Select one or more examples of street murals that you especially like. Explain why the murals appeal to you. You might want to view more examples of Latino street art before you answer.

To learn about Latino street murals in Los Angeles, click [here](#).



Mur Murs: Murals, Chicanas, and the Female Gaze

The Chicano art movement came alive in Los Angeles during the 1960s and 1970s, giving birth to vibrant murals across the city. Women painted some of the best of these murals, but their work often did not receive as much attention as the work of men. Since then, Chicana muralists have worked with each other and organized within their communities to help their own art—and the art of other women—to be seen and appreciated. The artists use their murals to honor their culture and history and empower women to better their own lives.

Click [here](#) to learn about Chicana muralists in Los Angeles.

Then come back to answer these questions:

1. What are the names of the women whose murals appear in this online exhibit?
2. What scenes from the history of Los Angeles did the muralists portray? Support your answer with notes or sketches of details from the murals.
3. Who helped the artists create their murals, and who created obstacles and conflicts for the artists? How were these conflicts resolved?

Quiz

Read the questions and write your answer in your notebook or on a piece of paper.

1. Who was Diego Rivera?
2. How many walls at the Detroit Institute of Arts are covered by Rivera's mural *Detroit Industry*?
3. How does Eduardo Carrillo's *El Grito: The Cry for Freedom* differ from the other murals in this lesson?
4. What is the Chicano Art movement?
5. On what kinds of structures do the Latino murals in Washington, DC, appear?
6. Who helped the artists create the murals in Washington, DC's, Latino communities?
7. Who are two women artists whose murals celebrate the history of Los Angeles?
8. How did people from diverse communities contribute to murals of Los Angeles history?

Explore Further

This lesson has taken you on brief tours of murals in Latino communities in the United States. It has also introduced you to some basic ideas that are relevant to this topic. To learn more about Latino murals, click [here](#) and scroll down to the section "Awe-inspiring murals."



It's Your Turn!

Mural Project In this lesson, you learned about murals in the Latino community. You saw that murals are large projects that involve many people. But a mural usually begins in the brain of an individual artist. So the next great muralist could be you! Here's how to start a mural project.

1. Select and sketch your site. Look for a wall, fence, or building that you think would look better with a mural on it. For your first mural, choose a smaller site, such as a garage door, section of fence, or storefront. Make a rough drawing of the site.
2. Trace or copy your rough sketch of the site. Make several copies. Try out your ideas for the mural on the sketch. Experiment with lines, colors, shapes, images, and words until you are satisfied with your design.
3. Create a photo model. This step is an option if you have access to a smartphone, computer, and printer. Take pictures of the actual site. Enlarge and print the pictures. Make multiple copies. Then draw or paint your design ideas on the printed pages.
4. Create a cartoon. A cartoon is a detailed drawing of the mural. Most artists draw smaller versions of the cartoon first and then enlarge the cartoon section by section. The final cartoon is the same size as the site and is usually drawn on large rolls of paper or canvas.

Answers

Diego Rivera's *Detroit Industry*

1. The machines in the mural are made of sharp geometric shapes. The colors of the machines are white, grey, and black.
2. The bosses stand out from the workers because of their formal black and white clothing. Rivera's workers look strong and noble and the bosses look proud or superior. The viewer can infer that Rivera took the side of the workers over their bosses.
3. Rivera has mixed feelings about industry. He sees the beauty in industrial workers combining their energy to create powerful objects. But the figures at the tops of the murals, which represent nature, project sorrow over what might be destroyed.

El Grito: The Cry for Freedom

1. The mural commemorates the 1810 revolt of Father Hidalgo, in which he cried for the peasants to revolt against Spain. It was the first public call for revolt, and it led eventually to Mexico's independence in 1821.
2. Carrillo studied and measured the site. He made sketches of his ideas and then enlarged the sketches to fit. He created a large actual-size cartoon of the design and tried it out onsite. He revised the design, transferred it to tiles, painted the tiles, and attached the tiles to the wall.
3. Eduardo Carrillo was inspired by the social revolts of the 1960s against the Vietnam War and in favor of civil rights and social justice. He and his group of muralists (*Los cuatro*) followed the techniques and goals of the great muralists of Mexico (*Los tres*).

DC Latino Street Murals: A Virtual

1. The murals portray people from Brazil, Colombia, and Central and South America. Murals also portray groups of people in scenes from everyday life.
2. The murals show statues and monuments from ancient Mexico, Central America, and Peru. They also show the arrival of European ships and the transition from traditional to modern life.
3. Answers will vary.

Mur Murs: Murals, Chicanas, and the Female Gaze

1. Judy Baca, Judith Hernández, Barbara Carrasco, Yreine Cervantez, Kristy Sandoval
2. Answers will vary. Scenes include the founding of Los Angeles, Spanish pueblos and missions, California statehood, the rise of Hollywood, early rock 'n' roll stars, and portraits of community leaders.
3. The artists had help from other artists and from groups of young people in the community. People from diverse community groups contributed their stories. The artists were hindered by censorship from sponsors and by delays in getting permissions, credits, and funds. Some issues were resolved by having public collections acquire the murals.

Answers

Quiz

1. Diego Rivera was a Mexican artist who painted large murals and influenced muralists around the world, including in the US Latino community.
2. Four: the North, South, East, and West walls
3. Carrillo's *El Grito* is made of ceramic tiles, while all the other murals in the lesson are painted.
4. The Chicano Art Movement is an effort led by artists, focusing on cultural identity, social justice, and community organizing.
5. Latino murals in Washington, DC, appear on apartment buildings, retaining walls, schools, and community centers.
6. Artists in DC's Latino communities created murals with the help of community groups, especially school and youth groups.
7. Judy Baca and Barbara Carrasco painted large murals celebrating Los Angeles history.
8. People from diverse communities contributed their oral and written personal stories to help the artists create scenes for their murals.