

In Creative Harmony: Three Artistic Partnerships



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This catalogue accompanies the Blanton exhibition *In Creative Harmony: Three Artistic Partnerships*. Arshile Gorky and Isamu Noguchi; José Guadalupe Posada and Artemio Rodríguez; Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse (February 16, 2025–July 20, 2025).

BLANTON EDITIONS



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Director's Foreword

Simone J. Wicha

Director, Blanton Museum of Art

In Creative Harmony: Three Artistic Partnerships takes a unique approach to the subject of artistic inspiration. The exhibition explores the relationships between three pairs of artists: friends and innovators in abstract painting and sculpture Arshile Gorky and Isamu Noguchi; intergenerational Mexican printmakers José Guadalupe Posada and Artemio Rodríguez; and mother and daughter artists Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse. Even as they formed new visual languages and individual identities, the featured artists were inspired by shared ideas, techniques, and traditions. Placing the work of one artist in dialogue with that of another illuminates the aesthetic, conceptual, and personal connections between their authors. Each section of *In Creative Harmony* was organized by a different Blanton curator, and the central relationship of each partnership is distinct. Yet as a whole, this three-part exhibition celebrates the fruitful impact of finding a kindred spirit in the creative process.

Arshile Gorky and Isamu Noguchi: Outside In traces the careers and friendship of the Armenian American painter Arshile Gorky and the Japanese American sculptor Isamu Noguchi. Between the late 1920s and 1940s, both artists developed mature, distinctive styles of abstraction evoking organic forms, shaped by their engagements with Surrealism and observations of the natural world. They became friends through their shared artistic interests, as well as a mutual sense of otherness. *Outside In* was curated by former associate curator of collections and exhibitions Claire Howard during her tenure at the Blanton. Her essay in the exhibition catalogue contextualizes Gorky and Noguchi's friendship and creative trajectories, from early attempts to break with modernist forebears and find their own voices via abstraction in the 1920s and 1930s, through their artistic breakthroughs,

contact with Surrealism, and roles in the nascent New York School in the 1940s, before Gorky's untimely death in 1948. Howard explores Gorky's and Noguchi's identities and place within the art historical canon, as well as the ways that their individual visual languages synthesize the external world and personal experience, revealing the resonances and differences that continue to make these artists compelling and pivotal figures in twentieth-century American art.

José Guadalupe Posada and Artemio Rodríguez: Calaveras y Corazones presents two masterful Mexican printmakers in virtual dialogue. Separated by a century, they are nevertheless united by their use of caustic critique and dark humor to deliver sharp social and political commentary. Both artists also anchor their subjects within their respective contemporary contexts, celebrating their communities' histories, heritage, and popular traditions. A witness to both Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship and the early years of the Mexican Revolution, Posada was one of the most radical printmakers in Mexico in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His predilection for grinning skeletons and stinging satire earned him the moniker, "The Mexican Goya." As a young immigrant finding his artistic voice in Los Angeles in the 1990s, Rodríguez embraced Posada's precedents as a bridge, connecting him not only to historical and contemporary Chicano art, but also linking him to shared traditions and common roots within Californian communities. In his works, Rodríguez satirized contemporary debates, from immigration to the Gulf War; he invented a radically original artistic language by splicing inspiration from Posada with elements of Chicano and European medieval visual cultures. Curated by Vanessa Davidson, research curator of Latin American art, this exhibition pairs the works of Posada and Rodríguez for the first time. In the

text accompanying a rare interview with Rodríguez, Davidson expands upon the legacies of satire and celebration that visually and conceptually unite these two artists' practices, resonating across 100 years.

Mother and daughter artists Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse come from a long lineage of Kha' p'o artists, a Tewa-speaking Pueblo community in northern New Mexico. The materials the artists use, the symbols in their works, and the stories they share reflect ancestral knowledge and respond to contemporary experiences. *Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse: Lifelong* presents a selection of sculptures by Nora and paintings by Eliza, as well as a new series of prints based on collaborative mixed-media drawings—the first works of this nature created by the artists for a museum exhibition. *Lifelong* was curated by Hannah Klemm, curator of modern and contemporary art. In an interview for this catalogue, Nora and Eliza discuss their familial and ancestral legacy, the materiality of their community, and the power of creativity to transform our collective future and relationship to the Earth.

The belief that artistic connection can fuel the creative spirit is at the core of *In Creative Harmony*, and we are very grateful to the featured artists and lending institutions for sharing their work with our audiences. We thank Nora Naranjo Morse, Eliza Naranjo Morse, and Artemio Rodríguez, as well as the Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, for providing their works to be included in the exhibition. We also greatly appreciate the Arshile Gorky Foundation for facilitating the inclusion of Gorky's work in this catalogue. We acknowledge and thank the following lenders for loaning works from their collections to this exhibition: Amon Carter Museum of American Art;

Baltimore Museum of Art; LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin; David Owsley Museum of Art, Ball State University; Fleming Museum of Art, University of Vermont; the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia; Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College; Gertrude Stein; Harry Ransom Center; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Menil Collection; Mexico-Arte Museum; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Nasher Sculpture Center; and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

At the Blanton, I want to recognize Carter Foster, chief curator and deputy director of collections, and Cassandra Smith, director of collections and exhibitions, who helped think through how to cohesively present a three-part exhibition while still maintaining the distinctive artistic and curatorial voice of each section. Carter was key in identifying the strategy of looking more broadly at the theme of collaboration by using Claire Howard's research on Gorky and Noguchi as a springboard for a larger exhibition, and later exploring various possible artist partnerships with Vanessa Davidson and Hannah Klemm.

As such, *In Creative Harmony* was a major cross-curatorial collaboration. The breadth of the exhibition is a testament to the depth of expertise in the Blanton's curatorial team, and the museum's commitment to advancing new perspectives on modern and contemporary art of the Americas. It is also a reflection of the power of creativity, which can flourish through relationships and connection.



Arshile Gorky and Isamu Noguchi: Outside In

Claire Howard

From the late 1920s through the 1940s, painter Arshile Gorky (circa 1904–1948) and sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988) developed distinctive abstract vocabularies grounded in the natural world or evoking organic forms. At the same time, the artists established a friendship informed not only by their work, but also by a shared sense of national dislocation and otherness. The tension between outside and inside defines their individual visual languages, which reconcile nature, memory, and personal myth. It also characterizes their multilayered identities and independent engagements with Surrealism and abstraction, and continues to shape Gorky's and Noguchi's receptions today.

It is hard to ignore the biographical resonances between Gorky and Noguchi, in addition to their shared artistic context and creative trajectories. Noguchi indicated that it was their similar backgrounds—particularly a feeling of national alienation or otherness—as well as their creative identities that undergirded their friendship: “It was a kind of bond between us, not being entirely American. . . . We were friends and we had a good deal in common because we were artists and we had a certain loneliness here, which we shared, and art was something we could talk about. It was the thing that kept us going.”¹ Both spent their formative years elsewhere—Gorky in Ottoman Armenia, and Noguchi in Japan—estranged from their fathers. In the United States, each undertook a self-reinvention or self-mythologizing, and grappled with his own identity as well as the ways others perceived him. Each would experience the trauma of persecution and bigotry based on his ethnicity: as a teenager, Gorky saw his mother starve to death in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide, while Noguchi became pointedly aware of his own precarity as a Japanese

American and spent six voluntary but disillusioning months in an Arizona incarceration camp during World War II. These personal histories informed the development of each artist's own style, which unfolded in a shared milieu that began in Greenwich Village in the mid- to late 1920s and continued through the Great Depression and World War II. Each achieved artistic breakthroughs and success as American affiliates of Surrealism and vanguard members of the emerging New York School in the mid-1940s, before Gorky's suicide in 1948.

Beginnings

Arshile Gorky was born Vosdanig Adoian in Khorkom (now Dilkaya, Turkey), a rural village in the ethnically Armenian and Kurdish province of Van on the eastern border of the Ottoman Empire.² In 1906, his father, Setrag Adoian, immigrated to the United States, leaving his family behind shortly before Gorky's mother, Shushan Der Marderosian Adoian, gave birth to Gorky's younger sister, Vartoosh. With the start of World War I in 1914, Turkish persecution of Armenians, who were seen as a foreign-aligned internal threat to the declining empire, escalated into deportations and mass killings.³ Gorky's family was first displaced on a 100-mile forced march in 1915 and then subjected to Turkish food blockades during the exceptionally cold winter of 1918–19. In March 1919, Shushan became one of the 200,000 Armenians who starved or succumbed to disease that winter. A year later, Gorky and Vartoosh arrived at Ellis Island, and settled with family in Watertown, Massachusetts, an Armenian enclave near Boston.⁴ The young artist visited local museums and studied art at the New School of Design, soon becoming an instructor. Shortly before moving to New York in late 1924, he signed a painting of

Boston's Park Street Church "Gorky, Arshele," his first use of the pseudonym that underwent several permutations before he arrived at "Arshile Gorky" in 1932. In New York, Gorky continued to build his own mythology, claiming to be a cousin of the Russian author Maxim Gorky.⁵ Though he titled a mid-1930s series of paintings and drawings after Khorkom and made features of the Van countryside and other childhood memories central to his mature work, Gorky insisted that he was born in Russia or Georgia. He does not appear to have told close friends—including Noguchi—or his wife (whom he called "Mougouch," an Armenian term of endearment), about his experience of the Armenian Genocide.⁶ They were shocked to discover the truth after his death. Gorky's obscuring of his Armenian heritage perhaps reflects an attempt to suppress the trauma of the genocide and distance himself from the stigma attached to "starving Armenian" refugees at the time, or more closely align himself with the European artistic tradition of which he aspired to be part.⁷ Of this self-fashioning, Elaine de Kooning later wrote, "A biography, as Arshile saw it, like a beard or a mustache, was something convenient to hide behind."⁸

Even as he taught students including Mark Rothko, Gorky embarked on a series of informal apprenticeships to the virtuosos of modern art. Believing that an artist's discovery of their unique style could come only after thoroughly studying the innovations of other painters, he collected art magazines and made frequent visits to museums and galleries. Among these was A. E. Gallatin's Gallery of Living Art at New York University, one of the first public collections of European modern art in the country, located just three blocks from his Washington Square studio.⁹ Gorky made his own compositions in the style of artists such as Paul Cézanne and Pablo Picasso to master their techniques.

The thickly painted *Still Life (Composition with Vegetables)* (circa 1928) adopts the colorful palette and flattened, overlapping forms of Picasso's Synthetic Cubist still lifes. (Plate 1) Gorky made no secret of his admiration for these forerunners; in a 1931 essay about his friend Stuart Davis's work, Gorky wrote, "Has there in six centuries been better art than Cubism? No. Centuries will go past—artists of gigantic stature will draw positive elements from Cubism."¹⁰ Meeting gallerist Julien Levy in the winter of 1932, Gorky explained, "I was with Cézanne for a long time, and now naturally I am with Picasso." Levy replied that he would show Gorky's work "someday, when you are with Gorky."¹¹

Isamu Noguchi was born in Los Angeles to Léonie Gilmour, an Irish American writer, editor, and translator.¹² His father, Japanese poet Yonejirō (Yone) Noguchi, had returned to Japan three months earlier. In early 1907, Léonie and her child—to whom Yone belatedly gave the name "Isamu"—arrived in Japan. Léonie and Isamu lived largely independent of Yone in various locations in Yokohama, Tokyo, and the seaside town of Chigasaki, and the artist grew up as "Isamu Gilmour." He returned alone to the US in 1918 and briefly attended the progressive Interlaken School in Indiana before graduating from La Porte High School. In 1922, he apprenticed with sculptor Gutzon Borglum before moving to New York to begin premedical studies at Columbia University. He continued to study sculpture at the Leonardo da Vinci Art School under Onorio Ruotolo and left Columbia to devote himself to sculpture full-time in 1924. With the launch of his art career, he began to refer to himself as "Isamu Noguchi," aligning his professional identity with a father from whom he would remain largely estranged.¹³ Noguchi exhibited his academic-style sculpture and executed commissioned portraits of notable figures from the arts and society, a practice that would

sustain him over the next two decades.

An encounter with the work of Romanian sculptor Constantin Brâncuși in a November 1926 exhibition at the Brummer Gallery in New York effected a major shift in Noguchi's work.¹⁴ In 1927, he traveled to Paris on a Guggenheim Fellowship. There, he received an introduction to Brâncuși and worked for several months as his studio assistant. Brâncuși's insistence upon direct carving in stone and wood, without first modeling a design in clay or wax, had revolutionized modern sculpture and centered a respect for materials' natural properties that would define Noguchi's later work. Brâncuși's abstracted forms likewise resonated with Noguchi: "Brâncuși, like the Japanese, would take the quintessence of nature and distill it."¹⁵

After leaving Brâncuși's workshop, Noguchi began to create abstract sculptures in wood, metal, and stone that echoed the simplified, organic forms of the older sculptor's work. In 1928, he made *Leda* (Plate 2), a response to Brâncuși's sculpture of the same title (Figure 1), the bronze surface of which Noguchi had been assigned to polish weekly.¹⁶ Both sculptors were inspired by the Greek myth in which Zeus disguises himself as a swan to take sexual advantage of Leda, Queen of Sparta, but Noguchi chose to construct his Leda from sheet metal—a material Brâncuși did not use—as a "way of getting away from him."¹⁷ In the late 1920s, Gorky and Noguchi each sought to move through and past the giants of modernism and toward his own distinct vocabulary.

Experiments in Abstraction

In 1930, the artists were included in the Museum of Modern Art's *An Exhibition of the Work of 46*



Figure 1. Constantin Brâncuși, *Leda*, 1926, polished bronze (sand casting), nickel silver, 53 × 79 × 24 cm, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, Bequest of Constantin Brâncuși, 1957.

Painters and Sculptors under 35 Years of Age, but neither yet demonstrated artistic independence. Noguchi exhibited *Leda* and three figurative sculptures, while Gorky (described as a onetime student of Wassily Kandinsky) showed three Cubist still lifes.¹⁸ As the decade unfolded, however, both Gorky and Noguchi further developed their creative identities through continued experimentation with abstraction. This was fostered in part by their shared artistic circles, which centered on the bohemian Greenwich Village tavern Romany Marie's. Here, they found a community of artists and intellectuals committed to bringing new theories and political commitments to bear on the next stage of modernism. While the two artists may have met at this time, other relationships appear to have taken precedence.¹⁹ Willem de Kooning, another friend, dubbed Gorky, John Graham, and Stuart Davis "the Three Musketeers."²⁰ The older, Kiev-born Graham, whose influential *System and Dialectics of Art* (1937) emphasized the centrality of abstraction and reliance on the unconscious, was a crucial link between American artists and the European avant-garde and mentor to Gorky.²¹

Noguchi befriended visionary architect, theorist, and designer R. Buckminster Fuller at Romany Marie's in 1929.²² After visits to Paris, the Soviet Union, and China, and an extended stay in Japan during which he saw his father for the first time in over fourteen years, in 1931 Noguchi returned to New York and began a series of collaborations with Fuller. Noguchi's sculpture *Miss Expanding Universe* (1932) reflects Fuller's futurism. (Plate 4) Fuller titled the work, likely in reference to astronomer Edwin Hubble's 1929 discovery that the universe is expanding in all directions.²³ Its soaring form suggests optimism for limitless human potential, "everything expanding in spite of the Depression," Noguchi later wrote.²⁴ Like Fuller's torpedo-shaped

Dymaxion car, which Noguchi first helped model in plaster, the sculpture was cast in lightweight, shiny aluminum.²⁵ The abstracted female form relates to the wool jersey sack costumes designed by Noguchi and fabricated by his half-sister, dancer Ailes Gilmour Spinden, for dancer and choreographer Ruth Page. Worn in her 1932 performance *Expanding Universe*, the costume extended and highlighted Page's bodily movements.²⁶ (Figure 2) In 1936, the Museum of Modern Art's Alfred H. Barr Jr. included *Miss Expanding Universe* in his landmark exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, the first time Noguchi would show alongside the Surrealists. Likely inspired by its dreamlike appearance of flight, Barr included the sculpture as an example of "artists independent of the Dada and Surrealist movements" but nonetheless aligned with their interest in the fantastic or marvelous.²⁷

Back in New York, Noguchi also confronted what he called "the same old problem of making a living."²⁸ Like many of their peers, Gorky and Noguchi turned to public art commissions from the government and businesses to sustain themselves during the Great Depression. Although many New Deal-era art projects utilized a figurative style thought best to communicate with the public, the artists demonstrated increasing confidence and commitment to abstraction in their proposals, though this often led to rejection or criticism of their designs.

Gorky provocatively condemned the dominant style of Social Realism as "poor art for poor people."²⁹ Instead, in 1934 he submitted to the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) a mural proposal based on his extensive series of drawings *Nighttime*, *Enigma*, and *Nostalgia* (1929–circa 1936), one of which he apparently gave to Noguchi. (Plate 3) The series demonstrates an early interest in Surrealism through its mysterious arrangements of



Figure 2. Ruth Page wearing a sack costume designed by Isamu Noguchi, 1932, The Noguchi Museum Archives, 01455.

abstract, organic forms, architecture, and objects in compartmentalized compositions inspired by Giorgio de Chirico's *The Fatal Temple* (1914), part of Gallatin's collection.³⁰ Gorky was subsequently dropped from the program, but in the following year, he was assigned to the Mural Division of the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) Federal Art Project.³¹ In 1936, he undertook an ambitious aviation-themed mural cycle for the Newark Airport Administration Building. Of the mural's ten oil-on-canvas panels, only two survive today.³² *Study for 'Mechanics of Flying'* represents one of two panels Gorky produced for the east wall of his Newark Airport mural cycle, which, art historian Jody Patterson writes, "synthesize[d] observation and abstraction" to produce a modernist form of realism.³³ (Plate 6) In a statement on the murals, the artist described his use of "morphic shapes" to isolate aviation tools such as a thermometer, hygrometer, and map from their usual environment and give them compositional emphasis on par with their importance for flight.³⁴ The murals were immediately controversial, requiring Barr to defend them as visually suited to their subject. "One of the great mysteries of modern life," he wrote, "is the enthusiasm for streamlined trains, automobiles and airplanes shown by people who at the same time are timid when confronted by equally modern painting."³⁵

Noguchi wanted "to find a way of sculpture that was humanly meaningful without being realistic, at once abstract and socially relevant," a guiding principle for the rest of his career.³⁶ In early 1934, he submitted to the New York City Parks Commission and PWAP proposals for three large-scale public artworks: the earthworks *Monument to the Plow* and *Play Mountain*, and the sculpture *Monument to Ben Franklin*. (Plate 5) These works' modernist vocabulary would underscore the resonance of

American history and ideals in contemporary life, but the PWAP committee's desire for "work of a more purely sculptural character" led to Noguchi's dismissal from the program after only two months.³⁷ *Monument to the Plow* and *Play Mountain*, as well as a sculpture honoring Carl Mackley—a Philadelphia hosiery factory worker killed during a strike, designed in the same year—were never realized. *Monument to Ben Franklin* would not be completed for more than fifty years. The stainless-steel sculpture memorializes Franklin without depicting him directly; a jagged bolt of lightning connects a kite to a key at the work's base, alluding to Franklin's discovery of electricity, and, like Gorky's Newark murals, rejecting illustration in favor of objects isolated and made monumental in reflection of their significance to the subject. Noguchi modified the design slightly before realizing it in Philadelphia in 1984. (Figure 3)

Notably, Noguchi placed his public art proposals on the same artistic level as his sculpture, and exhibited his four rejected models for the above-mentioned works in his solo exhibition at Marie Harriman Gallery in 1935 (as he later would his maquette for *Monument to Heroes*).³⁸ Unsuccessful in securing these public commissions, the artist instead focused on creating his first set design for Martha Graham's dance company and making commissioned portraits in Hollywood before realizing his first public artwork, *History Mexico* (1936), a concrete and colored cement relief mural in Mexico City.³⁹ This anti-fascist, pro-labor mural was a notably forceful political statement by Noguchi. Three years later, he and Gorky would be inspired to create their only known collaborative artworks in response to a cataclysmic global event.

Figure 3. Isamu Noguchi with *Bolt of Lightning... A Memorial to Benjamin Franklin*, Philadelphia, 1984.



Collaborative Drawings

After Noguchi's return from Mexico, his friendship with Gorky deepened, and the two artists frequently visited museums together, where Gorky would give impromptu lectures on his favorite paintings.⁴⁰ On September 3, 1939, Gorky, Noguchi, and Romanian-born artist De Hirsh Margules (1899–1965) were together in Noguchi's studio when they heard President Franklin D. Roosevelt's radio address regarding the outbreak of war in Europe, two days after the Nazi invasion of Poland.⁴¹ In response, the artists produced at least four known collaborative drawings, using Noguchi's preexisting drawings, crayon, pencil, India ink, and sealing wax. Three of these works' locations are known today; a fourth is known only through a photograph. (Plates 7-10, Figure 4)

These layered, improvised compositions suggest the artists' adaptation of the Surrealist "exquisite corpse," an updated parlor game in which multiple participants create a sentence or drawing

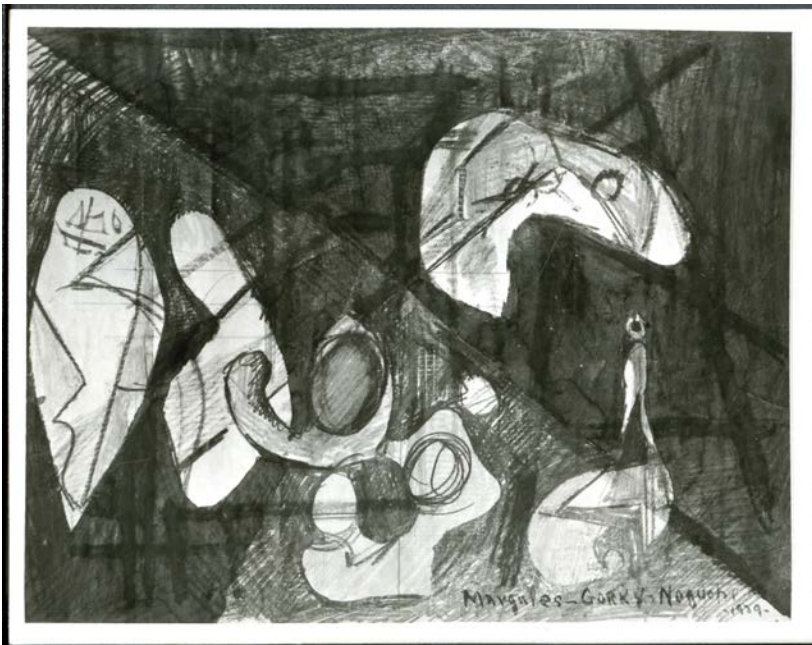


Figure 4. Photograph of Arshile Gorky, De Hirsh Margules, and Isamu Noguchi, *Invasion of Poland by Hitler*, collaborative drawing, 1939 (present location unknown), The Noguchi Museum Archives, 06851.

without seeing the previous player's contribution, creating unexpected juxtapositions of words and imagery via chance.⁴² The Museum of Modern Art's *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (which also included Noguchi's *Miss Expanding Universe*) had presented five such collaborations by artists including Yves Tanguy, Joan Miró, André Breton, Valentine Hugo, and Max Ernst, giving American audiences an opportunity to see the technique firsthand. The agitated lines in Gorky, Noguchi, and Margules' drawings, and the appearance of Gorky's handprints in red sealing paste on one work, also express the artists' distress and anxiety in response to the rise of Nazism and the specter of wartime violence and displacement. All three artists' distinct experiences of discrimination and the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment in Depression-era New York informed their antiwar statement.⁴³ Gorky's traumatic experience of the Armenian Genocide also made him pointedly aware of the stakes in this growing conflict.⁴⁴ Seen together, these fraught abstract drawings represent a rerouting of the Surrealist game into a collaborative artistic statement of mutual support in the face of catastrophe.

Psychological Landscapes

In the early 1940s, Gorky and Noguchi were increasingly linked, personally and professionally. They both showed in the 1940 *Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Art* at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The Museum of Modern Art acquired their work in 1941 and subsequently included it in *New Acquisitions and Extended Loans: Cubist and Abstract Art* (1942).⁴⁵ They also shared friends including mosaic artist and patron Jeanne Reynal, who in 1941 arranged for Gorky's first solo museum exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art.⁴⁶ In July, Gorky resigned from the WPA and he,

Noguchi, and Gorky's fiancée, Agnes "Mougouch" Magruder, embarked on a cross-country road trip from New York to California for the exhibition.⁴⁷ The group passed through the Mojave Desert and Grand Canyon before arriving in Los Angeles, where Noguchi remained, while Mougouch and Gorky headed north to San Francisco.

Both Noguchi and Mougouch recalled the lively philosophical debates, friendly competition, and bickering between the two artists on their drive, as they debated the presence of forms in the clouds. "We had a terrible argument about it because I said, 'That's just a cloud,' and he said, 'Oh no, don't you see that old peasant woman up there?'" Noguchi remembered. "And then he'd go on about his childhood recollections, which seemed to tinge everything he saw. . . . Nature didn't look the same to him as it did to somebody else."⁴⁸ This fusion of abstracted natural forms with personal memories became a turning point in Gorky's development of his own visual language. The sun-drenched palette of Gorky's *Mojave* (1941–42), painted upon his and Mougouch's return to New York as a married couple, represents a singular moment of engagement with the Western landscape. (Plate 11) Its boot- or boomerang-like organic forms resonate with those of Gorky's contemporaneous *Garden in Sochi* paintings and earlier *Khorkom* series, which reference imagery from Gorky's childhood village. "I like the wheatfields the plough the apricots the shape of apricots those flirts of the sun," Gorky wrote, describing *Garden in Sochi* for the Museum of Modern Art in 1942.⁴⁹ (Figure 5) *Mojave's* composition, however, suggests fore-, middle-, and background more than most of the *Sochi* and *Khorkom* paintings do, anticipating instead the deeper spaces of the nature-based abstractions inspired by the Connecticut and Virginia countryside that would mark Gorky's breakthrough in the

following years.

Noguchi was still living in California on December 7, 1941, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, precipitating the US entry into World War II. Shortly after the attack, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, resulting in the forced removal and incarceration of over 120,000 people of Japanese descent—two-thirds of them US citizens—from the West Coast to camps in the Southwest.⁵⁰ While as a resident of New York Noguchi was not subject to the order, the rise of anti-Asian bigotry caused a profound shift in his sense of self and identification with the Nisei, or American-born children of Japanese immigrants.⁵¹ It also galvanized Noguchi politically; he co-organized the advocacy groups Nisei Writers and Artists

Figure 5. Arshile Gorky, *Garden in Sochi*, 1941, oil on canvas, 44 1/4 × 62 1/4 in. (112.4 × 158.1 cm), Museum of Modern Art, New York, Purchase Fund and gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wolfgang S. Schwabacher (by exchange), 335.1942.



Mobilization for Democracy and, later, the Arts Council of the Japanese American Committee for Democracy, and testified at a San Francisco hearing of the House Committee to Investigate National Defense Migration.⁵² In an act of solidarity with his fellow Japanese Americans, in May 1942, Noguchi voluntarily entered the incarceration camp at Poston, Arizona, with hopes of improving life for the prisoners through traditional Japanese craft workshops and landscape designs.⁵³ As he explained in his unpublished essay, “I Become a Nisei,” submitted to *Reader’s Digest* in October 1942:

To be hybrid anticipates the future. This is America, the nation of all nationalities. . . . For us to fall into the Fascist line of race bigotry is to defeat our unique personality and strength. . . . Because of my peculiar background I felt this war very keenly and wished to serve the cause of democracy in the best way that seemed open to me. . . . A haunting sense of unreality, of not quite belonging, which has always bothered me made me seek for an answer among the Nisei.⁵⁴

Unable to effect the change he had hoped for and distrusted by prisoners and administrators alike, Noguchi left the camp, depressed and disillusioned, six months later.⁵⁵ In his new studio at 33 MacDougal Alley in Greenwich Village, he began a series of relief sculptures in white magnesite, a moldable cement. These works, called *Lunars*, emerged from Noguchi’s time in the Arizona desert, which he described as “a moonscape of the mind.”⁵⁶ They evoke both a desire to escape to other realms and the feeling of being treated as “alien” in one’s own country. *Yellow Landscape* (1943) recalls the racist notion of the Yellow Peril, which cast Asian immigrants as an untrustworthy internal threat. (Plate 12) Its delicate arrangement of dangling objects suggests the feeling of precarity

the artist identified at the root of his and the Nisei’s experience. *This Tortured Earth* (1942–43, originally in magnesite, later cast in bronze) imbues a landscape with psychology and rage, mapping the cost of war on a broader scale. (Plate 13) “*This Tortured Earth* was my concept for a large area to memorialize the tragedy of war. There is injury to the earth itself. The war machine, I thought, would be excellent equipment for sculpture, to bomb it into existence,” Noguchi later wrote.⁵⁷ The strafed landscape resembles torn flesh, or, as Amy Lyford describes, the folded forms of labia, reinforcing subconscious connections between the body and the earth.⁵⁸ Likewise, *Lunar Landscape (Woman)* (1944), an illuminated sculpture shown in the Surrealists’ 1947 exhibition in Paris, implies both a topography and the female body through protruding forms, receding voids, and an evocative slit, charging the landscape with erotic energy.⁵⁹ (Plate 14) These ghostly landscapes thus express both Noguchi’s psychology as he processed his experience in Poston, as well as Surrealist ideas of subjectivity, metamorphosis, and the unconscious increasingly in the air in New York due to the group’s wartime exile there.

In early 1944, at the request of Reynal, Noguchi introduced Gorky to Surrealist leader André Breton who, with much of his circle, had fled Paris after the Nazi occupation.⁶⁰ Breton quickly claimed Gorky for Surrealism, and as Gorky prepared for his debut solo show with Julien Levy’s gallery in March 1945, he and Breton devised a collaborative free-association process for titling his new paintings. From a conversation with Gorky about each work’s origins—often childhood memories—Breton would coin a poetic phrase, such as *How My Mother’s Embroidered Apron Unfolds in My Life* or *The Love of a New Gun* (both 1944).⁶¹ (Plate 16) Gorky’s widow, Mougouch, recalled, “Words, explanations

and titles did not interest [Gorky] unless they aroused some remembered feeling.”⁶²

In the paintings he made that year, Gorky melded direct observation of the Virginia countryside with childhood memories and the Surrealist interest in the unconscious, eroticism, and automatically generated imagery—treating nature, Breton wrote in his essay for the Levy exhibition, “as a cryptogram.”⁶³ (Figure 6) *The Horns of the Landscape* (1944) features delicately traced biomorphic forms, suggesting genitalia or internal organs as much as leaves or opening flowers. (Plate 15) It also demonstrates Gorky’s mastery of thinned oil paint, which he used to create drips and pools of color, a technique he learned from Chilean Surrealist Roberto Matta.⁶⁴

While they seem spontaneous, most of Gorky’s mature paintings have at least one related study, often drawn directly from nature. In late 1943, Gorky had returned to his New York studio with over 100 drawings after his family spent their first summer at Crooked Run, the Virginia farm Mougouch’s parents owned. Through his flowing brushwork, Gorky translated the emotions he experienced in nature from these drawings onto canvas. Breton wrote, “Gorky is, of all the surrealist artists, the only one who maintains direct contact with nature—sits down to paint *before her*.”⁶⁵ The Virginia landscape released in Gorky memories of his Armenian childhood surroundings and other unconscious associations and desires, which he expressed in these seemingly improvisatory and deeply personal abstractions featuring washes of color, sinuous lines, and hybrid imagery. “By ‘hybrids,’” Breton wrote, “I mean the resultants provoked in an observer contemplating a natural spectacle with extreme concentration, the resultants being a combination of the spectacle and



Figure 6. Arshile Gorky, with Maro Gorky on his shoulders, and André Breton, Roxbury, Connecticut, Spring 1945.

a flux of childhood and other memories, and the observer being gifted to a rare degree with the grace of emotion.”⁶⁶ While Gorky’s breakthrough works did not embrace Surrealist automatism entirely, their emphasis on the unconscious and language of suggestive biomorphic forms reflects his independent assimilation of its principles.

The early 1940s thus represented a watershed—personally and creatively—for both artists, as they drew inspiration from nature, abstracting and imbuing their landscapes with psychological content. By 1945, however, the two artists saw less of each other. In 1944, Noguchi was absorbed in a relationship with Ann Matta Clark; the production of three set designs for Martha Graham performances, *Appalachian Spring*, *Hérodiade*, and *Imagined Wing*; and his first furniture designs.⁶⁷ Gorky and his growing family spent significant time away from New York at Crooked Run farm before moving to Connecticut in early 1945. In November 1945, Mougouch wrote to Reynal that she had not seen Noguchi in a year.⁶⁸

Later, Noguchi also commented that Gorky’s success and absorption into the Surrealist circle meant he saw less of him in the mid-1940s. His retrospective comments blame the pressures that Gorky’s affiliation with Surrealism brought him for his eventual depression and suicide and minimize Noguchi’s own ties to Surrealism at this time.⁶⁹ Both he and Gorky participated in the exhibition *The Imagery of Chess* (December 1944–January 1945) at Julien Levy Gallery with Breton, Marcel Duchamp, Kay Sage, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Matta, Dorothea Tanning, and other Surrealist notables.⁷⁰ While not championed by Breton as Gorky was, Noguchi was one of the “native affiliates corresponding to the imaginative sources approved by Surrealism” showcased by Charles Henri Ford and Parker

Tyler's *View* magazine, which provided Surrealism an important platform upon the group's arrival in America.⁷¹ Ford and Tyler included Noguchi in the 1945 survey of Neo-Romantic and Surrealist art they organized for the debut of Hugo Gallery in New York, *The Fantastic in Modern Art*, and featured him on the magazine's fall 1946 cover. Moreover, in late 1947, Gorky and Noguchi were two of only a few Americans (though Noguchi was misidentified as Japanese) included in the Surrealists' first postwar international exhibition in Paris, *Le Surréalisme en 1947*, at Galerie Maeght.⁷² A photograph of the exhibition by Willy Maywald shows Gorky's monumental *The Liver Is the Coxcomb* (1944) and Noguchi's *Time Lock* (1944–45) placed in close proximity, underscoring the biomorphic areas of ovoid projection and recession in each. (Figure 7)

The Biomorphic '40s

View's November 1941 "Surrealist issue" was guest edited by Nicolas Calas, a Greek poet and critic who had been part of Breton's Paris circle. Calas was one of the first Surrealists to arrive in New York during World War II and interpret the movement for an American audience.⁷³ He soon befriended Noguchi, and later Gorky. In 1947, Calas organized an exhibition titled *Bloodflames* at Hugo Gallery, presenting biomorphic paintings, sculptures, and mosaics by Gorky, Noguchi, Jeanne Reynal, Wifredo Lam, Matta, David Hare, Gerome Kamrowski, and Helen Phillips. In the previous year, Gorky and Noguchi were among the artists who gave significant representation to biomorphic abstraction amid the wide range of styles in *Fourteen Americans*, the Museum of Modern Art's eclectic survey of contemporary American art. Taken together, these two exhibitions provide important context for the two artists' work during what critic Lawrence Alloway

(Facing Page)
Figure 7. Noguchi's *Time Lock* (1944–45) and Gorky's *The Liver Is the Coxcomb* (1944), with a work by Alexander Calder, in *Le Surréalisme en 1947*, Galerie Maeght, Paris, 1947.



termed “the biomorphic ’40s.”⁷⁴ They demonstrate the prevalence and impact of Surrealist nature-inspired abstraction on the development of postwar American art, often obscured by both the popularity of Surrealist dream imagery and the triumph of gestural abstraction to follow.

Bloodflames featured eight American artists who extended the biomorphic vocabulary of earlier Surrealists such as Hans Arp, André Masson, and Joan Miró, infusing their forms with a primordial, mythic quality that echoed postwar realities. The show’s title suggested the violence and destruction of the recent past, recalled in the catalogue’s

Figure 8. Installation view of *Bloodflames*, with Noguchi’s *Trinity* in foreground, Hugo Gallery, New York, 1947.



epigraph, “We, the inheritors of chaos, must be the architects of a new unity,” attributed to visionary architect Frederick Kiesler, who also designed the exhibition.⁷⁵ Kiesler painted a dark, irregularly shaped band like a multi-tentacled organism around the gallery’s walls, floor, and ceiling, connecting the works on view and creating an immersive environment for the viewer.⁷⁶ (Figure 8) Kiesler rejected traditional art displays that “separate sculpture and painting from the flow of our daily environment . . . destroying their integrative potentialities and arresting their continuity with our total mode of life. . . . The new flame will be kindled by the reawakening of our primordial awareness of the interrelatedness of man and nature.”⁷⁷ His design for *Bloodflames* thus reinforced the organic forms of the exhibited works as part of this larger program of reintegration.

In his catalogue texts, Calas emphasized the existential, magical, and metamorphic qualities of the works on view. Of Noguchi’s *Trinity* (1945), Calas observed, “[The artist] translates problems of equilibrium and proportion between carefully wrought parts and wholes, into terms of relationship between forms dictated by the desires of the unconscious.”⁷⁸ (Plate 20) *Trinity* is one of a series of sculptures that Noguchi began in 1944, made from interlocking stone slabs cut into organic shapes and held together by gravity. Bulges, spikes, and suggestions of appendages protrude from its three planes, originally slate (later cast in bronze), evoking a rapturous embrace or multi-limbed being.⁷⁹

The finely outlined, bonelike forms of Gorky’s spare *Nude* (1946) would have resonated with the biomorphic shapes of Noguchi’s sculpture nearby. (Plate 21) The painting derives from a group of line drawings the artist produced to illustrate Breton’s book of poetry *Young Cherry Trees Secured Against*

Hares (1946). Its cryptic form of a female nude echoes Breton's description of his lover's body hybridized with nature: "My wife with armpits of marten and of beechnut . . . with arms of seafoam and of riverlocks / And of a mingling of the wheat and the mill."⁸⁰ Writing in the *Bloodflames* catalogue, Calas emphasized the power of Gorky's invention to surpass mimesis and synthesize forms with memories in his creation of a new iconography. "This is not a painting of memorized images and feelings," Calas writes, "for the forms which have been extracted from life and nature with such sensitivity are treated like precious elements and combined to form a whole whose presence was sensed on a still empty canvas and was realized through insight and labor."⁸¹

Calas thus established the organic forms of the *Bloodflames* artists as expressions of an artist's individual psychology, rather than simply rehearsing the formal innovations of earlier Surrealists. Gathering this group of US-based abstract artists, born or working in the country before the war, and eschewing the Dalíean dream imagery that had by then become shorthand for Surrealism in the US, Calas appeared to claim biomorphism as the native tongue of Surrealism's American diaspora.⁸²

The centrality of biomorphic abstraction in contemporary American art had been showcased the year before in *Fourteen Americans*. This was the first in a series of surveys of the state of American art that Dorothy C. Miller curated for the Museum of Modern Art. It offered an eclectic selection of work from the socially focused magic realism of Honoré Sharrer and Alton Pickens to the expressionism of David Aronson and Mark Tobey. Perhaps the clearest grouping of works, however, was the biomorphic abstraction represented by Gorky, David Hare, Robert Motherwell, Noguchi, and Theodore Roszak.

These artists' work, Miller wrote, manifests their "research in a universe of imaginative construction where all forms are possible and meaning is not dependent on the illustration-image."⁸³ Miller's phrasing anticipates Calas's emphasis on the image as the means but not the end of a work of art, leaving open the possibility of communication via suggestive but abstracted forms that operated on a more intuitive level and spoke to cultural influences and concerns as well as psychology.

In *The Unattainable* (1945), we see Gorky's extraordinary facility with a sign painter's liner brush, which created the fluid yet tightly controlled lines that became a hallmark of his later work.⁸⁴ (Plate 19) According to Willem de Kooning, who took credit for introducing Gorky to this tool, the thin brush allowed the artist to translate the calligraphic lines of his drawings to the canvas.⁸⁵ *The Unattainable's* white background echoes the flatness of paper, foregrounding the lines of variable thickness that define organic forms, floating upward within its spatial scaffolding. Its network of lines recalls the wire Breton analogized to Gorky's vision: "Truly the eye was not made to take inventory like an auctioneer. . . . It was made to cast a lineament, a conducting wire between the most heterogeneous things. . . . [that] should allow us to understand . . . the relationships which connect, without possible discharge of continuity, innumerable physical and mental structures."⁸⁶

The strings comprising Noguchi's *Monument to Heroes* (1943) likewise traced these relationships between physical and mental structures. (Plate 18) Like *This Tortured Earth*, it meditates on the costs of war, adopting the traditional columnar form of military memorials dating back to the Roman emperor Trajan.⁸⁷ Noguchi described his sculpture as "a *Monument to Heroes* who never return," and

its pierced black cylinder and delicately suspended bones and organic wooden forms suggest a body destroyed by battle and the fragility of human life, visualizing death and sacrifice rather than abstract notions of heroism.⁸⁸ Never realized as a public sculpture, the maquette appeared in both *Fourteen Americans* and *Bloodflames*, as well as the Surrealists' 1947 international exhibition in Paris, reflecting both its postwar timeliness and centrality to Noguchi's practice.⁸⁹

While *Monument to Heroes* demonstrated Noguchi's material experimentation, the slate slab sculpture *Gregory (Effigy)* (1945) and Languedoc marble *Time Lock* indicate his return to working directly with stone. *Gregory's* frontal orientation recalls the figure of its namesake, Gregor Samsa of Franz Kafka's novella *The Metamorphosis* (1915), who awakens to discover he has been transformed into a cockroach.⁹⁰ (Plate 22) Breton published an excerpt from Kafka's story in his 1940 *Anthologie de l'humour noir (Anthology of Black Humor)*, underscoring the Surrealist interest in metamorphosis as a theme that resonated with their embrace of irrationality and the instability of imagery and meaning in dreams.⁹¹ In contrast, Noguchi described *Time Lock* and other works of direct carving in the early 1940s as "the sure things of sculpture, long lasting (locked against time's erosion), sculptural sculpture."⁹² (Plate 17) Nonetheless, it too implies mutation—round protuberances sprout from its back and front, disrupting its clean, trapezoidal outline. Viewed from the side, the sculpture's undulating pink marble form resembles a landscape turned vertically, allowing us to visualize both peaks and valleys simultaneously and suggesting deep, geological time, or perhaps a four-dimensional topography.⁹³

In a review, critic Clement Greenberg condemned

Fourteen Americans. While he allowed that the work of abstract artists including Gorky had "to be taken seriously," he singled out Noguchi and Irene Rice Pereira (the show's only female artist) as "faking it," and stated that the exhibition was too eclectic to give a clear sense of direction for American art.⁹⁴ Against this backdrop, *Bloodflames* stands as a bold assertion of the viability of biomorphic abstraction as a visual language and an attempt to theorize it as a way forward for American artists in 1947. Biomorphism's roots in and lingering affiliation with Surrealism led it to become *démodé* after the ascent of Abstract Expressionism and has rendered its primary practitioners—such as Gorky and Noguchi—elusive figures in art history. Nonetheless, its fusion of "ideas about nature, automatism, mythology, and the unconscious" that Lawrence Alloway identified points to the galvanic nature of nature-based abstraction in this often-overlooked decade.⁹⁵

Tragedy and Legacy

The tragedies that beset Gorky during the final years of his life—as he and Noguchi exhibited together in New York and Paris—appear to have brought the two artists closer than they had been in recent years. *Nude* was one of the first paintings Gorky produced after returning to New York following a fire that destroyed his Connecticut studio and over twenty paintings in January 1946.⁹⁶ In March of that year, he was diagnosed with rectal cancer and underwent a colostomy. Noguchi reported on the surgery in a letter to Ann Matta Clark, indicating that he was in close contact with Gorky at the time.⁹⁷ Despite these setbacks, Gorky mounted two solo exhibitions at Julien Levy Gallery in 1946 and 1947. During a particularly productive summer in his Union Square studio in 1947, while his family

vacationed in Maine, Gorky wrote to Mougouch that he was seeing friends, including Calas and Noguchi.⁹⁸ It was possibly around this time that Noguchi produced a small portrait of Gorky in the margins of a sketch for a sculptural installation. (Figure 9) By the end of the year, however, Gorky had sunk into a depression, and he and his family moved back to Connecticut. As his marriage to Mougouch foundered, the extensive *Betrothal* series—including three paintings contrasting attenuated forms with heavily worked, scumbled or washed surfaces created the previous summer—must have seemed cruelly ironic.⁹⁹ (Plate 23) In June 1948, Gorky was in a car accident with Levy and his wife, artist Muriel Streeter, which broke his collarbone, fractured two vertebrae, and temporarily immobilized his painting arm. After they returned to New York, Mougouch took their daughters and left Gorky in mid-July 1948.

Noguchi's recollections of Gorky's final days indicate that the painter still considered him a close friend and someone to turn to in crisis. In his 1968 autobiography, *A Sculptor's World*, Noguchi recalled Gorky coming to his studio in the days before his death: "In his hands were two rag dolls, a traction collar stretched his neck, the tears streamed down his cheeks. I thought he had come to me as to a fellow immigrant out of his past. We talked a long while."¹⁰⁰ At Gorky's request, Noguchi and Wifredo Lam drove him back to his house in Connecticut and left him with other friends, seemingly in better spirits. Gorky hanged himself two days later, on July 21, 1948. "I blamed it largely on his wishful involvement with the snobbish world," Noguchi wrote. "He had finally broken into the sacred circle through the intercession of André Breton. I had introduced them. . . . What was the purpose of all this striving? How superficial and cruel the recognition!"¹⁰¹ It was at Gorky's funeral that Noguchi discovered the truth



Figure 9. Isamu Noguchi, sculpture study including a portrait of Gorky, 1947, graphite and colored pencil on paper. 13 7/8 × 10 15/16 in. (35.2 × 27.8 cm). The Noguchi Museum Archives, 01285.

of his friend's Armenian origins; shortly thereafter, he departed for a two-year period of travel, funded by the Bollingen Foundation, through Europe, Egypt, India and Southeast Asia, and Japan.¹⁰²

After his death, Gorky's biomorphic Surrealism was interpolated into Abstract Expressionism through critical language that treated subject matter or evocative forms as secondary to formal concerns and downplayed the influence of Surrealism's interest in the unconscious on gestural abstraction.¹⁰³ Already in his review of Gorky's last lifetime exhibition, Greenberg wrote that the artist had finally found his voice, in his estimation, "in celebrating the elements of the art he practices and in proclaiming his mastery over them."¹⁰⁴ Yet even as the large-scale, gestural paintings of Abstract Expressionism began to dominate the New York art scene, Gorky had continued to work at an intimate, easel scale, translating his rigorously plotted compositions to canvas. "I prefer not to see the strength of my arm in the painting but only the poetry of my heart," his pupil V. V. Rankine recalled Gorky stating. "The trouble is everyone uses their arms too much, that is too many brushstrokes. . . I prefer . . . to be able to move into the painting and reform it. I want to leave only the ghost of the painting to spur imagination."¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, in the 1950s, Gorky was frequently shown alongside his old friend de Kooning, former student Mark Rothko, and sometime antagonist Jackson Pollock in exhibitions that codified Abstract Expressionism's ascendancy. The trajectory that began at Gorky's death continued through Gorky, Pollock, and de Kooning representing the US in the 1950 Venice Biennale and culminated in the Museum of Modern Art's internationally touring *The New American Painting* (1958–59), which proclaimed the triumph of Abstract Expressionism as a distinctly American idiom.¹⁰⁶

Increasingly, Noguchi felt that the New York School had left him behind, artistically as well as, perhaps, personally.¹⁰⁷ Travel, he recalled, “Sort of directed me elsewhere than in the New York scene. I was the absent one, so to speak. Every time I’d come back, I’d see my old friends who were then becoming very famous and all that.”¹⁰⁸ His longstanding belief in sculpture’s social role conflicted with the formalist insistence on medium specificity or self-referentiality.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, as Amy Lyford points out, the rhetoric around Abstract Expressionism prioritized the supposed universality of abstraction as well as the individuality of the maker, which left out women and artists of color, whose identities were visibly marginal, and whose work could therefore only be seen as an expression of their gender or race.¹¹⁰ Though Noguchi had stated in “I Become a Nisei” that “to be hybrid anticipates the future,” critics’ hyperawareness of his identity often limited readings of his varied and experimental practice to a narrow range of cultural references, or emphasized his Japanese heritage in biased ways, invalidating his claim to true hybridity.¹¹¹ As early as 1935, Henry McBride invoked the Yellow Peril in his review of Noguchi’s Harriman Gallery show, stating that the “wily” Noguchi “has been studying our weaknesses with a view of becoming irresistible to us.”¹¹² In a review of the artist’s March 1949 Charles Egan Gallery solo show (his first since 1935), Greenberg criticized Noguchi’s “taste and the obsessive concern with finish” demonstrated in his stone works’ “excessive polish and smoothness of surface” and the “miniature grace on a large scale” of his sculpture.¹¹³ His comments contained an implicit contrast with the muscular, rough, and expansive works of painters like Pollock or the industrial materials of David Smith that also conjured stereotypes of Asian men as effeminate.¹¹⁴

Noguchi traveled consistently throughout the 1950s. He pursued international commissions and furniture and lighting design in addition to his sculpture. “Somehow,” he later wrote, “I have sought to express myself more fully, to make contact with a larger world, more free and more kindly than the one that had killed my friend.”¹¹⁵ While their identities as outsiders had bonded them, Noguchi felt that the pressures of life as an “insider” had destroyed Gorky, and sought a wider context for his work. Gorky’s and Noguchi’s synthesis of the external and natural with the personal and internal produced highly original visual languages that have placed both at the center of the history of twentieth-century American art but also ensured that they remain outside of easy categorization.

Notes

1 Noguchi, interviewed by Karlen Mooradian, May 2, 1966. Thanks to the Arshile Gorky Foundation's Parker Field and Anna McCormick-Goodhart for checking the audio recording of this quote against that published (with slight alterations) in Karlen Mooradian, *The Many Worlds of Arshile Gorky* (Gilgamesh, 1980), 183.

2 For a complete chronology of Gorky's short but eventful life, see Julia May Boddewyn, Anna McCormick-Goodhart, and Parker Field, "Chronology," The Arshile Gorky Foundation, accessed March 24, 2025, <https://www.arshilegorkyfoundation.org/artist/chronology>. See also Matthew Spender, *From a High Place: A Life of Arshile Gorky* (Knopf, 1999); Nouritza Matossian, *Black Angel: The Life of Arshile Gorky* (Overlook Press, 2000); and Hayden Herrera, *Arshile Gorky: His Life and Work* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003).

3 R.G. Suny, "Armenian Genocide," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 17, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Armenian-Genocide>. Peter Balakian was the first to explore the significance of the Armenian Genocide in Gorky's work. See Balakian, "Arshile Gorky and the Armenian Genocide," *Art in America* 84 (February 1996): 58–67, 108–109.

4 Gorky became a US citizen in May 1939.

5 "Gorky Joins the Grand Central School of Art," New York Evening Post, September 15, 1926, in *Arshile Gorky: The Plow and the Song: A Life in Letters and*

Documents, ed. Matthew Spender (Hauser & Wirth Publishers, 2018), 36–37.

6 See Helen Sandow, "Gorky in the Twenties and Thirties," in Spender, *The Plow and the Song*, 41; Isamu Noguchi, oral history interview by Paul Cummings, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, November 7–December 26, 1973, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-isamu-noguchi-11906>; Spender, *From a High Place*, 208.

7 Kim S. Theriault, *Rethinking Arshile Gorky* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 27. Theriault explores Gorky's shifting identity and self-fashioning as a response to the trauma of the Armenian Genocide and his refugee experience (13–31).

8 Elaine de Kooning, "Gorky: Painter of His Own Legend," *Art News* XLXI, no. 9 (January 1951): 40.

9 See Michael R. Taylor, "Rethinking Arshile Gorky," in *Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., ed. Michael R. Taylor (Philadelphia Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2009), 31.

10 Arshele [sic] Gorky, "Stuart Davis," *Creative Art*, vol. IX, September 1931, in Spender, *The Plow and the Song*, 50.

11 Julien Levy, "A First Meeting with Arshile Gorky," 1977, in Spender, *The Plow and the Song*, 82.

12 For a full chronology of Noguchi's life, see "Chronology," The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, accessed

March 24, 2025, <https://www.noguchi.org/isamu-noguchi/biography/chronology/>. See also Noguchi's autobiography, Isamu Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World* (Harper & Row, 1968); Dore Ashton, *Noguchi East and West* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1992); Masayo Duus, *The Life of Isamu Noguchi: Journey Without Borders* (Princeton University Press, 2004); and Hayden Herrera, *Listening to Stone: The Art and Life of Isamu Noguchi* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2015).

13 Noguchi's comments about this decision reveal his complex feelings of identity: "I was at this time still known as Isamu Gilmour, and I had become completely acclimatized as an American. There was no hint of Japan about me. Yet when I finally became conscious that I was to be a sculptor, I decided almost involuntarily to change my name, adopting one that perhaps I had no right to. I could see my mother's consternation, but she did not object, helping me rather in my travail, away from her, toward Japan, and the way that I had chosen" Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*, 15.

14 The exhibition was organized by Marcel Duchamp, whom Noguchi recalled meeting at the exhibition. Noguchi, interview by Paul Cummings.

15 Sam Hunter, *Isamu Noguchi* (Abbeville, 1978), 35.

16 Isamu Noguchi, letter to Athena C. Tacha, March 23, 1962, quoted in Amy Wolf, *On Becoming an Artist: Isamu Noguchi and His Contemporaries*, 1922–1960, exh. cat. (The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2010), 29.

17 Noguchi, interview by Paul Cummings.

18 "Master Checklist," *An Exhibition of Work of 46 Painters & Sculptors under 35 Years of Age*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, April 11–27, 1930, https://assets.moma.org/documents/moma_master-checklist_333046.pdf.

19 Noguchi offered conflicting recollections of his first meeting with Gorky. In 1989, he told Gorky's daughter Maro that they met just before the stock market crash in 1929, but he had previously placed their meeting at a gallery in 1932, or around the time of his Marie Harriman Gallery exhibition (though he misremembered the 1935 show's date as 1933 or 1934). Spender, *From a High Place*, 79, 383; Herrera, *Listening to Stone*, 158; Mooradian, *Many Worlds*, 180.

20 Alicia G. Longwell, "John Graham and the Quest for an American Art in the 1920s and 1930s" (PhD diss., City University of New York Graduate Center, 2007), 103.

21 Longwell, "John Graham," 115–126, 168–172, 188–189; see also Dickran Tashjian, *A Boatload of Madmen: Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde* (Thames & Hudson, 1995), 280–281.

22 For a thorough exploration of their friendship, see David Michaelis, "Independents: Isamu Noguchi/Buckminster Fuller," in *The Best of Friends: Profiles of Extraordinary Friendships* (William Morrow, 1983), 41–73; and Florence Ostende, "World Consciousness: Isamu Noguchi and R. Buckminster Fuller," in *Isamu Noguchi*, exh. cat. (Prestel,

2021), 54–63.

23 Deborah A. Goldberg, "Isamu Noguchi: The Artist as Sculptor and Visionary Engineer, 1918–1939" (PhD diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 2000), 175–76. Noguchi also owned a copy of Sir Arthur Eddington's *The Expanding Universe* (1933), which explained Hubble and Georges Lemaître's theories and observations for a lay audience; see Dakin Hart, "What Did Noguchi Mean by 'Space'?" in *Isamu Noguchi* (2021), 128, and Wolf, *On Becoming an Artist*, 48.

24 Isamu Noguchi, Letter to Otto Wittmann, Director of the Toledo Museum of Art, January 4, 1970, MS_GAL_129_002, Isamu Noguchi Archive, <https://archive.noguchi.org/Detail/archival/72806>.

25 Deborah A. Goldberg, "Isamu Noguchi: Visionary Designer and 'World Citizen,'" in *Isamu Noguchi, Patent Holder: Designing the World of Tomorrow*, exh. cat. (Geoffrey Yeh Art Gallery, 2015), 5. See also Goldberg, "The Artist as Sculptor," 182–183.

26 Liesl Olson, "Flicker of an Eyelid: Isamu Noguchi, Ruth Page, and the Universe of Chicago," spring 2021, <https://www.noguchi.org/isamu-noguchi/digital-features/flicker-of-an-eyelid-isamu-noguchi-ruth-page-and-the-universe-of-chicago/>. Page and Noguchi had a yearlong romantic relationship and lasting friendship.

27 Alfred H. Barr Jr., ed., *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, exh. cat. (Museum of Modern Art, 1936), 3, [\[logue_2823_300293441.pdf\]\(https://assets.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_2823_300293441.pdf\).](https://assets.moma.org/documents/moma_cata-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

28 Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*, 21.

29 Gorky, quoted in Herrera, *His Life and Work*, 258. While Gorky's rejection of Social Realism as propagandistic illustration reflects his larger objection to the instrumentalization of art to political ends, Jody Patterson's exploration of Gorky's public art relative to the leftist politics of his milieu challenges the common assertion that he was politically uninterested; see Patterson, "'Flight from Reality'? A Reconsideration of Gorky's Politics and Approach to Public Murals in the 1930s," in Taylor, *Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective*, 74–93.

30 See Taylor, "Rethinking Arshile Gorky," 31–33.

31 Gorky had met Holger Cahill, future head of the WPA, and Cahill's future wife and MoMA curator, Dorothy C. Miller, at Romany Marie's.

32 Gorky's murals were painted over after the military commandeered Newark Airport, including the administration building, during World War II. Curator Ruth Bowman initiated a search for the panels in the 1970s, leading to the recovery and restoration of two panels, which were exhibited in 1978; see Ruth Bowman, "Arshile Gorky's Aviation Murals Rediscovered," in *Murals Without Walls: Arshile Gorky's Aviation Murals Rediscovered*, exh. cat. (The Newark Museum, 1978), 34–45. The panels are now are on extended loan to the Newark Museum of Art from The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey.

33 Patterson, ““Flight from Reality’?” 89. Patterson relates Gorky’s new realism to that of his friend Stuart Davis and Fernand Léger.

34 Arshile Gorky, “My Murals for the Newark Airport: An Interpretation,” 1936, in Spender, *The Plow and the Song*, 108.

35 Alfred Barr, Reply to Olive Lyford, 1936, in Spender, *The Plow and the Song*, 115.

36 Noguchi, *A Sculptor’s World*, 21.

37 Letter from Juliana Force to Isamu Noguchi, March 2, 1934, quoted in Amy Lyford, *Isamu Noguchi’s Modernism: Negotiating Race, Labor, and Nation, 1930-1950* (University of California Press, 2013), 15-17. Lyford analyzes several of Noguchi’s New Deal-era public works through the lens of labor in Chapters 1 and 2.

38 Marie Harriman Gallery exhibition brochure, 1935, MS_EXH_014_001, The Noguchi Museum Archives, <https://archive.noguchi.org/Detail/archival/73404>.

39 See James Oles, “Noguchi in Mexico: International Themes for a Working-Class Market,” *American Art* 15, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 10-33; Alex Ross, “History Mexico,” accessed February 18, 2025, <https://www.noguchi.org/isamu-noguchi/digital-features/history-mexico/>.

40 Herrera, *Listening to Stone*, 158. In 1937, Noguchi also helped Gorky receive a commission for a mural at Chez Firehouse, a nightclub at 141 East Fifty-Fifth Street, which Noguchi had been hired to

redesign.

41 Perfume executive and collector Gaston de Havenon is also reported to have been present, though his name is not included on any of the collaborative drawings. For a thorough exploration of these works’ histories, see Michael R. Taylor, “Hitler Invades Poland: Isamu Noguchi, De Hirsh Margules, and Arshile Gorky’s Response to an Imminent Global Catastrophe,” unpublished manuscript, 2023, in *Dada and Surrealism: Transatlantic Transactions Between the Great War and the Cold War*, ed. James McManus (Bloomsbury, forthcoming).

42 Michael R. Taylor, “Gorky and Surrealism,” in Taylor, *Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective*, 99.

43 Taylor, “Hitler Invades Poland,” 2.

44 Taylor, “Hitler Invades Poland,” 10.

45 In 1942, MoMA exchanged with the artist Gorky’s *Painting* (circa 1937–38), gifted by Gorky’s patrons Ethel and Wolfgang Schwabacher, for *Garden in Sochi* (1941). “*Painting*, c. 1937–38, P212,” *Arshile Gorky Catalogue Raisonné*, <https://www.gorky-catalogue.org/catalogue/entry.php?id=1975>.

46 On Reynal’s life and work, see *The Mosaics of Jeanne Reynal* (George Wittenborn, Inc., 1964). On her collaborations with Noguchi, see Dakin Hart, “Jeanne Reynal and Isamu Noguchi: What Collaboration Looks Like,” in *Mosaic is Light: Work by Jeanne Reynal, 1940-1970*, exh. cat. (Eric Firestone, 2021), 54-57.

47 Reynal’s partner, muralist Urban Neiningner (1906–1985), and others are sometimes mentioned as additional passengers; see, for example, “Biography,” Noguchi Museum, accessed February 18, 2025, <https://www.noguchi.org/isamu-noguchi/biography/chronology/>. Neither Noguchi nor Mougouch mention Neiningner in recollections of the trip, however; Noguchi, *A Sculptor’s World*, 25, and Herrera, *His Life and Work*, 339. Neiningner recalled meeting Gorky once the latter arrived in San Francisco; see Urban Neiningner, oral history interview by Harlan Phillips, September 22, 1964, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-urban-neiningner-12522>.

48 Noguchi, interview by Karlen Mooradian, May 2, 1966, courtesy of the Arshile Gorky Foundation. Interview published (with slight alterations) in Mooradian, *Many Worlds*, 181.

49 Arshile Gorky, text for the Museum of Modern Art describing the *Garden in Sochi* series, in Spender, *The Plow and the Song*, 255.

50 “Japanese American Internment,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed February 18, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Japanese-American-internment>. This essay uses the term “incarceration” rather than the euphemistic “internment,” following the guidance of the non-profit organization Densho; see “Terminology,” Densho, accessed February 18, 2025, <https://densho.org/terminology/#incarceration>.

51 “With a flash I realized I was no longer the sculptor alone. I

was not just American but Nisei. A Japanese-American. . . . I felt I must do something. But first I had to get to know my fellow Nisei; I had had no reason previously to seek them out as a group.” Noguchi, *A Sculptor’s World*, 25.

52 On Noguchi’s wartime activism, see Lyford, *Noguchi’s Modernism*, 108-113, 144-145; see also Herrera, *Listening to Stone*, 173-174.

53 Amy Lyford has revealed Noguchi’s involvement in planning for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Relocation Center Project at Poston and his ambiguous role relative to the camp’s administrators. Lyford, *Noguchi’s Modernism*, 113-115.

54 Isamu Noguchi, “I Become a Nisei,” manuscript, October 1942, MS_BIO_028_002, Isamu Noguchi Archive, <https://archive.noguchi.org/Detail/archival/75423>. See also Isamu Noguchi, *I Become a Nisei* (The Brother in Elysium, 2020).

55 Herrera, *Listening to Stone*, 182. Noguchi remained under FBI surveillance until late 1945 and was even briefly ordered back to the incarceration camps, though he did not go. Lyford, *Noguchi’s Modernism*, 143-145.

56 Noguchi, letter to Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, August 1972, quoted in Valerie J. Fletcher, *Isamu Noguchi: Master Sculptor*, exh. cat. (Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, 2004), 78-81.

57 Isamu Noguchi, *The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum* (Harry N. Abrams, 1987), 152.

58 Lyford, Isamu *Noguchi’s*

Modernism, 140.

59 The work is identified as *Femme (Woman)* in the exhibition’s catalogue, underscoring the Surrealist affinity for its evocative forms. *Le Surréalisme en 1947: Exposition internationale du surréalisme, présentée par André Breton et Marcel Duchamp*, exh. cat. (Maeght, 1947), xlv.

60 Recollections of the circumstances of this first meeting differ slightly; see Spender, *From a High Place*, 266; Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), 519; Isamu Noguchi, Interview with Karlen Mooradian, May 2, 1966, in Spender, *The Plow and the Song*, 349.

61 Herrera, *His Life and Work*, 463; Mougouch Gorky, “How Breton and Gorky Worked on Titles,” December 22-28, 1993, in Spender, *The Plow and the Song*, 336.

62 Agnes “Mougouch” Gorky Fielding, interview by Cosima Spender, *Tate Etc.*, no. 18 (Spring 2010), <https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-18-spring-2010/my-gorky>. Dickran Tashjian ties Gorky’s narrative technique to Armenian oral traditions in “Arshile Gorky’s American Script: Ethnicity and Modernism in the Diaspora,” *Bucknell Review* 30, no. 1 (1986), 144–161.

63 André Breton, “The Eye-Spring: Arshile Gorky,” trans. Julien Levy (Julien Levy Gallery, March 1945), accessed February 18, 2025, <https://www.gorky-catalogue.org/exhibitions/entry.php?id=72>.

64 On Gorky and Matta, see Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile*

and the Beginning of the New York School (MIT Press, 1995), 323-328, and Tashjian, *A Boatload of Madmen*, 282, 299. Michael R. Taylor traces Gorky’s interest in Surrealism and contact with Matta before meeting Breton in Taylor, “Gorky and Surrealism,” 95-109.

65 Breton, “The Eye-Spring.” Italics Breton’s.

66 Breton, “The Eye-Spring.”

67 On Noguchi’s work with Graham, see Bonnie Rychlak, ed., *Noguchi and Graham: Selected Works for Dance*, exh. cat. (The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2004); Robert Tracy, *Spaces of the Mind: Isamu Noguchi’s Dance Designs* (New York: Limelight Editions, 2000).

68 Herrera, *His Life and Work*, 497. Mougouch later commented that while Noguchi blamed her for this distance, it was his time in Poston and theirs in the “country” that kept them apart and that Gorky was no longer interested in Noguchi’s work by this time; Mougouch Gorky, “Regarding de Kooning, Noguchi, and Gorky,” June 12, 2005, in Spender, *The Plow and the Song*, 348.

69 Isamu Noguchi, interview by John Jones, 1966, in John Jones and Nicolette Jones, eds., *The American Art Tapes: Voices of Twentieth-Century Art* (Tate, 2021), 282-284; Noguchi, *A Sculptor’s World*, 30; Noguchi, interview by Paul Cummings.

70 This important show, for which Noguchi made a custom chess set and table, was the subject of a 2005–6 exhibition at the Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum. See Larry

List, ed., <i>The Imagery of Chess Revisited</i>, exh. cat. (George Braziller and the Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, 2005).	the Tent-Maker, Does Décor,” <i>Art Digest</i> 21 (March 15, 1947): 15; and “Vogue Designs for Dressmaking: Space Experiment in an Art Gallery,” <i>Vogue</i> 109, no. 8 (April 15, 1947): 136-137. See also Taylor, “Gorky and Surrealism,” 121-124, for details of the installation.	as withdrawing from Surrealism’s political commitments into the world of magic and myth; Tashjian, <i>A Boatload of Madmen</i>, 372 n44. Calas remained a staunch defender of Surrealism, however, and was working on a text titled <i>The Challenge of Surrealism</i> at his death in 1988. See Lena Hoff, <i>Nicolas Calas and the Challenge of Surrealism</i> (Museum Tusculanum Press, 2014).	89 Noguchi contemplated proposing the sculpture again during the Vietnam War. Fletcher, <i>Master Sculptor</i>, 72.	97 Herrera, <i>Listening to Stone</i>, 209.	flatness. Kramer, “Art,” <i>The Nation</i> (January 12, 1963): 38-39.
71 Parker Tyler, quoted in Tirza True Latimer, <i>Eccentric Modernisms: Making Differences in the History of American Art</i> (University of California Press, 2017), 81. Tyler and Ford, however, resisted the categorization of <i>View</i> as a Surrealist mouthpiece by Clement Greenberg and others. Latimer, <i>Eccentric Modernisms</i>, 104-105. See also Chapter 7, “<i>View</i> and the Surrealist Exiles,” in Tashjian, <i>A Boatload of Madmen</i>, 176-201, for the collaborations and conflicts between Breton, Nicolas Calas, Ford, and Tyler.	77 Frederick Kiesler, “Note on Correalism,” in Dorothy C. Miller, ed., <i>Fifteen Americans</i>, exh. cat. (Museum of Modern Art, 1952), 8.	83 Dorothy C. Miller, “Foreword,” in Miller, ed., <i>Fourteen Americans</i>, exh. cat. (Museum of Modern Art, 1946), 7.	90 Noguchi notes that he also thought of Cook Islands sculpture while making <i>Gregory</i>. Noguchi, <i>The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum</i>, 248.	98 See Arshile Gorky, letter to Mougouch Gorky, circa June 29, 1947, in Spender, <i>The Plow and the Song</i>, 426.	104 Clement Greenberg, “Review of Gorky’s Julien Levy Show,” <i>The Nation</i>, March 20, 1948, in Spender, <i>The Plow and the Song</i>, 483. This echoes Greenberg’s praise of Gorky’s technical facility in an otherwise scathing review of his first show at Julien Levy Gallery: “Whether or not he is a first-rate artist, Gorky is definitely a first-rate painter, a master of the mechanics and cuisine.” Greenberg criticized Gorky’s debt to other painters and his use of biomorphism, which Greenberg described as “consigned since Odilon Redon to the academic basement.” Greenberg, “Art,” <i>The Nation</i> (March 24, 1945): 343.
72 Exhibition checklist, <i>Le Surréalisme en 1947</i>, Galerie Maeght, Paris, 1947, accessed March 11, 2025, https://www.andrebretton.fr/en/work/56600100506400.	78 Calas, <i>Bloodflames</i>, 12.	84 A checklist of the nine paintings and drawings Gorky exhibited shows that they were primarily from the 1940s, with the exception of <i>The Artist and His Mother</i> (circa 1926–36). The similarly linear <i>Nude</i> was included on the catalogue’s checklist but later marked as not exhibited. “Catalog of the Exhibition,” <i>Fourteen Americans</i>, accessed February 18, 2025, https://assets.moma.org/documents/moma_master-checklist_387274.pdf.	92 Noguchi, <i>A Sculptor’s World</i>, 26.	99 Julien Levy related <i>Betrothal I</i>’s central figure to Marcel Duchamp’s erotic, mechanized <i>Bride</i>. Julien Levy, <i>Arshile Gorky</i> (Harry N. Abrams, 1966), 32. Ethel Schwabacher instead asserted that the <i>Betrothal</i> paintings’ forms derived from riders in Paolo Uccello’s <i>Battle of San Romano</i> (circa 1435-1460). Ethel K. Schwabacher, <i>Arshile Gorky</i> (Whitney Museum of American Art, 1957), 131.	105 V.V. Rankine, interview by Karlen Mooradian, July 26, 1977, quoted in Mooradian, <i>Arshile Gorky Adoian</i> (Gilgamesh, 1978), 208.
73 See Tashjian, <i>A Boatload of Madmen</i>, 188-190.	80 André Breton, “Freedom of Love,” quoted in Herrera, <i>His Life and Work</i>, 482.	85 Herrera, <i>His Life and Work</i>, 434. “The Unattainable,” <i>Arshile Gorky Catalogue Raisonné</i>, accessed June 22, 2023, https://www.gorkycatalogue.org/catalogue/entry.php?id=2066.	94 Clement Greenberg, “Review of the Pepsi-Cola Annual; the Exhibition <i>Fourteen Americans</i>; and the Exhibition <i>Advancing American Art</i>,” <i>The Nation</i> (November 23, 1946), reprinted in Clement Greenberg, <i>The Collected Essays and Criticism</i>, vol. 2, ed. John O’Brian (University of Chicago Press, 1992), 113. See also Lyford, <i>Isamu Noguchi’s Modernism</i>, 177-179.	100 Noguchi, <i>A Sculptor’s World</i>, 30.	106 Also organized by Miller, <i>The New American Painting</i> introduced European audiences to Abstract Expressionism as America’s dominant cultural expression, touring to eight countries during 1958-59 before being shown in New York. Of the <i>Fourteen Americans</i> artists, only Gorky and Robert Motherwell were included in this influential exhibition; as a sculptor, Noguchi was excluded. See “<i>The New American Painting as Shown in Eight European Countries 1958–1959</i>, May 28–Sep 8, 1959,” The Museum of Modern Art, accessed October 28, 2024, https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1990.
74 Lawrence Alloway, “The Biomorph ‘40s,” <i>Artforum</i> (September 1965), reprinted in Ellen G. Landau, ed., <i>Reading Abstract Expressionism: Context and Critique</i> (Yale University Press, 2005), 250-256.	81 Calas, <i>Bloodflames</i>, 8. Michael R. Taylor proposes that the linear design Kiesler painted around the gallery’s walls was inspired by the palette and brushwork of Gorky’s painting; Taylor, “Elective Affinities: Arshile Gorky and Frederick Kiesler,” in Peter Bogner and Gerd Zillner, eds., <i>Frederick Kiesler: Face to Face with the Avant-Garde: Essays on Network and Impact</i> (Birkhäuser, 2019), 272.	86 Breton, “The Eye-Spring,” np. The catalogue for <i>Fourteen Americans</i> reprinted Breton’s text.	95 Alloway, “The Biomorph ‘40s,” 253.	101 Noguchi, <i>A Sculptor’s World</i>, 30.	107 Herrera, <i>Listening to Stone</i>, 277.
75 Nicolas Calas, <i>Bloodflames</i>, exh. cat. (Hugo Gallery, 1947), n.p.	82 Calas’s attempt to define a homegrown American form of Surrealism perhaps reflects his growing estrangement from Breton. The Surrealist leader objected to Calas’s proposal of his own third manifesto of Surrealism, and Calas saw Breton	87 Lyford, <i>Isamu Noguchi’s Modernism</i>, 147.	96 Herrera, <i>His Life and Work</i>, 507. The works that Gorky produced in his borrowed studio over several weeks following the fire— <i>Nude</i> and the three paintings in the <i>Charred Beloved</i> series— are examined in depth in Max Carter, ed., <i>Arshile Gorky: Charred Beloved I</i> (Christie’s, 2023).	102 Isamu Noguchi, interview by Paul Cummings.	
76 Kiesler’s design was illustrated on the exhibition catalogue’s cover. The installation was documented in contemporary reviews including Ad Reinhardt, “Neo-Surrealists Take over a Gallery,” <i>New York, PM.</i>, (March 11, 1947): 10; Judith Kaye Reed, “Kiesler,		88 Isamu Noguchi, <i>Isamu Noguchi: The Sculpture of Spaces</i>, exh. cat. (Whitney Museum of American Art, 1980), 18; Lyford, <i>Isamu Noguchi’s Modernism</i>, 149.		103 In his review of Gorky’s 1951 memorial exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Robert M. Coates writes that Gorky was a member of Abstract Expressionism and “in his lifetime more or less headed” the group. Coates, “The Art Galleries: Moderns—Past and Present,” <i>The New Yorker</i> 26, no. 48 (January 20, 1951): 60. In 1962, Harold Rosenberg bypassed Gorky’s engagement with Surrealism and called him “a typical hero of Abstract Expressionism.” Rosenberg, <i>Arshile Gorky: The Man, The Time, The Idea</i> (Horizon Press, 1962), 14. By 1963, however, Hilton Kramer noted that Gorky’s use of metaphor had little to do with the current New York School’s preoccupation with	

108 Noguchi, interview by Paul Cummings.

109 Bert Winther-Tamaki, *Art in the Encounter of Nations: Japanese and American Artists in the Early Postwar Years* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 119-120.

110 Lyford, *Isamu Noguchi's Modernism*, 178–79. See also Winther-Tamaki, *Art in the Encounter of Nations*, 114-115.

111 Lyford, *Isamu Noguchi's Modernism*, 163–69; Winther-Tamaki, *Art in the Encounter of Nations*, 110-121.

112 Henry McBride, quoted in Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*, 22.

113 Clement Greenberg, “Review of Exhibitions of Isamu Noguchi and American Paintings from the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art,” *The Nation* (March 19, 1949), reprinted in Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 2, 294-297.

114 Lyford, *Isamu Noguchi's Modernism*, 195; Winther-Tamaki, *Art in the Encounter of Nations*, 119. Kim Theriault explores a similar critical feminization and exoticizing of Gorky in Chapter 7 of *Rethinking Arshile Gorky*, 163-177. Greenberg also invoked masculinity in his 1945 review of Gorky's solo exhibition at Julien Levy, underscoring his equation of machismo with true artistry: “Because Gorky remained so long a promising painter, the suspicion arose that he lacked independence and masculinity of character.” Greenberg, “Art,” *The Nation* (March 24, 1945): 343.

115 Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*, 30.



Plates



Plate 1
 Arshile Gorky
Still Life (Composition with Vegetables), circa 1928
 Oil on canvas
 28 1/16 × 36 1/16 in. (71.3 × 91.6 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of
 Albert Erskine to the Mari and James A. Michener Collection, G1974.6



Plate 2
 Isamu Noguchi
Leda, 1928
 Aluminum bronze, brass on marble base
 23 3/8 × 11 7/8 × 12 5/8 in. (59.4 × 30.2 × 32.1 cm)
 The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

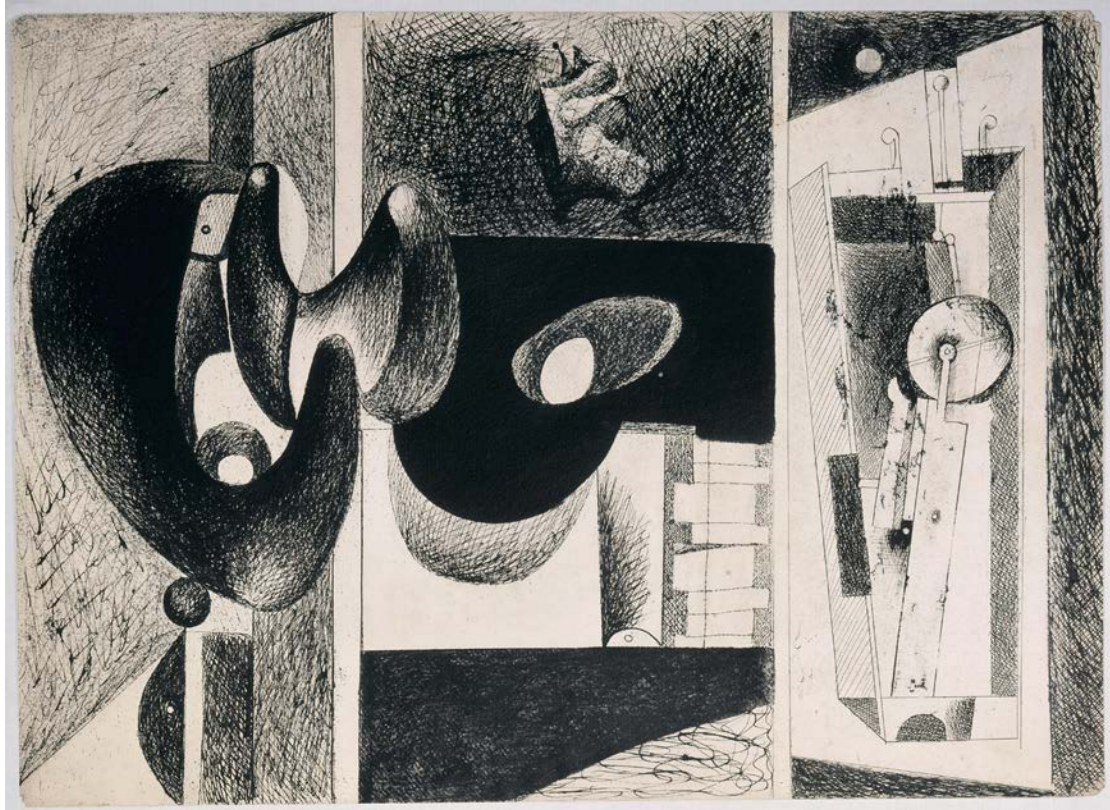


Plate 3
 Arshile Gorky
Untitled (Nighttime, Enigma, and Nostalgia), circa 1931–32
 Ink on paper
 21 1/2 × 29 1/2 in. (54.6 × 74.9 cm)
 The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York



Plate 4
 Isamu Noguchi
Miss Expanding Universe, 1932 *
 Aluminum, unnumbered edition (2 realized)
 40 7/8 × 34 7/8 × 9 in. (103.8 × 88.6 × 22.9 cm)
 *This edition not included in exhibition



Plate 5
Isamu Noguchi
Monument to Ben Franklin, 1933
Bronze with chrome nickel plating and aluminum
48 1/2 × 23 1/4 × 12 3/4 in. (123.2 × 59.1 × 32.4 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York



Plate 6
Arshile Gorky
Study for "Mechanics of Flying," Newark Airport Aviation Murals, circa 1936
Opaque watercolor and graphite pencil on paper
15 × 18 1/4 in. (38.1 × 46.4 cm)
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York,
50th Anniversary Gift of Alan H. Temple, 80.16



Plate 7
 Arshile Gorky, De Hirsh Margules, and Isamu Noguchi
Hitler Invades Poland, 1939
 Graphite pencil, wax crayon, and sealing wax on wove paper
 17 1/2 x 22 7/8 in. (44.5 x 58.1 cm)
 Collection of Gertrude Stein, New York



Plate 8
 Arshile Gorky, De Hirsh Margules, and Isamu Noguchi
Hitler Invades Poland, 1939
 Graphite pencil and wax crayon on wove paper
 17 11/16 x 23 5/8 in. (44.9 x 60 cm)
 David Owsley Museum of Art, Ball State University, Muncie,
 Indiana, Museum Purchase, 1963.012.002



Plate 9
 Arshile Gorky, De Hirsh Margules, and Isamu Noguchi
Abstract, 1939
 Ink, graphite pencil, oil pastel, watercolor, and wash on paper

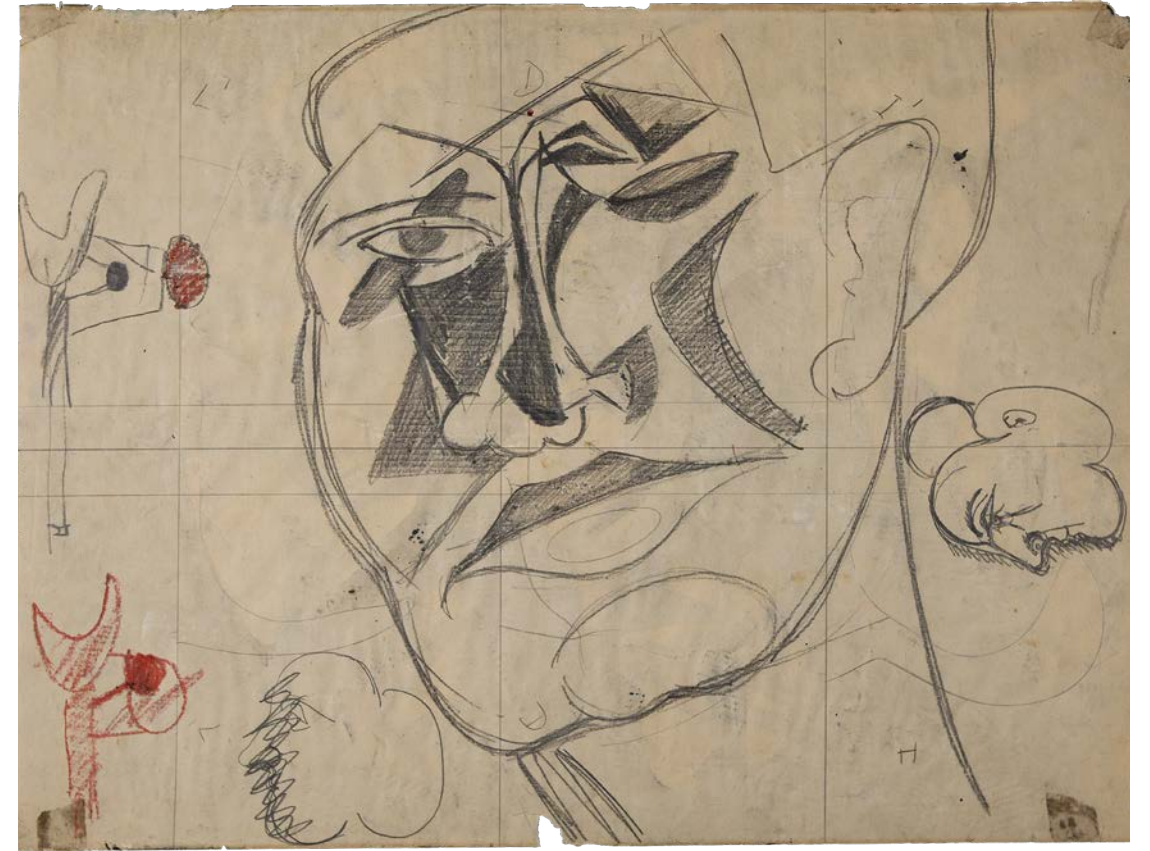


Plate 10
 Arshile Gorky
Head of Margules, 1939
 Graphite pencil and crayon on paper
 17 3/4 x 23 1/4 in. (45.1 x 59.1 cm)
 Fleming Museum of Art, University of Vermont, Burlington, Gift of Walter
 Cerf, 1982.26.4b,a



Plate 11
 Arshile Gorky
Mojave, 1941–42
 Oil on canvas
 28 7/8 × 40 5/8 in. (73.3 × 103.2 cm)
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Burt Kleiner



Plate 12
 Isamu Noguchi
Yellow Landscape, 1943 (partially reconstructed 1995)
 Magnesite, wood, string, and metal fishing weight
 30 1/2 × 32 5/8 × 6 3/4 in. (77.5 × 82.9 × 17.1 cm)
 The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York



Plate 13
Isamu Noguchi
This Tortured Earth, 1942–43 (cast 1963)
Bronze
3 × 28 1/8 × 29 in. (7.6 × 71.4 × 73.7 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden
Museum, New York

Plate 14
Isamu Noguchi
Lunar Landscape (Woman), 1944
Magnesite, electric components
26 7/8 × 12 × 11 in. (68.3 × 30.5 × 27.9 cm)
The Fralin Museum of Art at The University
of Virginia, Bequest of Buzz Miller. The Alan
Groh-Buzz Miller Collection, 1999.12.64



Plate 15
Arshile Gorky
The Horns of the Landscape, 1944
Oil on canvas
29 15/16 × 33 7/8 in. (76 × 86 cm)
Collection of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center,
Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, Gift from the
collection of Katherine Sanford Deutsch, class of 1940

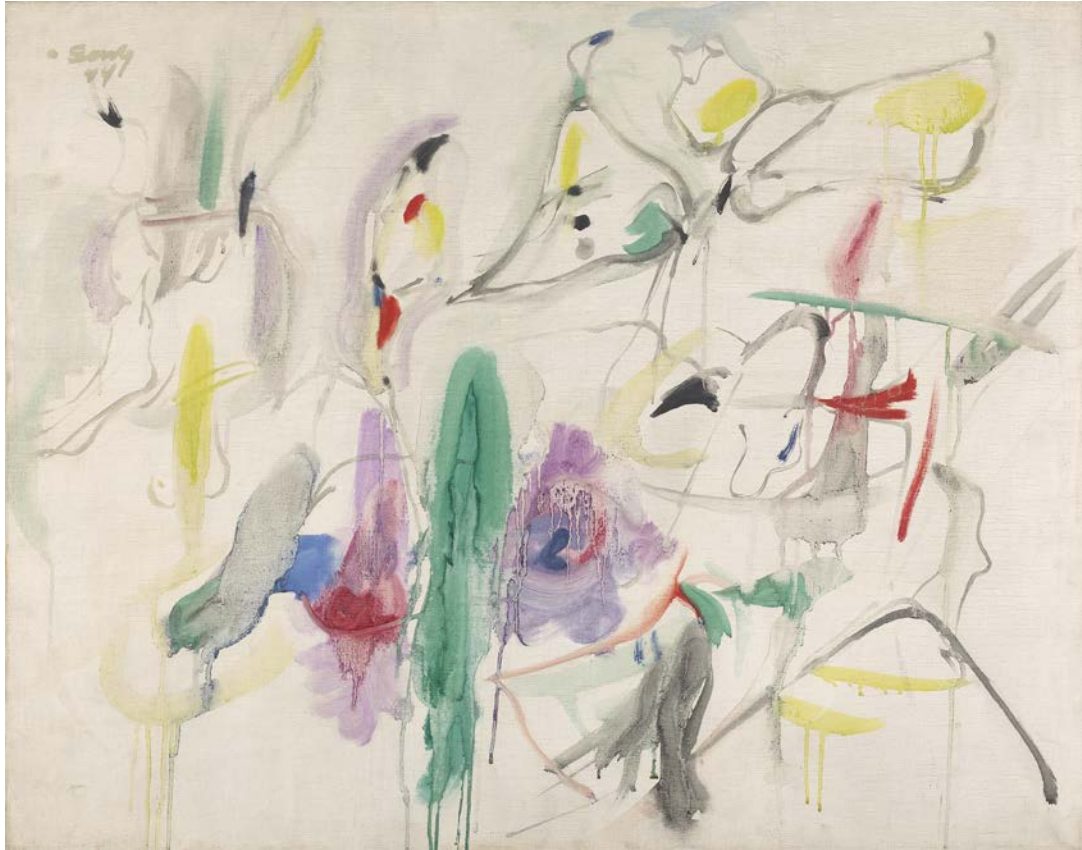


Plate 16
 Arshile Gorky
The Love of a New Gun, 1944
 Oil on canvas
 29 3/4 × 37 3/4 in. (75.6 × 95.9 cm)
 The Menil Collection, Houston, 1980-17 DJ



Plate 17
 Isamu Noguchi
Time Lock, 1944-45
 Languedoc marble
 26 1/4 × 20 1/2 × 15 3/4 in. (66.7 × 52.1 × 40 cm)
 The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York



Plate 18
Isamu Noguchi
Monument to Heroes, 1943 (exhibition copy, fabricated 1978)
Plastic, paint, bones, wood, string
37 1/2 × 20 3/4 × 19 in. (95.3 × 52.7 × 48.3 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York



Plate 19
Arshile Gorky
The Unattainable, 1945
Oil on canvas
41 1/4 × 29 1/4 in. (104.8 × 74.3 cm)
The Baltimore Museum of Art: Purchase with exchange funds from
Blanche Adler Bequest, Frederic W. Cone, William A. Dickey, Jr., Nelson
and Juanita Greif Gutman Collection, Wilmer Hoffman, Mr. and Mrs.
Albert Lion, Saidie A. May Bequest, Philip B. Perlman Bequest, Leo M.
Rogers, Mrs. James N. Rosenberg, and Paul Vallotton; BMA 1964.15



Plate 20
Isamu Noguchi
Trinity, 1945 (cast 1988)
Bronze plate
55 3/4 × 22 1/4 × 19 1/2 in. (141.6 × 56.5 × 49.5 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

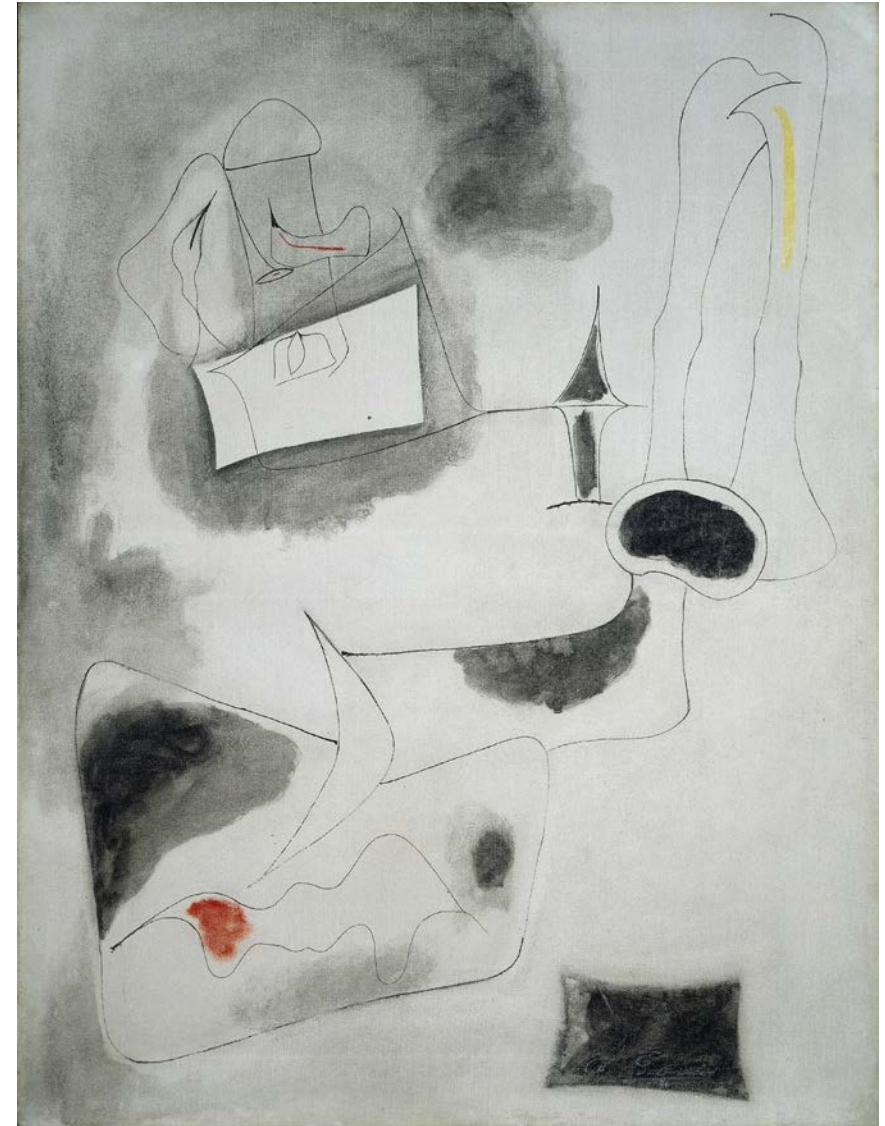


Plate 21
Arshile Gorky
Nude, 1946
Oil on canvas
50 1/8 × 38 1/8 in. (127.3 × 96.9 cm)
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, DC, Gift of the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation, 1966



Plate 22
 Isamu Noguchi
Gregory (Effigy), 1945 (cast 1969)
 Bronze
 69 1/4 × 16 1/8 × 16 3/8 in. (175.9 × 41 × 41.6 cm)
 Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection,
 Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas



Plate 23
 Arshile Gorky
The Betrothal, II, 1947
 Oil and ink on canvas
 50 3/4 × 38 in. (128.9 × 96.5 cm)
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Purchase 50.3

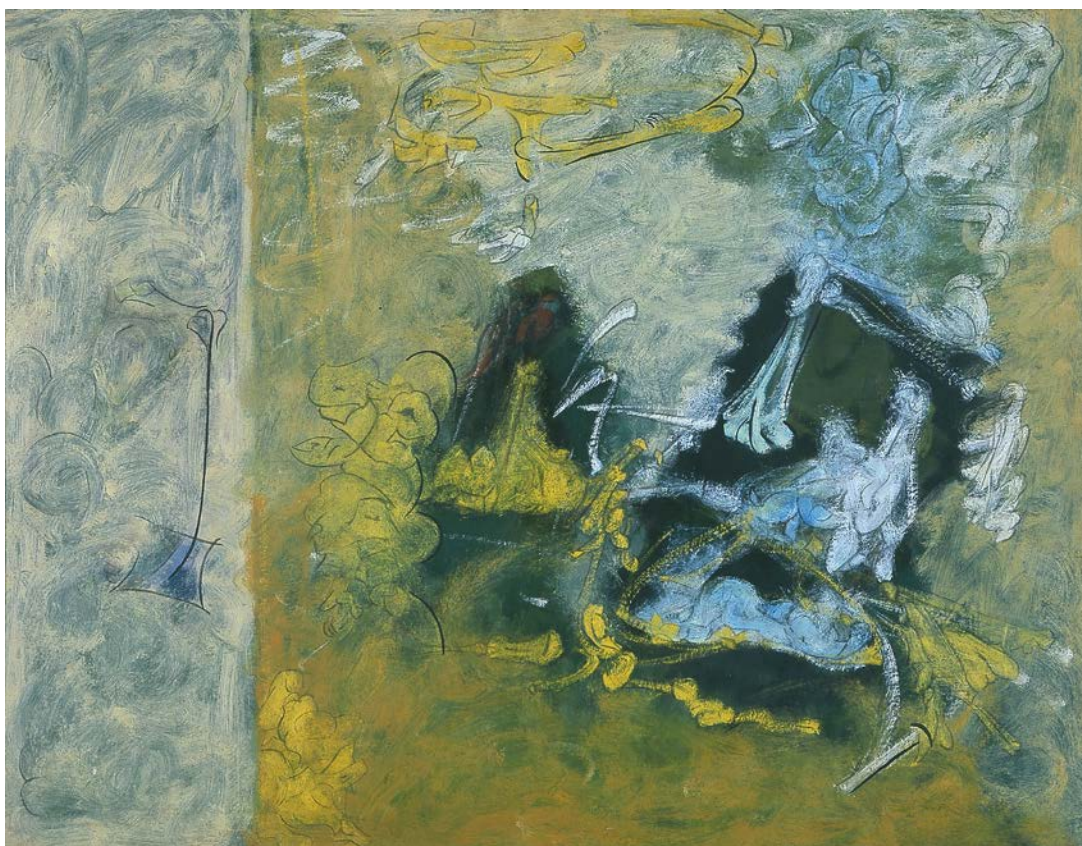


Plate 24
Arshile Gorky
Dialogue of the Edge, circa 1946
Oil on canvas
32 1/16 × 41 1/8 in. (81.5 × 104.4 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at
Austin, Gift of Mari and James A. Michener, 1991.223



Textual information, likely a label or description, mounted on the wall.



Checklist of the Exhibition

Arshile Gorky
Khorkom, Ottoman Empire (now Dilkaya, Turkey), circa 1904– Sherman, Connecticut, 1948

Still Life (Composition with Vegetables), circa 1928
Oil on canvas
28 1/16 × 36 1/16 in. (71.3 × 91.6 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Albert Erskine to the Mari and James A. Michener Collection, G1974.6

Untitled (Nighttime, Enigma, and Nostalgia), circa 1931–32
Ink on paper
21 1/2 × 29 1/2 in. (54.6 × 74.9 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

Study for “Mechanics of Flying,” Newark Airport Aviation Murals, circa 1936
Opaque watercolor and graphite pencil on paper
15 × 18 1/4 in. (38.1 × 46.4 cm)
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 50th Anniversary Gift of Alan H. Temple, 80.16

Mojave, 1941–42
Oil on canvas
28 7/8 × 40 5/8 in. (73.3 × 103.2 cm)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Burt Kleiner

The Horns of the Landscape, 1944
Oil on canvas
29 15/16 × 33 7/8 in. (76 × 86 cm)
Collection of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, Gift from the collection of Katherine Sanford Deutsch, class of 1940

The Love of a New Gun, 1944
Oil on canvas
29 3/4 × 37 3/4 in. (75.6 × 95.9 cm)
The Menil Collection, Houston, 1980-17 DJ

The Unattainable, 1945
Oil on canvas
41 1/4 × 29 1/4 in. (104.8 × 74.3 cm)
The Baltimore Museum of Art: Purchase with exchange funds from Blanche Adler Bequest, Frederic W. Cone, William A. Dickey, Jr., Nelson and Juanita Greif Gutman Collection, Wilmer Hoffman, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Lion, Saidie A. May Bequest, Philip B. Perlman Bequest, Leo M. Rogers, Mrs. James N. Rosenberg, and Paul Vallotton; BMA 1964.15

Nude, 1946
Oil on canvas
50 1/8 × 38 1/8 in. (127.3 × 96.9 cm)
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, Gift of the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation, 1966

Dialogue of the Edge, circa 1946
Oil on canvas
32 1/16 × 41 1/8 in. (81.5 × 104.4 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Mari and James A. Michener, 1991.223

The Betrothal, II, 1947
Oil and ink on canvas
50 3/4 × 38 in. (128.9 × 96.5 cm)
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Purchase 50.3

Isamu Noguchi
Los Angeles, California, 1904–New York, New York, 1988

Leda, 1928
Aluminum bronze, brass on marble base
23 3/8 × 11 7/8 × 12 5/8 in. (59.4 × 30.2 × 32.1 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

Miss Expanding Universe, 1932 (exhibition copy, fabricated 2021)
Aluminum
40 7/8 × 34 7/8 × 9 in. (103.8 × 88.6 × 22.9 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

Monument to Ben Franklin, 1933
Bronze with chrome nickel plating and aluminum
48 1/2 × 23 1/4 × 12 3/4 in. (123.2 × 59.1 × 32.4 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

This Tortured Earth, 1942–43 (cast 1963)
Bronze
3 × 28 1/8 × 29 in. (7.6 × 71.4 × 73.7 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

Monument to Heroes, 1943 (exhibition copy, fabricated 1978)
Plastic, paint, bones, wood, string
37 1/2 × 20 3/4 × 19 in. (95.3 × 52.7 × 48.3 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

Yellow Landscape, 1943 (partially reconstructed 1995)
Magnesite, wood, string, and metal fishing weight
30 1/2 × 32 5/8 × 6 3/4 in. (77.5 × 82.9 × 17.1 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

Lunar Landscape (Woman), 1944
Magnesite, electric components
26 7/8 × 12 × 11 in. (68.3 × 30.5 × 27.9 cm)
The Fralin Museum of Art at The University of Virginia, Bequest of Buzz Miller. The Alan Groh-Buzz Miller Collection, 1999.12.64

Time Lock, 1944–45
Languedoc marble
26 1/4 × 20 1/2 × 15 3/4 in. (66.7 × 52.1 × 40 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

Trinity, 1945 (cast 1988)
Bronze plate
55 3/4 × 22 1/4 × 19 1/2 in. (141.6 × 56.5 × 49.5 cm)
The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York

Gregory (Effigy), 1945 (cast 1969)
Bronze
69 1/4 × 16 1/8 × 16 3/8 in. (175.9 × 41 × 41.6 cm)
Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas

Collaborative Drawings:
Arshile Gorky, Isamu Noguchi, and De Hirsh Margules (Iași, Romania, 1899–New York, New York, 1965)

Hitler Invades Poland, 1939
Graphite pencil, wax crayon, and sealing wax on wove paper
17 1/2 × 22 7/8 in. (44.5 × 58.1 cm)
Collection of Gertrude Stein, New York

Hitler Invades Poland, 1939
Graphite pencil and wax crayon on wove paper
17 11/16 × 23 5/8 in. (44.9 × 60 cm)
David Owsley Museum of Art, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, Museum Purchase, 1963.012.002

Abstract, 1939
(verso: Arshile Gorky, *Head of Margules*, 1939)
Ink, graphite pencil, oil pastel, watercolor, and wash on paper
17 3/4 × 23 1/4 in. (45.1 × 59.1 cm)
Fleming Museum of Art, University of Vermont, Burlington, Gift of Walter Cerf, 1982.26.4a,b

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- Fleming Museum of Art,
University of Vermont, Burlington
- The Fralin Museum of Art at the
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- Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center,
Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York
- Gertrude Stein, New York
- Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
- The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and
Garden Museum, New York
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- The Menil Collection, Houston
- Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Acknowledgements
Claire Howard

Arshile Gorky and Isamu Noguchi: Outside In has been in development for over seven years and through multiple permutations, and its realization would not have been possible without the support and hard work of many talented people at the Blanton Museum of Art and beyond. I am deeply grateful to Blanton director Simone J. Wicha, who championed this project from the outset, and to chief curator and deputy director of collections Carter Foster, who believed in its importance and expanded its thesis into *In Creative Harmony: Three Artistic Partnerships*, the exhibition of which it is now a part. I applaud my co-curators, Vanessa Davidson and Hannah Klemm, for their smart and compelling sections of this three-part exhibition, which pair José Guadalupe Posada and Artemio Rodríguez, and Nora and Eliza Naranjo Morse.

Special thanks are due to the Blanton’s Cassandra Smith for overseeing the myriad budgetary and logistical aspects of this project, and to Lisa Dirks for coordinating complex loans and ensuring a seamless installation. The beautiful presentation is thanks to the diligence and good humor of Matthew Langland, Eric Mathis, James Turner, Rachael Shannon, and especially Andrew Anderson, who created its visually distinctive platforms. Meg Burns, Lillian Michel, and Holly McDonald capably supported this project and its publication throughout their development. Ray Williams provided sensitive feedback on its interpretive texts, and I thank Maggie Fucile and the Blanton’s Education and gallery teacher teams for enthusiastically sharing the project with visitors. Mitch McDavid and the Blanton’s gallery assistants thoughtfully engaged with the installation and ensured the safety of its objects. Katie Bruton, Manny Alcalá, and Lizabel Stella helped it reach a wider audience. Dawn Hewitt and Julia Roach secured vital funding for the exhibition. Numerous other Blanton colleagues, including Leslie Adkins, Anna Berns, Michael Carnes, Stacey Cilek, Allie Heath, Sarah Hutchison, Shelby Lakins, Jennifer Lioy, Portia Martin, Taryn Mills-Drummond, Virginia Rothenflue, Meredith Sutton, Carlotta Stankiewicz, Jennifer Swartley, and Shaien White, were integral to its success, and I am in their debt.

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Michael R. Taylor, with whom I had the great fortune to work on the 2009 Arshile Gorky retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, has remained a crucial sounding board and mentor since. Lastly, I wish to thank collectors Albert R. Erskine Jr., and Mari and James A. Michener, who gifted The University of Texas at Austin the two Arshile Gorky paintings that bookend this installation. The Micheners’ collection of twentieth-century American art was a source of fascination and inspiration throughout my time at the Blanton, of which this project is a deeply gratifying capstone, and I thank again everyone who nurtured it along the way.

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The following text is a transcription of the wall text in the gallery, providing information about the artworks and the exhibition.





A Virtual Partnership: José Guadalupe Posada and Artemio Rodríguez in Dialogue

Vanessa K. Davidson

The exhibition *José Guadalupe Posada and Artemio Rodríguez: Calaveras y Corazones* examines a virtual dialogue spanning one hundred years between two radical printmakers. Both employ caustic political critique, while also celebrating the tales and traditions of the *pueblo*, their “people”: each artist’s community, rooted in historical and cultural kinship. As such, their distinct bodies of work have tremendous resonance, although they inhabited different worlds. The patterns of their early lives in rural environs, as well both artists’ transformative teenaged apprenticeships, also display considerable overlap, as elucidated in Rodríguez’s contributions to this volume. Echoes of distant conversations reverberate among Posada’s and Rodríguez’s artworks, despite a century of separation.

Working in Mexico City at the turn of the twentieth century, José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913) is known alternately as “The Printmaker of the People” or “The Mexican Goya,” but ultimately, as the father of modern graphic arts in his country (Figure 1). Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972—Páztcuaro, Mexico, present), emerged as an artist at the turn of the twenty-first century living in East Los Angeles. He reinvented Posada’s seminal precedent by splicing its fundamental lessons with visual sources as disparate as medieval European, Netherlandish, and Chicano art. As this exhibition illustrates, both artists anchor their subjects deeply within their respective contemporary contexts, celebrating the histories and popular cultures of their communities. They also share a penchant for grim humor, biting social satire, and a predilection for living, breathing *calaveras*: the skeletons Posada first popularized as ironic depictions of the Mexican bourgeoisie. Inspired as much by pre-Columbian

Figure 1. Unknown Mexican photographer, *Retrato de José Guadalupe Posada y su hijo Sabino* [Portrait of José Guadalupe Posada and his son Sabino], 1890–1895.





Figure 2. José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913), *Calavera Oaxaqueña* [Skeleton from Oaxaca], circa 1910, type-metal engraving, 11 7/8 × 15 7/8 in. (30.2 × 40.3 cm). Artemio Rodríguez Collection.

artforms as by popular *Día de Muertos* traditions, Posada's *calaveras* soon became beloved, everyday characters enacting rituals of popular life and lore—and later, during the days of the Mexican Revolution, murderous warriors on the rampage (Figure 2).

This exhibition is the first to bring Posada and Rodríguez together in partnership. As an introduction to this catalogue, I here discuss how the show highlighted three primary points of confluence that unite these artists across time: incisive narratives rooted in each artist's particular context and community; pursuant from this, content that dictates imaginative stylistic choices; and compositional tactics often designed as vehicles for scathing political parody or morbid humor. Both artists are also recognized innovators. Posada modernized and reinvented the graphic arts in Mexico, and Rodríguez revived the art of relief printmaking at the end of the twentieth century in Los Angeles, and in Mexico at the start of the twenty-first.

Posada witnessed a rapidly changing Mexico: his lifetime spanned the long decades of the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1830–1915), known as the *Porfiriato* (1876–1911), until the beginnings of the

Mexican Revolution (1910–1921). Living in the United States from 1994 to 2008, Rodríguez encountered a nation waging wars in the Persian Gulf (1990–1991 and 2003–2011), while also embroiled in an intensifying internal struggle against undocumented immigrants. Each artist worked at a decisive historical moment within his own particular milieu. These turn-of-the-century historical crossroads converge in this exhibition, manifesting parallel artistic strategies adapted to suit own each artist's reality, 100 years apart.



Figure 3. Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present), *La Lotería XII* [Lottery XII], detail, 1999, linocut, 15 × 14 3/4 in. (38.1 × 37.5 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores García, 2024.92.

The themes of Celebration and Satire structure this exhibition as poetic bridges that unite Posada's and Rodríguez's prolific production. These terms function as nuanced, elastic concepts involving wide thematic variations that help to illuminate both bodies of work. The section *Celebration: Community and Culture* encompasses diverse deep ties: commemorations of popular customs, shared heritage, beloved traditions, as well as symbolic allusions to community belonging (Figure 3). In addition, it features visual illustrations of hundred-year-old disparities between conventions framing gender relations, especially those confining female bodies, while also juxtaposing courtship rituals from each artist's era. Diametrically opposed, the section Satire: Calaveras, Critique, and *The Triumph of Death*, with its confrontational and aggressive implications, features machete-wielding skeletons and sensationalized apocalyptic scenes. It also includes satirical caricatures of Uncle Sam and Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz, and contemporary “fat cats” preying on those who can least afford to lose. Ironic confrontations between characters, who often personify nation states or sometimes Death itself, populate narratives in the Satire section with political parodies refracted through dark humor and boundless imagination (Figure 4).

Posada went largely unrecognized by the art establishment during his lifetime. The young future Mexican Muralist Diego Rivera, however, “seldom let a day pass without going to Posada's shop”¹ during his time studying at the Academia San Carlos across the street. He later described “Don Lupe” most expansively as the “interpreter of the sorrows, the happiness, and the anguished aspirations of the Mexican people.”² Rivera specified more precisely the dual poles central to Posada's work by describing him as the “illustrator of stories, legends, songs and prayers of the poor people; a



Figure 4. José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913), *Filosofías populares. ¡No raspen, que descascaran!!* [Popular Philosophies. Don't Scrape!! You'll Peel!!], published in *El Diablito Rojo* [The Little Red Devil], vol. 2, no. 2, 1901, metal relief print on paper, 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm). Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin.

tenacious, mocking and ferocious combatant; good as gold and fond of fun.”³ With an unwavering focus on Mexican society, politics, and the lives and traditions of everyday folk, this radical printmaker celebrated the exploited while satirizing the exploiters. Posada's visual veneration of the *pueblo*, in diametrical contrast with the satirical vitriol he reserved for those who profited off its people, serve as the two parallel cornerstones of his production, resonating with the dual axes of Rodríguez's praxis. The exhibition is structured according to these opposing thematic leitmotifs to respect the throughlines that organically connect both bodies of work.

Printed on penny papers, broadsides, and street gazettes sold on streetcorners, Posada's illustrations have a conceptual clarity and visual impact that made them cheap “books for the

illiterate.” This was crucial in the early 1900s in Mexico, when literacy rates floundered around 15%.⁴ After leaving Aguascalientes abruptly—he vilified the ruling elite in his first published illustrations in 1971, and fled fearing recrimination, as discussed below—he worked in León for 16 years (1872–1888), honing his craft, and steadily gaining increasing recognition and commissions from national presses. Posada’s career truly flourished when he joined the Antonio Vanegas Arroyo Publishing House in Mexico City in 1888. Vanegas Arroyo dedicated his press to producing a range of inexpensive newspapers, as well as illustrated chapbooks, comics, *corridos*, sensationalist news, and moralistic and religious cautionary tales: all marketed for the popular masses. Many of the Press’s publications were also examples of *prensa obrera* [workers’ journalism], in which Posada’s illustrations would play a central role.

Posada initially worked alongside the Press’s Chief Illustrator and Engraver, Manuel Alfonso Manilla (Mexico City, Mexico, 1830–1895), who became his close colleague and collaborator, until Manilla retired in 1892 and Posada assumed this title. Some of the broadsides included in this exhibition feature both artists’ engravings on the same page. They harmonized so well that sometimes their production can be difficult to differentiate. In fact, it was Manilla who first introduced skeletons into the Vanegas Arroyo Press’s publications (Figure 5). But it would be Posada who greatly expanded the calaveras’ satirical, humorous, and popular potential, exponentially expanding their renown in the 52 periodicals to which he contributed illustrations while at Vanegas Arroyo.

Posada invented one of his most beloved creations, the female dandy *La Calavera Catrina*, in 1910, just as the Mexican Revolution was catching

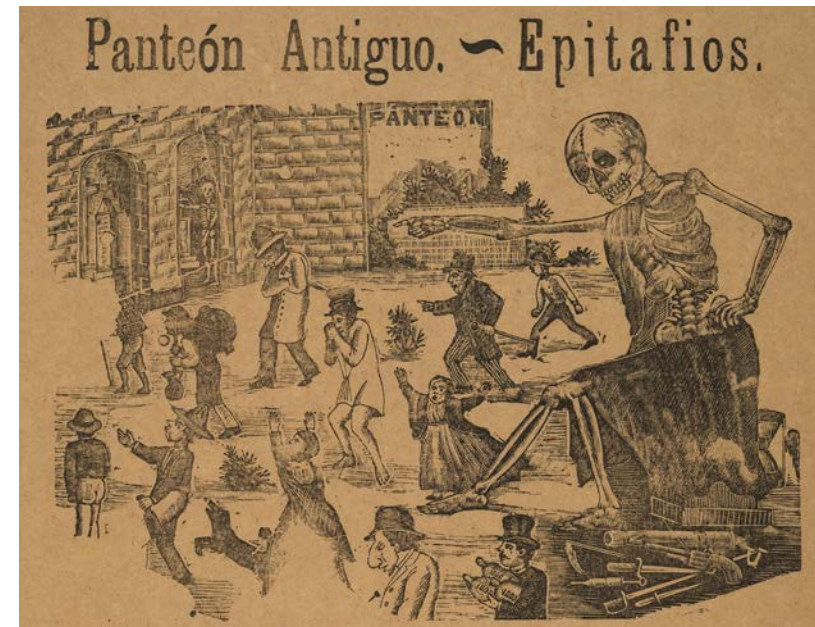


Figure 5. Manuel Manilla (Mexico City, Mexico, 1830–1895), *Panteón antiguo. Epitafios* [Ancient Pantheon. Epitaphs], published by Vanegas Arroyo Press, Mexico City, circa 1890, type-metal engraving, 14 1/2 × 11 7/8 in. (36.8 cm × 30 cm). Artemio Rodríguez Collection.

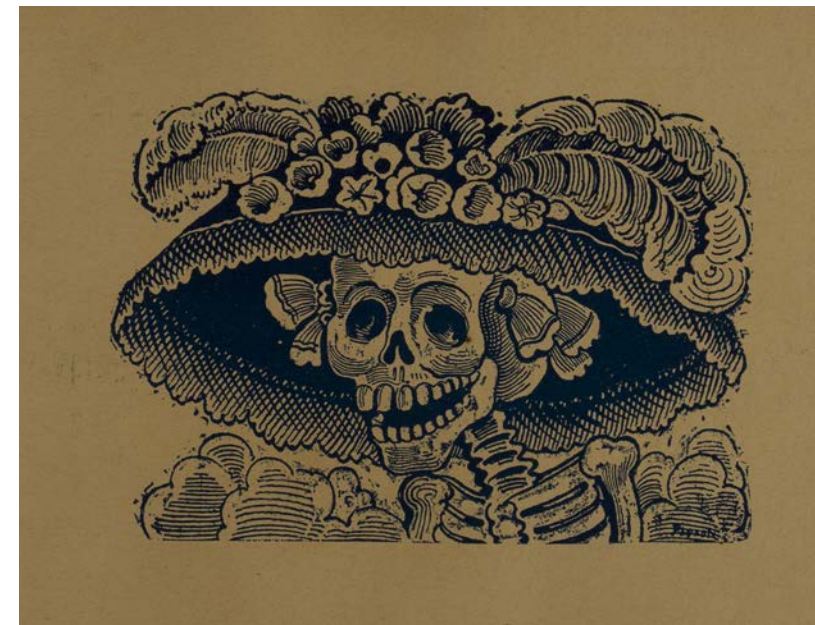
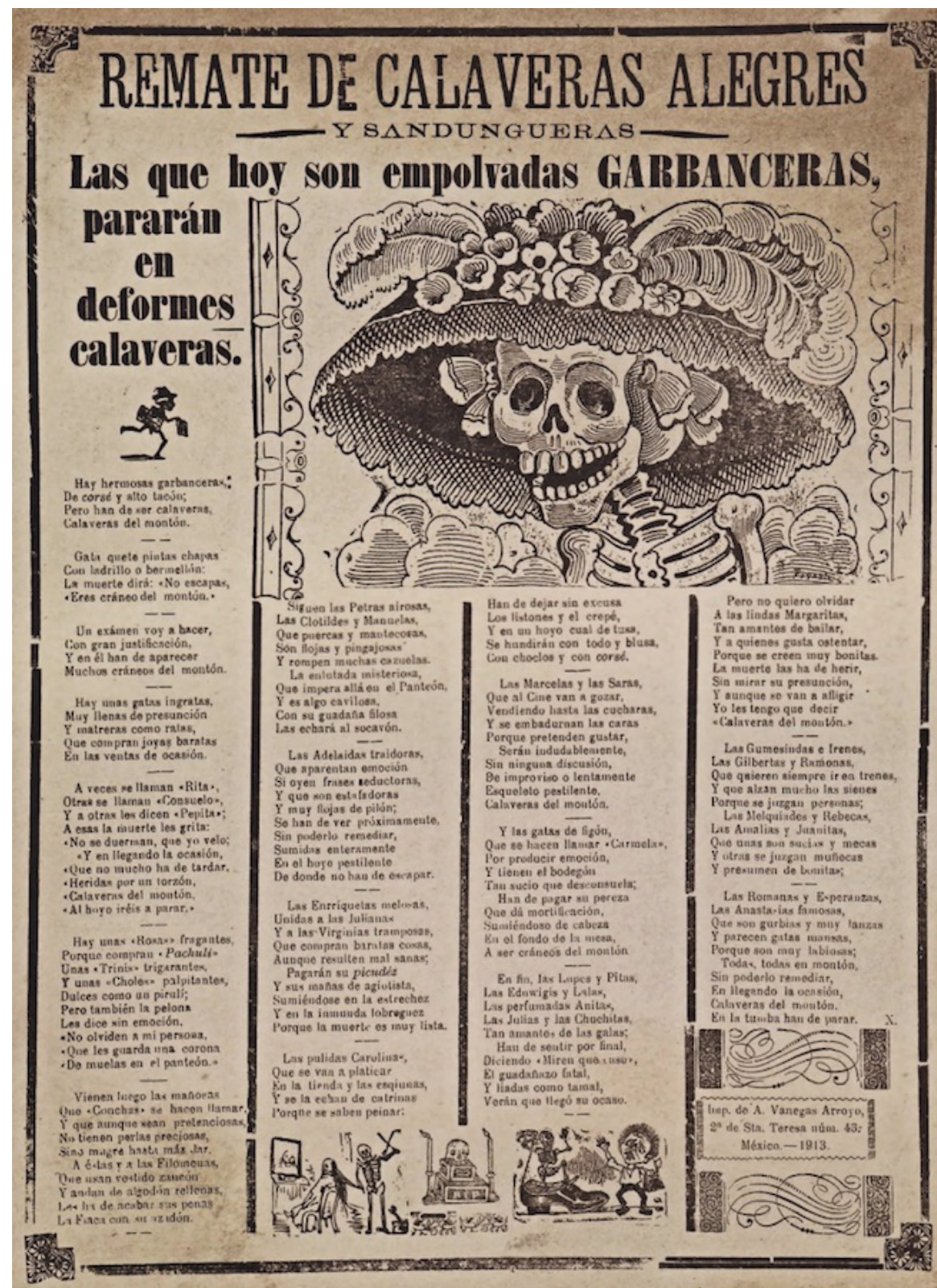


Figure 6. José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913), *Calavera de la Catrina* [Skeleton of the Female Dandy], circa 1910, photo-relief etching with engraving, 6 1/4 × 9 1/8 in. (15.9 × 23.2 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores García, PA2023.CA.633.

fire (Figure 6). At first, he called her *La Calavera Garbancera*, the derogatory term for Mexicans who claimed solely European ancestry and rejected their Indigenous roots (Figure 7). In her ostentatious hat, this bony fashionista was intended as a symbolic epitaph for the wealthy privileged classes, a



satirical emblem of the sins of vanity and greed, and an allegorical representation of government corruption under dictator Porfirio Díaz. However, her naïve, beguiling nature soon endeared her to the disgruntled masses. Renamed after *catrin* or “well-dressed,” she became simply *La Calavera Catrina*. “*La Catrina*” became a national icon among popular folk, who embraced her as a demure champion of the underdog. Depicted repeatedly by Mexican artists throughout the twentieth century as a symbolic allusion to their inherited, radical historical roots, Chicano artists also reclaimed Catrina’s underlying insurgent character, beginning with the Chicano Movement in the 1960s and continuing to the present day. Diverse Chicano artists have celebrated *La Catrina*’s continued relevance as a cultural icon and a symbol of community belonging.

Figure 7. José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913), *Remate de calaveras alegres y sandungueras* [Auction of Cheerful and Sandunga-dancing Skulls], image design c. 1910, photo-relief etching, dated 1913 in lower right, 15.875 × 11.875 in. (40.3 × 30.2 cm). Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York.

Posada was “discovered” posthumously in the early 1920s by French-born Mexican artist Jean Charlot, who was studying the popular and Indigenous arts of Mexico. Charlot’s 1925 article “A Precursor of the Mexican Art Movement: The Printmaker Posadas [sic]” praises his subject’s “love of tragedy, blood, and death” as “an essential part of Indigenous life” while also exhorting other artists to mirror “the dignity that [Posada] knew to find in humble lives.”⁵ Posada was ultimately embraced by the Mexican Muralists—with Rivera leading the charge—as a crucial predecessor, a vital “missing” local link between the arts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Despite decades of vanguard artistic experimentation in Mexico between the 1890s and 1930s, Rivera cast Posada’s modernization of the print medium and dedication to common folks’ histories, traditions, and political plight as foundational cornerstones for the Muralists’ own art. For Rivera and his disciples, Posada’s popular illustrations modernized Mexican printmaking by developing



Figure 8. Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present), *Día de los Muertos* [Day of the Dead], 1995, color screenprint, 35 1/4 × 28 3/8 in. (89.5 × 72 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Ricardo and Harriett Romo, 1996.249.

a new graphic clarity that supplanted the visual language tied to Europeanized academicism of the nineteenth century. But also, perhaps most importantly, Posada ushered in The Modern by spotlighting a single, complex, multifaceted subject: Mexico itself, its society, politics, history, and popular culture, published for the masses.

Since that time, Posada’s satirical caricatures and his *calaveras*, alternately merry-making or murderous, have been revived as much by the members of the *Taller de Gráfica Popular* [People’s Print Workshop] in 1940s Mexico City, as by artists of the Chicano Movement working across the United States. This is only just. During his lifetime, Posada’s

prints also made their way north of the border to Mexican communities working there, hungry for news from home and familiar visions of the homeland—the more satirical and scandalous, the better.

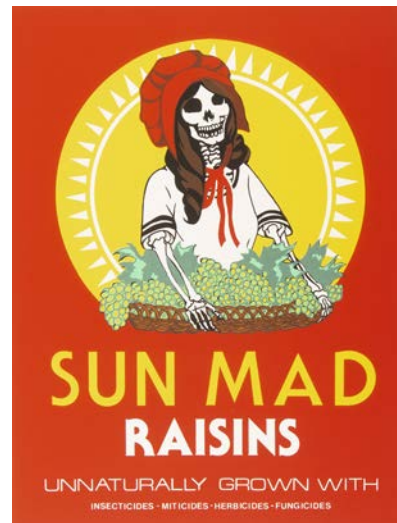


A century later, the 22-year-old Artemio Rodríguez crossed the Mexican border to live for 14 years in California, settling in East L.A. in the mid-1990s. With one foot in Mexico and the other in the U.S., straddling the complex borderlands in between, his perspective was initially that of an outsider, looking in. He relates that his “beginning in the art world in the United States” was at Self Help Graphics, which he found advertised in a community newspaper while working as a house painter (Figure 8). There, he soon enrolled in his first and only printmaking classes. He also received the crucial support of local artists and their larger communities in his early efforts to dedicate himself to printmaking.⁶ “SHG was founded in 1970, it was a legendary place in the Chicano art scene,” Rodríguez remarks. He soon pivoted from his day job as a painting contractor to first blossom, then thrive as an acclaimed printmaker, reviving and revolutionizing the technique of relief printmaking.⁷ “I was able to resume what I had learned about linocuts in Mexico,” he recalls. “My new circumstance, as an illegal person in a strange country gave me different perspectives on the world and on my existence. Printmaking was my way of expressing my ideas and relating to the new reality in which I found myself.”⁸

Posada’s example served Rodríguez as both a conceptual and a visual bridge to create a graphic art straddling his two incongruent worlds. If Posada was one of the vital links bridging the nineteenth and twentieth century in the minds of the Muralists,

his pivotal precedent served Rodríguez as a vital connection between his Mexican past and his new Mexican-American present in the twenty-first century United States. Rodríguez mined the two opposing cornerstones of Posada's practice, celebration and satire, as crucial reference points. He also linked the artistic strategies underlying Posada's fight for common people to the tactics used by artists of the historical Chicano movement to translate ideals of social justice and political resistance into graphic form. Such strategies include narrative clarity, irony and satire, manifestations of community unity, as well as the frequent recourse to *calavera* figures in critical prints and posters. *Calaveras*, creatively appropriated from Posada's own original skeletal figures, whose insurgent influence had soon spread north of the border, were common in many representations Chicano artists produced, not only in connection with their Day of the Dead celebrations. One cannot help but imagine *Calavera Catrina* as a point of departure for Chicana artist Ester Hernández's 1982 *Sun Mad* (and later *Sun Raid* of the 1990s/2000s) (Figure 9). On the other hand, Carlos A. Cortéz's 1981 portrait of Posada pictures *La Catrina* pointing her bony fingers to the "Movimiento ARTístico CHicano" emblazoned upon Posada's own apron. Her agency not only anchors and legitimizes the "Chicano Artistic Movement" within the irreverent, ironic, and ultimately impassioned histories that the Posada's works have come to represent, but their emphatic capitals in Spanish also exhort all to "MARCH!" (Figure 10). Represented in the Blanton's collection, these are but two of the most iconic *calavera* images to emerge from the historical Chicano Movement.

Drawing inspiration from such Chicano precursors, the medieval printmakers he greatly admired, and also from Posada's own example, Rodríguez



engages themes of contemporary injustice in the United States. During his formative years there, he touched upon highly charged immigration, border, and wartime issues in an expressive graphic language all his own. His syncretic, inventive art also exhibits dual poles of community celebration and socio-political condemnation, mirroring Posada's practice. Rodríguez connects *calaveras* with critique, popular culture with political satire, themes balanced in his production by images embodying profound respect for communal histories and heritage. Posada's *pueblo* constituted the Mexican common folk who comprised Vanegas Arroyo publications' readership. Rodríguez found his own in the United States among those same Chicano, Latino, and Mexican Angeleno artists and communities who first embraced him. Furthermore, the artworks Rodríguez created during his U.S. sojourn justly belong within the context of the Chicano art and graphic activism produced in California from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s.

Rodríguez's artistic agility is due in no small part to the fluency with which he marshals diverse visual sources of inspiration, creating a unique synthesis: an entirely new hybrid. This innovative fusion sets him apart from the many other artists who found inspiration in Posada's body of work over the past century. Rodríguez's graphic dexterity derives from imaginative narrative frameworks he has reinvented using Posada's precedent as a launching pad to address contemporary themes rooted in community. Such were the woes of prolonged war in Iraq that Rodríguez reimagined with morbidly dark humor in his "woodcut mural" *The Triumph of Death* (2003–2006)—shown in this exhibition for the first time adjacent to Posada's murderous and mischievous *calaveras*, which served him as pivotal reference points. In addition to the U.S.'s first and second wars in the Persian Gulf (1990–1991 and

(Facing Page) Figure 9. Ester Hernández (Dinuba, California, 1944–San Francisco, California, present), *Sun Mad*, 1982, screenprint, 22 × 17 in. (55.9 × 43.2 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022.180. © Ester Hernández.

(Facing Page) Figure 10. Carlos A. Cortéz (Milwaukee, Wisconsin 1923–Chicago, Illinois 2005), *José Guadalupe Posada*, 1981, linocut, 35 × 23 1/8 in. (89 × 58.7 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022.167.

2003–2011), however, Rodríguez also witnessed the enactment of national legislation like the 1995 Immigration Enforcement Improvements Act, which further increased restrictions on undocumented immigrants. The artist and his community vividly experienced these socio-political tensions, which Rodríguez rendered raw upon the page, with, as critic Wayne Alan Brenner put it, “consummate skill in service of narrative so powerful it could fell a tree.”⁹

The Triumph of Death is a tour-de-force of woodcut printmaking, which the Blanton recently had the opportunity to acquire as the last extant edition not already in a museum collection. Astonishing in the proliferation of details upon its surface, executed pristinely in the splintery plywood medium, it constitutes an apocalyptic nightmare, as *calavera*

Figure 11. Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present), *El Triunfo de la Muerte* [*The Triumph of Death*], detail, 2003–2006, woodcut print, 96 × 144 in. (243.8 × 365.6 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Museum purchase, 2024.567.a-c.



Figure 12. José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913), *Panteón político* [*Political Pantheon*], detail, published in *El Diablito Rojo* [*The Little Red Devil*], 2nd epoch, vol. III, no. 136, 1910, metal relief print on paper, 12 3/6 × 18 9/10 in. (32 × 48 cm). Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin.

armies gruesomely slay everyone in sight, including Uncle Sam, the Statue of Liberty, and Superman, among so many others (Figure 11). Rodríguez here draws as much inspiration from Posada’s confrontational *calaveras*, as from the cast of malevolent characters Pieter Bruegel the Elder invented in the original 1562 *Triumph of Death*, which Rodríguez first saw in the Prado Museum in 1999. Also familiar with the *Dances of Death* by artists like Hans Holbein, as well as the flights of fancy of Hieronymus Bosch—among other points of reference in the universal history of art—Rodríguez here brings them all together in concert. A masterpiece of its medium, Rodríguez’s woodcut mural is infused with the same menacing, grim humor as Posada’s circa 1910 *Calavera oaxaqueña* [*Skeleton from Oaxaca*] and the “stew” of corruption he creates in his 1910 *Panteón político* [*Political Pantheon*], in which a grotesque devil forces politicians, church officials, and members of the military and the bourgeoisie into his boiling cauldron (Figures 12). Rodríguez’s hybrid fusion and tremendous artistic talent set him apart from many

who would emulate Posada, for he creates entirely original, syncretic artworks in dialogue with his predecessor as well as other sources of inspiration, thereby opening Posada's legacy to other art histories, other worlds.

Viewing Posada's and Rodríguez's works together evokes an imagined, conceptual call-and-response exchange of ideas. In the *Satire* section of the exhibition, Rodríguez's apocalyptic scenes populated by rapacious *calaveras* keep company with Posada's alarmist harbingers of the "End of the World." Rodríguez dared to murder pop culture icons Mickey Mouse [*Mickey Muerto*] and Superman [*Supermuerto*] (Figure 13). These characters coexist with Posada's ferocious *calaveras* brandishing machetes and others amassed as skeleton armies (Figure 14). And Posada's *Calavera Catrina* becomes in Rodríguez's hands *Calavera Katrina*, painted on the hood of a 1968 Chevy Impala lowrider, her name changed to commemorate the Hurricane Katrina tragedy (Figures 15-16). A collaboration with John Jota Leños, *El Muertorider Katrina Car* also displayed skeletal figures inspired by Posada's most



Figure 13. Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present), *Supermuerto* [*Superdead*], 2017, silkscreen, 40 × 21 in. (101.6 × 53.3 cm). Artemio Rodríguez Collection.

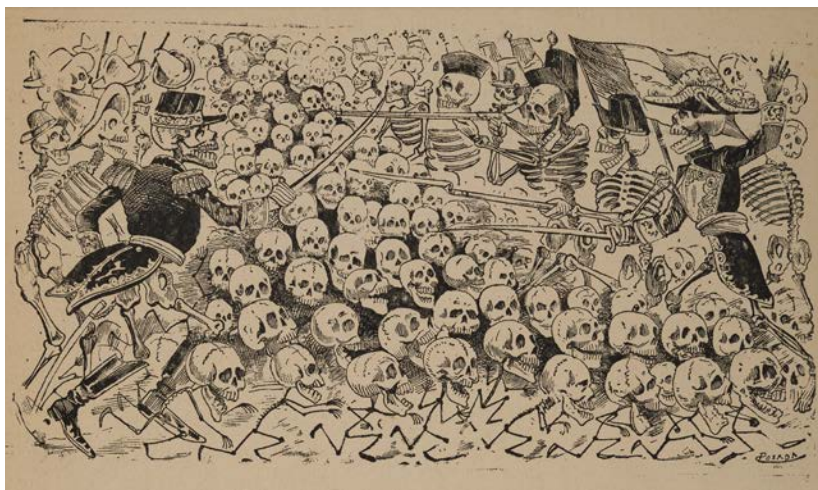


Figure 14. José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913), *Calavera: Guerra Mundial* [*Skeleto: World War*], 1911, original engraving on type metal, 17 1/4 × 12 3/4 in. (43.8 × 32.4 cm). Artemio Rodríguez Collection.

elaborate *calaveras* on both sides, as well as the top of the trunk, alongside recurring written references to oil and money (such as slogans like "War Is Money!") that allude to the Iraq War. *El Muertorider* thus embodies many traditions simultaneously: lowrider culture, political protest, Day of the Dead commemoration, and *La Catrina*'s enduring symbolism among contemporary Mexican and Chicano communities as a badge of belonging, even as a talisman.



Figure 15. Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present), John Jota Leños (Pomona, California, 1969–Santa Cruz, California, present), *El Muertorider Katrina Car* 2006, customized 1968 Chevrolet Impala lowrider. Photograph by John Jota Leños.



Figure 16. Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present), John Jota Leños (Pomona, California, 1969–Santa Cruz, California, present), *El Muertorider Katrina Car* 2006, customized 1968 Chevrolet Impala lowrider. Photograph by John Jota Leños.

Prominent in the *Celebration* section of the exhibition are works by Posada portraying Mexico allegorically as a vulnerable, beautiful damsel who attempts to repel the advances of a homely Uncle Sam, who sidles up to her for “a very tender and very Gringo hug” (Figure 17). On the other hand, Rodríguez critically depicts a commonplace U.S. bar of men ogling their waitress as they drink beer below a picture of an “Indigenous” woman, naked except for a few feathers, topped by the blatantly sexist slogan: “Santa Fe Is Hot.” Posada casts Uncle Sam, and Rodríguez, American men, as lecherous characters who cannot keep their hands to themselves, both literally and figuratively. In other prints, Rodríguez pictures women as strong, independent figures, in full, powerful self-possession of their sexuality, as notably is his *Eve Outside the Garden of Eden* (Figure 18). 100 years earlier, on the other hand, Posada’s allegorical female characters are depicted as if still in need of (male) protection. Posada’s *calaveras* dance and woo one another at parties wearing traditional peasant garb, making tacos, drinking pulque or mezcal, and playing music on popular instruments, while Rodríguez’s gather for popular outdoor *fiestas*, becoming amorous as skeleton mariachis play on the roof. Rodríguez’s *calavera* communities also crowd together around communal tables, celebrating connections that will endure, as the title of one work indicates, into “infinite night” (Figure 19).

Organized according to the thematic cornerstones that link both artists’ rich practices, this exhibition is by no means a retrospective of either. Neither is it a display of “greatest hits,” although many of the “essential” Posadas, those usual suspects, are indeed present. Instead, this exhibition focuses on presenting rarely-seen Posada illustrations from the covers of street gazettes that made up the lifeblood of Mexico’s turn of the twentieth century *prensa*

(Facing Page) Figure 17. José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913), *Un abrazo muy tierno y muy gringo* [A Very Tender and Gringo Hug], detail, published in *El Diablito Bromista* [The Trickster Little Devil], vol. 6, no. 14, 1903, metal relief print on paper, 12 3/6 × 18 9/10 in. (32 × 48 cm). Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin.



Figure 18. Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present), *Eva fuera del Paraíso*, del portafolio *Grabados de mujeres* [Eve Out of Paradise, from the portfolio *Woodcuts of Women*], 2001, linocut, 10 × 11 3/4 in. (25.4 × 29.8 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.259.



Figure 19. Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present), *Noche infinita* [Infinite Night], 2004, linocut, 32 1/2 × 50 3/4 in. (82.6 × 129 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022.108.



obrero. These penny papers' readership comprised the Mexican working class, and here, Posada's gutsy satirical venom is paired with Rodríguez's own parodies of twenty-first century politics and popular culture. Ultimately, both artists reflect the realities they live within their prints as if through a refracted mirror, producing visions of their respective communities' experiences infused with humor, irony, irreverence, endless imagination, and, at times, outrage. And they are equally audacious in their symbolic allusions to the politics of their times as they are astute commentators on the world around them.

By pairing historical artworks with contemporary ones, this exhibition challenges visitors to read shared conceptual and formal foundations between images created a century apart. The exhibition itself, and this catalogue accompanying it, aspire to make a contribution to Posada and Rodríguez scholarship by taking a different tack, by opening up a new direction: by positing their visual conversation as a virtual alliance, a partnership. Like no other artist inspired by this Mexican master, Rodríguez embraced the conceptual, narrative, and compositional scaffolding that Posada's work provided, but melded it with lessons gleaned from other art histories, thereby introducing the vibrant spirit of Posada's *calaveras y corazones* into new universes of the imaginary. And creating something entirely original and unmistakably innovative—both formally and iconographically—in the process.

Concrete anchors in these artists' processes are essential aspects of the show's narrative, including numerous cues for seeing beyond content to consider each artist's ground-breaking facture. For instance, Rodríguez's printing block for his 2023 linocut *La fragil vida* [*Fragile Life*], the most recent work in the exhibition, hangs next to the print it

produced on the introductory wall, heralding this emphasis throughout the show. One case features four of the linocut printing blocks Rodríguez created to produce the artist book *Saliglia* [*The Seven Deadly Sins*] in 2011. Directly opposite is another vitrine with two of Posada's relief etchings on type metal mounted onto their original wooden blocks, both from the Vanegas Arroyo days and thus dated circa 1888–1913. One represents a tall *calavera* holding an hourglass, so typical of Posada's symbolic production; he created the other at the start of the Mexican Revolution, the more fancifully entitled *Scene with Cannon and Beasts in Sky*. Gallery labels here discuss both artists' production methods and techniques, underscoring the fact that both favor relief printmaking, despite using different methodologies. Viewing these blocks alongside their prints shifts the visitor's narrative momentarily from the "what" of these artists' diverse production, to the "how:" revealing glimpses of the wizards behind their curtains, traces the artists themselves left behind.



Recognizing Posada's influence upon his practice, in his 1946–47 mural *Sueño de una tarde dominical en la Alameda Central* [*Dream of a Sunday Afternoon at Alameda Central Park*], Diego Rivera portrayed *Calavera Catrina* as his mother, holding tight to his hand, and by her side, the printmaker himself as his father (with Frida Kahlo's protective hand resting on his little shoulder). For his part, Rodríguez created a print duplicating the best-known photograph of a seated Posada posing proudly with his son Sabino (Figure 1), adding himself into the scene as his own devilish alter-ego, seated snugly by the master's feet (Figure 20). In this exhibition, channels of inspiration and hybrid strains of innovation traverse distant chronologies. Throughout

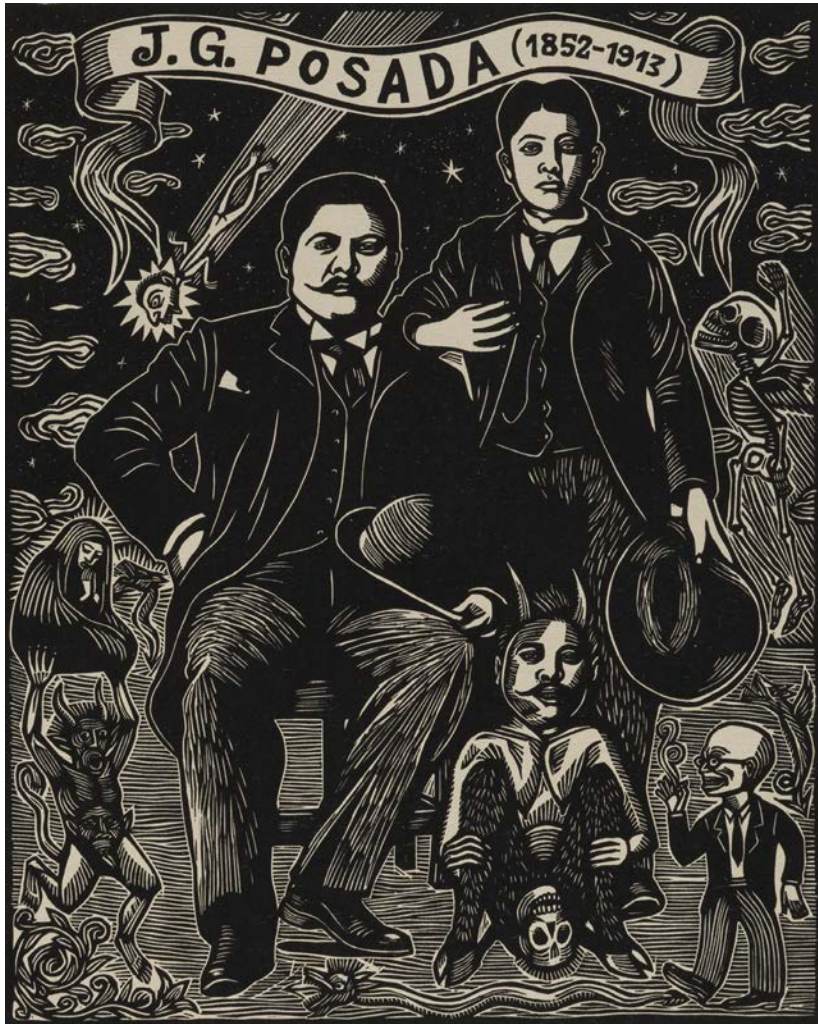


Figure 20. Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–present), *Retrato de Posada y su hijo* [Portrait of Posada and His Son], 2002, linocut, 20 × 1/4 in. (50.8 × 0.6 cm). Artemio Rodríguez Collection.

this catalogue, Rodríguez himself touches upon unexpected connections that keep Posada present—not only in the interview that follows, but also as an affiliation personalized in his artist’s statement, aptly titled “My Encounter with José Guadalupe Posada.”

At the end of the day, this exhibition illustrates each artist depicting his own era’s politics and popular culture with irony, a cocked eyebrow, a satirical punch, a nostalgic twist. And, ultimately, the shared, intertwined stories underlying this project are both artists’ common roots in pivotal apprenticeships as teenagers, experiences that would forever transform their lives: it

is how each discovered for himself the great power of images.

Posada, who had aspired to be a painter (according to the 1867 census, recorded when he was but 15 years old), instead became apprenticed in 1868 to Aguascalientes lithographer José Trinidad Pedroza, learning lithography and possibly engraving in wood and type metal. This press was more than a mere workshop: José María Chávez, a progressive thinker who had fought against French intervention in Mexico, had originally established the publishing house, named *El Esfuerzo* [The Endeavor].¹⁰ It had become the local Aguascalientes center where political problems and cultural issues were discussed—and the locus of the young Posada’s political formation. Pedroza gave Posada his big break when he was just 19 years old: the opportunity to publish 11 illustrations for a publication he owned, *El Jicote* [The Wasp], in 1971. Posada’s mockery of the ruling political elite in these images—imagine circus clowns and blubbery buffoons—was so incendiary and irreverent that it caused not a small scandal, provoking Pedroza (and Posada, after him) to leave Aguascalientes for León, a town 126 kilometers (78 miles) away. Thus, José Guadalupe Posada learned that images could speak even louder than words; this epiphany remained one of the underlying directives of his work forever after.

Rodríguez, for his part, had instead wanted to become a poet. And so, at age 17, he became an apprentice to Master Printer Juan Pascoe in the workshop he had founded on the outskirts of Tacámbaro in 1975. Named the *Taller Martín Pescador* [Kingfisher Workshop], a title suggested by the writer Roberto Bolaño, this was the press where poetry by Octavio Paz and Efraín Huerta, two of Mexico’s most iconic poets, had been published.

Keen to keep in the Masters' good favor, the young Rodríguez learned to set type as in Posada's day on Pascoe's antique presses, becoming adept at all aspects of manual printing processes. Before too long, Rodríguez gave the Master a manuscript of his poems, "just to 'get his opinion;' but inside I thought he would like them and would propose the printing of my first book. He received the manuscript, leafed through it, put it on his desk and told me, 'We'll see.'"¹¹ Days passed, but no further mention was made of the poems—until one day he found them on the workshop's trash heap. "But soon," he relates, "a door opened that I didn't even know existed." Master Pascoe explained: "Artemio, who knows if writing is your thing; it may be, but I see that you are always drawing; you should try to make linocuts."¹² Pascoe graciously gave the boy some pesos to buy linoleum and carving knives in Mexico City, but, most importantly, as a stand-in for his first series of art professors, the gift of the illustrated book *El grabado en madera* [*The Woodcut*] written by Paul Westheim. Published in Spanish in 1945, Westheim's classic book curiously features a first chapter (on medieval woodcuts) and a last (on Mexican innovations) as the longest and most detailed. In this way, Artemio Rodríguez encountered Posada for the first time, as well as woodcuts by the earliest medieval printmakers— and learned for himself the great power of images, the foundation of his future vocation. He recalls: "*The Woodcut* book was a magnificent introduction to a transcendental craft. It made me aware of its origins and helped me understand its creative possibilities."¹³ His first attempts based on the medieval prints that so greatly impressed him, he remembers that he "felt comfortable carving: it was like writing, like creating letters with multiple meanings; my concentration in the act of cutting was total, it was like a deep meditation, like wandering through new worlds."¹⁴

Thirty-three years later, Rodríguez continues to create new universes, with an agile and dexterous artistic mind and hand. In 2007, Los Angeles Times reporter Ben Ehrenreich visited the young Rodríguez at La Mano Press, describing him thus: "With so many worlds bubbling within, sitting idle must be an extraordinary act of containment."¹⁵ Lisa Fischman, then Chief Curator of the University of Arizona's Museum of Art, emphasized Rodríguez's impact on the Los Angeles art scene in terms of his strictly manual facture and frequently corrosive content. "There's not very much that's still shocking these days," she observed, "but the honesty with which [Rodríguez] approaches his subject and the sharpness of his satire on the United States is. He's supposed to be one of the voiceless ones, but obviously he's got a lot to say."¹⁶ It is Rodríguez's directness, clarity, and truth in his printmaking— fundamental lessons learned from Posada, as well as from anonymous medieval woodcut masters— that resounds most saliently about his body of work, and in his influence on other artists.

Indeed, both Posada and Rodríguez have "a lot to say," still; they intersect here only for an instant, at a crossroads of their respective, cataclysmic, historical moments, 100 years and worlds apart. Even when not adopting mirroring iconographies or even parallel messages, they share tactics for making allegories easily identifiable: foundational shared ground. Embedding subtle messages just beneath the surface, these artists require visitors to look and linger.

Rodríguez often seeks to evoke an underlying subtext camouflaged beneath the narrative's main message, but leaves its interpretation open-ended, waiting for the viewer to complete the narrative cycle. Posada follows a similarly layered approach in *El Purgatorio artístico* [*The Artistic Purgatory*],



Figure 21. José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–1913), *El Purgatorio artístico* [*The Artistic Purgatory*], detail, 1900–1910, offset lithograph, 13 3/4 × 11 in. (35 × 28 cm). Mexic-Arte Museum, Juan Antonio Sandoval Jr. Collection.

circa 1900–1910, the last work in the exhibition (Figure 21). This limbo includes all manner of artists and artisans “from all over the world.” The image is rather paradoxical. Instead of burning in Hell like Posada’s maligned politicians, these artists become contented *calaveras* who continue their crafts among the flames, praised in humorous, ironic verse beneath. Here, in the end, the artist expresses solidarity rather than satire, creating a version of Hell that becomes a safe haven for his fellow artists. “Today, for you, and tomorrow, for me,” Posada adds, knowing that all continue toward “the inexorable end.”

A century later, Posada’s *calaveras* enact scenes of Chicano popular culture as often as they are marshaled to portray politics and life in Mexico: expressions of both solidarity and satire at once, adapted to fit new communities, new realities. And as seen in this exhibition, the Master’s singular visual vocabulary, revolutionary in its time and long after, lives on in Rodríguez’s hands: reinvented.

Endnotes

- 1 Jere Abbot and Frances Flynn Paine, *Diego Rivera* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art: New York, 1931), 14.
- 2 Diego Rivera, “¿Quiénes levantarán el monumento a Posada? / Who will raise the monument to Posada?” In Francis Toor and Pablo O’Higgins, *Monografía: Las obras de José Guadalupe Posada: Grabador mexicano* (Mexico City: Mexican Folkways, 1930).
- 3 Abbot and Flynn Paine, op. cit., 14.
- 4 The General Census of the Mexican Republic, 1900, <https://en.www.inegi.org.mx/programas/ccpv/1900/>. Accessed 3/2025.
- 5 Jean Charlot, “Un precursor del movimiento de Arte Mexicano: El grabador Posadas,” *Revista de Revistas: El Semanario Nacional* (Mexico City), August 30, 1925: 25.
- 6 Gilberto Cárdenas’s and Dolores García’s fundamental early role in collecting Rodríguez’s work in his early career, as well as their continued support throughout his development and evolution as a printmaker, cannot be overstated. Many of the works by Rodríguez in this exhibition are in the Blanton’s collection thanks to the couple’s great vision in collecting these works over the years, as well as their great generosity in donating their collection to the Blanton Museum of Art.
- 7 With his partner Silvia Capistrán, Rodríguez founded in Los Angeles an independent gallery/workshop and printing press called La Mano Press, as well as a mobile studio/gallery (*El Gráficomovil*) to offer printmaking exhibitions and classes in disadvantaged Latino communities.
- 8 Artemio Rodríguez, “Constant Search,” in *Artemio Rodríguez Grabador / Artemio Rodríguez Printmaker: A 33 Year Retrospective* (Pátzcuaro, Mexico: La Mano Press, forthcoming 2025).
- 9 Wayne Alan Brener, Review, *Artemio Rodríguez: Printing Matters*, November 4, 2011, *The Austin Chronicle*, <https://www.austinchronicle.com/arts/2011-11-04/artemio-Rodriguez-printing-matters/>. Accessed 3/19/25.
- 10 Scholar Sylvia Orozco, now Director of the Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin, Texas, produced a helpful chronology of Posada’s early years on the University of Hawai’i Manoa website, a complement to their database of “Artist Jean Charlot’s extensive personal collection of prints and broadsides by Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada.” Cf. <https://guides.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/c.php?g=769711>. Accessed 3/19/25.
- 11 Rodríguez, “Constant Search,” op. cit.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid. Westheim’s book had such an impact on Rodríguez as a door to new worlds of possibilities that he created a Biblioteca del Libro Ilustrado [Library of Illustrated Books] at the workshop he founded in Pátzcuaro as an integral part of La Mano Press, which he continuously adds to, so that other young artists can be

similarly inspired.

15 Ben Ehrenreich, “The Bite of the Print,” Feb. 25, 2007, *Los Angeles Times*, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2007-feb-25-tm-artemioRodriguez08-story.html>. Accessed 3/19/25.

16 In *ibid.*



Artist's Statement: My Encounter with José Guadalupe Posada

Artemio Rodríguez



I began printmaking at the age of 17 in my hometown of Tacámbaro, Mexico, as a supplementary activity during my apprenticeship in the traditional book printing trade at master printer Juan Pascoe's *Taller Martin Pescador*. At that time, I saw engraving merely as a craft to decorate invitations for birthdays and weddings. I never imagined that an auxiliary book printing technique could evolve into an artistic medium in its own right—until I came across José Guadalupe Posada's singular prints. That encounter made me comprehend that it was possible to become an artist in every sense of the word through printmaking. The revelation opened my eyes and helped me focus entirely on this vocation.

Reading Posada's biography deepened my admiration for him—his humble origins, his start as a young lithographer in his native Aguascalientes, his brief stay in León, Guanajuato, and his arrival in Mexico City, where he established his own workshop and succeeded in making his illustrations an integral part of the daily lives of generations of Mexicans. Unfortunately, his own life ended tragically, and his body was buried in a mass grave in a Mexico City cemetery; no one was there to bid him farewell. Nevertheless, he left behind an immense legacy: thousands of illustrations that capture the spirit of Mexican society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

(Facing page) Artemio Rodríguez, *La Mano Gráfica* gallery, Pátzcuaro, Mexico, 2022. Photography, Florence Leyret.

Posada was able to create scenes and characters with amazing fluidity and originality using basic wood and metal engraving techniques that ensured that his images could be printed alongside letters and decorative elements on the letterpress. Finding creative freedom in a craft that some might view as tedious and limited, he became a figure of great importance in the history of art and culture. His life and work have been a profound example and inspiration to me. I, too, was born in the Mexican provinces, came from humble origins, began my career as an apprentice in a printer's workshop, and had no formal art studies. The scope of Posada's prints made me realize that these circumstances were not a hindrance to my career, but an incentive to strive to be a better artist. His images have been an essential reference point in my work.

I am wholeheartedly grateful to the Blanton Museum of Art for this opportunity to exhibit my images alongside the brilliant work of the quintessential master of Mexican printmaking.

Artemio Rodríguez
Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico
May 19, 2024



Questions, Intersections: Artemio Rodríguez on Inspiration and Invention

Vanessa K. Davidson and Artemio Rodríguez

Conducted in August 2024, my conversation with Artemio Rodríguez delved into his life experiences, which are not as well known in the United States as they should be, given the superb caliber of his printmaking. We also discussed his myriad sources of inspiration, which have been even less critically explored. This dialogue aimed to elucidate the means by which his influences have been fused, reflected, and refracted in his artworks, and how his principles have structured aspirations to always collaborate with community.

Vanessa K. Davidson: Your first mentor, Master Printer Juan Pascoe, gave you Paul Westheim's book *El grabado en madera* [*The Woodcut*] to nurture your artistic talent early in your apprenticeship (Figure 1). In this Spanish-language version of the book's history of woodcut practices since the Middle Ages, Mexico was well represented. Was it there that you first learned about José Guadalupe Posada?

Artemio Rodríguez: Yes, I discovered Posada's work thanks to Westheim. At the beginning, I was not able to adopt his printmaking techniques, but I found in Posada's art a great source of inspiration, in the way he portrayed the people of his time, his sense of humor, and his natural talent for drawing with grace and liveliness.

VKD: In *El grabado en madera*, Westheim pays considerably more attention to the first chapter, on medieval woodcuts, and the last one, which explores Mexican innovations; both are the longest chapters in the book. In my view, these two traditions serve as seminal anchors for your practice. How did these dual sources of inspiration contribute to your artistic formation?

AR: At the beginning of my learning years, even if I was inspired by Posada's subject matter and style, he was not a direct reference in my own work (Figure 2). First, because of the



Figure 1. Artemio Rodríguez, Taller Martín Pescador, Tacámbaro, Michoacán, 1996, 24 years old.



Figure 2. Artemio Rodríguez, Self-Help Graphics, East Los Angeles, 2000, 28 years old.

technical restrictions I faced: the linoleum I had at hand was very difficult both to draw on (its surface was dark blue and too smooth), and also to cut (due to its hard plastic consistency). Normally, when making a cut with the gouge on both wood and linoleum, the cut fragment “jumps” at the end of the cut, but in the linoleum that I used back then, such fragments had to be pulled out with fingernails or severed with a razor blade (Figure 3). These conditions forced me to make simple drawings and cuts. It was impossible to think of copying Posada’s style of drawing.

The second reason is of an artistic nature. After reading Westheim’s book, I was moved by the idea that primitive engraving had an elemental character: easy to understand and defined by its economy of language and means. I determined to make prints based on the technical limitations of the linoleum I had. That is, very linear images, but always seeking to convey ideas in a clear way, using a simple, universal language.

VKD: That’s interesting; I have never thought of your early work as “linear,” but rather your use of line as active, dynamic. You seem to adapt other visual strategies inspired by medieval art and woodcut printing when constructing your compositions as well. What about medieval artists do you find most inspiring?

AR: The way medieval printmakers created has always been present in my creative work: simplicity in the design, conveying a direct message, drawing without so much refinement, not emphasizing the ego or reputation of the artist. The medieval creators who impressed me the most remain unidentified. I was impressed by



Figure 3. Artemio Rodríguez, *La Mano Press*, Downtown Los Angeles, 2002, 30 years old.

the simplicity and directness of the images made before reaching the variegated load of details and mannerism of the Renaissance, which offers an almost excessive technical display that finds its maximum expression in artists like Albrecht Dürer.

VKD: Some of your subjects, like *Adam*, of 2000, depict exaggerated, elongated figures reminiscent of these early medieval prints (Figures 4 & 5). They also recall the style of El

Greco. What was your inspiration in your approach to creating such figures?

AR: When I work on biblical themes, I cannot help but refer to the way the human body is represented in early European prints or in the work of intensely religious painters such as El Greco. There are certain anatomical features that undoubtedly transport you to the religious mentality of those times.



Figure 4. Artemio Rodríguez, *Adán [Adam]*, 2000, linocut, 14 7/8 × 8 1/8 in. (37.8 × 20.6 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, 2024.261.

Figure 5. Artemio Rodríguez, *Eva [Eve]*, 2000, linocut, 14 7/8 × 8 1/4 in. (37.8 × 21 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.192.

VKD: Considering the arc of your production, religion is a frequent source of iconography in your work, whether in images of angels, devils, Adam and Eve, the Holy Family, or themes like the Apocalypse and the Last Judgment. Could you please elaborate on this facet of your production?

AR: Catholicism has been the dominant religion in Mexico for the last five centuries. From my earliest years, I was exposed to its many traditions and rich narratives about demons and angels; sins and repentance; hell, limbo, and paradise; multitudes of saints and virgins; priests, some of whom were pious and many others, abusers; nuns and other blessed women. There are many sensational biblical stories, as well as breakable commandments that can be easily redeemed in the confessional. Thus, it has been impossible in my artistic practice not to draw from such a great reservoir of images, stories, and ideas (Figure 6).

VKD: Having created over 20,000 prints during his lifetime, Posada also presented you with thousands of singular sources of inspiration. Further, his artistic tactics of satire, parody, and grim humor, as well as his celebration of the *pueblo's* beloved traditions, forges a vivid, graphic connection to similar strategies employed by Chicano artists, past and present. Was Posada more influential for you because his work was echoed

in the *Día de Muertos* traditions—among other artistic expressions of community—that you found among Chicano artists when you relocated to California in 1994?

AR: Yes, because it was thanks to Chicano art that I came across different ways of celebrating the Day of the Dead, and the present-day resonance of Posada's *calaveras* (Figure 7). In my Mexican hometown, the Day of the Dead is a simple, family celebration dedicated to loved ones who have passed away, whereas in California it is a celebration that additionally serves to address existential and political issues.



Figure 6. Artemio Rodríguez, *Mujer I*, del portafolio *Grabados de mujeres* [Woman I, from the portfolio *Woodcuts of Women*], 2000, 11 1/4 x 10 in. (28.6 x 25.4 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.257.

VKD: So, then, could you please speak to the influence in your work of all three traditions: medieval woodcuts; Posada; and popular Day of the Dead practices? The three are vividly distinct yet have important points of confluence in both content and underlying visual and stylistic strategies. Is each tradition important to you for a different reason?

AR: Yes. The medieval influence gives me a theoretical framework and a way to see myself as an artist; Posada opened the doors to a free artistic expression, with humor, based on very old artistic expressions (like the *Dances of Death*). The Day of the Dead tradition connects me to my pre-Hispanic and mestizo cultural heritage.

VKD: In your images of *calaveras*, Posada's characters, subjects, and themes often serve as foundational points of departure. Nevertheless, you deftly combined such references with other inspirations in your 2003–2006 monumental “woodcut mural” *The Triumph of Death*, based on Peter Bruegel the Elder's original 1562–63 painting of the same title. Although it is framed within the context of U.S. conflicts in the Persian Gulf that you were living through, there are allusions to medieval woodcuts here, as well as nods to Hieronymus Bosch's flights of fancy. I also see elements of the European *Dances of Death* social satires that you mentioned at play

in this piece (such as Hans Holbein's iconic prints series, circa 1524–25), as well as in others of your prints. When did you become familiar with *Dance of Death* artworks?

AR: At the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, I had the opportunity to see the brilliant engravings of Holbein and other creators of the *Dances of Death*. I was very moved by the devilish, playful feeling they embody, and I was able to sense how ingeniously they captured the fateful dread of the period when they were created. I like the playfulness of Posada's skeletons and the tragic and moralistic character of the *Dances of Death*.



Figure 7. Artemio Rodríguez, *Tzompantli* [Skull Rack], 2001, woodcut, 33 3/4 x 31 1/2 in. (85.7 x 80 cm). Artemio Rodríguez Collection.

VKD: Taking different aspects of each of these visual traditions as inspiration, you strategically adapt, translate, and transform elements of compositional structures and reprisals of iconic themes into something radically new. What aspects of Bruegel's sixteenth century original did you find the most compelling, when it inspired your own satirical, grim version of *The Triumph of Death*?

AR: His strong energy, his righteous, sweeping impetus that does not distinguish social classes or merit.

VKD: How did your own tour-de-force *Triumph of Death* come about?

AR: I started this piece in 2006 during a two-week artist residence at Hui Press, in Maui, Hawaii. I arrived there without a clue of the project I would embark on. At Hui No'eau Cultural Center, I went to their library, in the art section I found a book about the Museo del Prado. In those days the second Iraq War was taking place (Sadam Husein was hanged that year, his death was televised and seen all over the world). George W. Bush dominated the world scenario.

When I saw Peter Bruegel's *The Triumph of Death* in the book, I was taken by it: everything in it spoke to me about the current chaos. I remembered the strong impression I had felt when I saw it in person in Madrid. I decided to make my own version in

print. I chose to do it on wood, using three plywood sheets, each one divided in three parts. In two weeks, I was able to finish the whole drawing and carved four pieces. I took the rest of the plates back to Los Angeles, where I finished carving four weeks later. When I was working on it, I felt that the voice and expression of the knives while carving were the right ones to interpret such a strong and atemporal art piece. The result was a graphic mural that makes a strong impression on anyone who sees it.

VKD: Could you please describe the relationships you find between the skeletons in Bruegel's painting and Posada's *calaveras*? Do you perceive any links between them and the Mexican visual traditions of *Día de Muertos*?

AR: Bruegel lends his skeletons a presence as lively and radical as Posada's own. Both literally bring the dead back to life. That being said, I don't think there is a strong relationship between Bruegel's work and the Day of the Dead tradition, because the latter's main purpose is to remember and pay tribute to loved ones who have passed on. However, there is a relationship with an aspect of that tradition that is based on the *calaveras* written in verse. They describe situations in which the participating characters are portrayed as skeletons or dead people, saying or doing things that can be funny, political, critical,

and even serious and profound. Posada himself is part of this tradition of *calaveras* in verse, and his job was to illustrate those texts to be published in flyers that were sold on the streets the days before and during the Day of the Dead celebrations.

VKD: You seem to have adapted Posada's very direct, dynamic means of constructing compositions into your own unique artistic language. How would you describe the way you structure your prints? (Figures 8 & 9).

AR: There is an anecdote I like very much to tell: a boy on his daily way to school passes by a sculpture workshop. One day he watches a huge rock being unloaded. Day after day, he observes as the sculptor works tirelessly on it. A few weeks later, the sculpture is finished. Then the boy approaches the sculptor and asks: "How did you know that inside the rock was such a beautiful horse?" I see linoleum in the same way. When printing from a piece of blank linoleum, the result is a solid stain. The artist's job is to look for the forms that this material holds within. That is why that when I carve on linoleum or wood, I respect each space that I have not yet cut, carefully pondering what may be enclosed in each fragment, because each of them is like a rock, waiting for the right sculptor.

VKD: That is a beautiful metaphor for your unique practice. Taking all these

foundational sources of inspiration we have discussed into consideration, then, how would you yourself frame your innovative approach?



Figure 8. José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913), *Gran Calavera Eléctrica* [Great Electric Calavera], 1907, etching, 11 3/4 × 15 3/4 in. (29.8 × 40 cm). Artemio Rodríguez Collection.

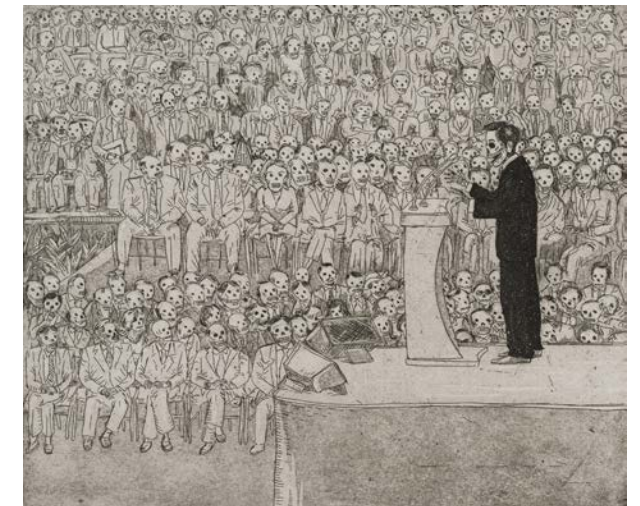


Figure 9. Artemio Rodríguez, *Un discurso más* [Just Another Speech], 2012, etching, 11 × 15 in. (27.9 × 38.1 cm). Artemio Rodríguez Collection.

AR: I think my contribution to the field of graphic arts has been very humble, but it could be said that, if any, it has been to promote a certain renaissance of relief printing at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, especially the technique of linoleum printmaking in Mexico and the United States.

We could list two great moments of relief printing in Mexico: one, the days of Posada, in the 1900s, when engraving had a leading role in commercial and popular printing; and the other in the 1930s, led by the *El Taller de Gráfica Popular* [People's Print Workshop], with great artists such as Leopoldo Méndez. The first moment died out when new image printing techniques (photoengraving) rendered obsolete the work of engravers like Posada and Manuel Manilla (1830–1900) [Posada's colleague at Vanegas Arroyo Press]. The second one came to an end when new artistic movements (like *La Ruptura* [The Breakaway Generation]) rejected the political content of their predecessors in favor of more personal expressions (José Luis Cuevas, Francisco Toledo, etc.), using techniques such as metal engraving rather than choosing wood or linoleum.

My entrance into the art world was neither related to the movement connected to the *Taller de Gráfica Popular*, nor to the moments in Mexican art that followed. I started

simply because a printer, Juan Pascoe, saw in me some of the talent needed to produce illustrations and ornamental designs on the traditional letterpress, just as Posada and Manilla did in their day. I had to create images that a printer would set next to typography, so they could not contain large black areas, which would likely result in bad impressions. Linear engravings with lots of white spaces are easier to ink and print. It was then that I discovered that the master medieval printmakers had the right answer. Westheim's *El grabado en madera* was an excellent guide to the creative possibilities of the technique.

In that sense, I think my contribution has been to re-open a path traveled for many centuries. Fortunately, collectors have responded positively, and other artists have appreciated the creative possibilities of my approach to relief printmaking. Many young artists in both Mexico and the United States have told me that they were inspired by *American Dream* (published by *La Mano Press* in association with Reverté Ediciones [Barcelona-Mexico, 2006]), a book that contains an early ten-year retrospective of my prints.

VKD: Beyond Master Printer Pascoe, who else do you consider a mentor? Someone you “apprenticed” with, even for a short time, or who helped you to develop your craft?

AR: In addition to seeing Juan Pascoe's disciplined practice, I was helped significantly by his brother, the painter Dionisio Pascoe, who taught me how to draw naturally, without fear of making “mistakes.” After all, freedom of expression is what makes a true artist, rather than the formal and academic rigidity that can easily turn you into a machine that only copies or visually reproduces the surrounding world. The architect Carlos Olvera also greatly assisted me, not only through his contagious passion for art in general, but also because he allowed me to learn the basics of textile art in his traditional wool loom workshop. I learned both to color the wool using natural elements (plants and minerals), and the use of the ancient wooden loom. It was there that I learned a lot about the patience required by traditional craft.

VKD: Among the many parallels between Posada's life and your own, the fundamental similarity is artistic self-discovery thanks to mentors in apprenticeships—for Posada with José Trinidad Pedrosa, and for you with Juan and Dionisio Pascoe and Carlos Olvera, as well as your later mentors at Self Help Graphics, such as Sister Karen Boccalero (Figure 10). Do you feel as if you also “apprenticed” with Posada himself by studying and collecting his works in depth?

AR: Yes, there is much to learn from Posada's work, not only technically, but in his natural and free way of portraying the characters of his time.

Also, my learning process was indeed similar to Posada's, although I imagine it must have been more difficult in his time to have access to historical material. Even in my own learning years, the internet was not widely used and so it had no effect on my education. Current generations have it as one more tool of knowledge in their favor (or maybe against them?)



Figure 10. Artemio Rodríguez among fellow printmaking students at Self Help Graphics. East Los Angeles, California, 1994.

VKD: Why do you think Posada's influence has lasted for a century?

AR: Because his artwork is universal, his characters are "human" and they seem alive, even the *calaveras*. I think that is something only a true artist can achieve.

VKD: How would you describe Posada's legacy in Mexican (and global) art?

AR: I believe that Posada is the people's artist *par excellence*, someone of humble origins who had the capacity to portray the era he lived in through innumerable and extraordinary illustrations.

VKD: How do you think Posada's legacy of satire applies to issues in the United States?



Figure 11. Artemio Rodríguez designing the *Graficomovil*, 2008, La Mano Press, Los Angeles, California.

AR: Posada's sarcastic, deep, critical, and observant attitude enables citizens to gain a more complete vision of reality. There is still much to learn from his work.

VKD: Did your experience working in the United States for nearly 15 years (1994–2008) change your ideas about artistic practice?

AR: Before traveling to the United States, my work was utilitarian or decorative (making invitations for social gathering like weddings, etc.) or very personal (I was 20 years old, living the existential whirlwind of any young person at that age). My time in the United States made me reflect on issues of nationality and humanity. Living the experience of an undocumented migrant led me to attempt to capture it all in my art. It made me have a wider, global vision and more concern about the situation of others.

VKD: How advanced was your practice when you arrived in Los Angeles?

AR: I arrived in Los Angeles with a basic knowledge of linoleum printing, but there I found a different, higher quality type of linoleum. I could draw in detail on its surface with pencil and pen, and the cuts could be made with finesse, since the fragments "jumped" in a marvelous way. The artistic possibilities of my medium proliferated at the same time that I began to question myself about identity and

immigration issues, and also the moment that I also discovered the Chicano Art Movement (Figure 11).

VKD: I'd like to return to the question of Chicano Art as an essential reference point in your work presently. But first: at what point did you realize that you could make an actual living, and also help others thrive, working solely as an artist? What occasioned your transformational transition from house painter to working artist?

AR: In 1994, when I had the opportunity to take a metal etching workshop at Self Help Graphics in Los Angeles, I personally met artists who made a living from their art. I realized it was actually possible to do so. When Sister Karen Bocalero (founder and director of Self Help Graphics) allowed me to participate in the Christmas sale that year, I sold some prints and earned an amount of money similar to what I would have earned in several weeks painting houses. I realized that if I dedicated myself full-time to making art, I could make a living.

VKD: How did you acquire your first printing press in LA?

AR: A fellow printmaker from Self Help Graphics told me about a German man who was selling his printing equipment. I went to see him and acquired my first proof press. I installed it in the garage of a friend's house in East Los Angeles.

VKD: Who were your closest artist friends/mentors in Los Angeles and Northern California?

AR: Some of my closest friends were Carlos Hernández (Mexican painter and printmaker, who died much too early), Oscar Duardo (Chicano master printer), Israel Rodríguez (Mexican painter and printmaker, who later moved to New York), Poli Marichal (Puerto Rican filmmaker, painter, printmaker, now lives in her beloved Puerto Rico), Marianne Sadowski (Mexican printmaker, still lives in LA), Dolores Carlos (Chicana college teacher, printmaker, still lives in Los Angeles), Pedro Ríos Martínez (Chicano painter, sculptor, printmaker), Unai San Martín (Spaniard photographer, printmaker), and Surito Echevarría (Guatemalan-Chicano collector).

VKD: What about Chicano artists' work inspired you, whether the iconic images of the historic Chicano Art Movement of the 1960s onward, or created by contemporary artists? What issues were important in your conversations with your fellow artists?

AR: We talked about our common roots. I have always been impressed by the ability of Chicano art to turn even the simplest everyday item into something iconic and mythical: a chair, a vase, a car, a hat, a dog, an accident on the freeway.

VKD: You found your artistic voice in California. What art were you immersed in at that time? Did you go to museum and gallery exhibitions in Los Angeles and subsequently Northern California?

AR: I loved going to art museums. My favorite was Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), but I also went to the Los Angeles Central Library, The Getty Art Museum, etc. In addition, I spent a lot of time visiting bookstores, looking for books for my collection. Of course, I also attended exhibition events in Los Angeles and in the Bay Area when I lived in Berkeley.

VKD: In 2006 in Berkeley, you created the spectacular *Muertorider Calavera Katrina* lowrider in collaboration with John J. Leaños, and in LA in 2008, you transformed a 1948 Chevy delivery truck into a mobile classroom and gallery space: the *Gráficomovil*, complete with extraordinary “mobile murals.” These two projects illustrate your involvement with Chicano and Latino communities in greater Los Angeles—both the artistic transformation of popular lowrider culture, on one hand, and the community outreach of the *Gráficomovil*, on the other. Could you please speak about these two connections, and describe your artistic partnerships with Chicano artists and other collaborative art projects you were involved in?

AR: For my first car project, the *Muertorider* (a 1968 Impala), I collaborated with John J. Leaños, a Chicano artist from San Francisco. For me, it was exciting to interpret such a strong tradition as the lowriders artistically.

For the *Graficomovil* project, I collaborated with Chicano artist and printer Oscar Duardo in Los Angeles (Figures 12, 13, & 14). A native of LA, Oscar was always a great friend and collaborator in different projects at La Mano Press, from construction work and electrical installations to the production of silkscreen editions. He is a professional master printer like his brother Richard Duardo, who at the time, ran the studio Modern Multiples. There I participated in the *Chicano Collection Project*, making portraits of many of the most renowned Chicano artists in the United States. This was a great honor for me because I have a deep admiration for the Chicano Art Movement.

VKD: In fact, the Blanton has 29 of your prints from the *Faces of the Chicano Collection* portfolio in its holdings, thanks to the great generosity of visionary patrons Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia (who I gather are wonderful friends of yours, still). So, then, building on these precedents, what was your original mission in founding La Mano Press in Los Angeles? What role did your partner, the graphic designer and painter Silvia Capistrán, play in its



Figure 12. *El Graficomovil*, 2008. Customized 1948 Chevy Delivery Truck. La Mano Press, Los Angeles, California.



Figure 13. *El Graficomovil*, 2008. Customized 1948 Chevy Delivery Truck. Installation view, Denver Art Museum, Third Americas Latino Eco Festival, 2015.



Figure 14. *El Graficomovil*, 2010. Customized 1948 Chevy Delivery Truck, Pátzcuaro, Mexico.

development, in California and later in Mexico?

AR: Silvia Capistrán and I founded the print studio/workshop La Mano Press in LA in 2001; it had its own gallery (Figure 15). We wanted a space to produce prints, organize workshops, classes, exhibitions, and community events. We also produced several editorial projects, including a book on Posada, *Puro muerto*; a collection of art around Day of the Dead; and a retrospective book of my work.

To promote our exhibitions, events, and workshops, we used methods typical of those days: we printed postcards, then mailed them; took them to art stores and other businesses; passed them out at other art events. We talked to everyone.

Collaborations with Silvia Capistrán have been fundamental for both La Mano Press and La Mano Gráfica, which we founded in Pátzcuaro, Mexico. First, because of her artistic vision and our similar cultural background (she was born in Jalisco, I in the neighboring state of Michoacán), but also because we share a deep love for Mexican art and we met in our youth in LA at a time when we both were eager to make our own mark in the artistic universe.

VKD: You have said that “La Mano Press came to occupy an interesting niche in the Los Angeles art scene: we



Figure 15. Silvia Capistrán and Artemio Rodríguez, La Mano Press, Los Angeles, California, 2004.



Figure 16. Biblioteca del Libro Ilustrado, Centro Cultural Antiguo Colegio Jesuita, Pátzcuaro, Mexico, 2019.

were an independent, young, Mexican space, dedicated to promoting printmaking.” How has the organization evolved since its first conception?

AR: We still have the same vision and goals; the main change is that we are no longer young.

VKD: Does La Mano Gráfica in Pátzcuaro have the original tripartite structure: a fine art press; a free educational center for teaching printmaking; and activities stemming from the impetus to serve constantly as a vehicle for community outreach? I understand you created a Library of Illustrated Books there— a tremendous community resource (Figures 16 & 17).

AR: La Mano Press continues as a workshop where prints and limited editions are produced (Figures 18 & 19). It also functions as an independent publishing house dedicated to the art of printmaking. La Mano Gráfica is our public-facing side, through our gallery in downtown Pátzcuaro, where we organize exhibitions, concerts, lectures, and workshops on different printing techniques and crafts, such as bookbinding and typography.

VKD: You—and Posada—were primarily self-taught but learned the mechanics of commercial printmaking through apprenticeships. Do you take on apprentices in your workshop?



Figure 17. Biblioteca del Libro Ilustrado, Centro Cultural Antiguo Colegio Jesuita, Pátzcuaro, Mexico, 2024.



Figure 18. Artemio Rodríguez, studio in Santa Ana Chapitiro, Pátzcuaro, Mexico, 2024.



Figure 19. Artemio Rodríguez, printing on a proof press FAG Estandar from 1951, at studio in Santa Ana Chapitiro, Pátzcuaro, Mexico, 2024.

AR: I have had several apprentices (Figure 20). For some years now, Rosalio García has been my assistant. He has now developed his own artistic career, illustrating several books, and exhibiting his art at various galleries and institutions. He is originally from Puácuaro, a town on the shores of Lake Pátzcuaro, and it is very interesting to see him express his own style and creative interests around his mother culture (Purépecha) combined with contemporary life and its issues.

VKD: What kinds of exhibitions do you display in La Mano Gráfica's gallery? Do the artists interact with young students and community members?

AR: We feature local artists as well as invited guests sometimes including international artists. We collaborate with participants on the installation of their work, and we also encourage them to produce at least one print with us so we can print it in our workshop. Additionally, we invite them to give a talk about their art open to the public before the show.

VKD: What kinds of books are found in La Mano Gráfica's extensive library in Pátzcuaro?

AR: At our *Biblioteca del Libro Ilustrado* [Library of Illustrated Books], we collect it all (Figure 21). I believe art books are the most inspiring, especially those dedicated to the life and work of one artist. Readers identify with and are inspired by the difficulties and achievements of important creators.

VKD: Could you name five books that helped you on your journey as an artist, just as you are helping these young people begin theirs?

AR: *El grabado en madera*, of course. *Don Quijote de la Mancha* by Cervantes; *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevski; *War and Peace* by Tolstoi; *Pedro Páramo* by Juan Rulfo.



Figure 20. Artemio Rodríguez and Jesús Arriaga and Juan Arriaga, Tacámbaro, Mexico, 2013.

Figure 21. Biblioteca del Libro Ilustrado, Centro Cultural Antiguo Colegio Jesuita, Pátzcuaro, Mexico, 2019.



VKD: You personally have an impressive collection of works by Posada and by Manuel Manilla, his colleague at the Vanegas Arroyo Press. Could you please describe your collection? How did you begin collecting their prints and printing blocks?

AR: I have just over two hundred pieces by both artists, thanks to friends: the publisher Ramón Reverté, the bookseller Mercurio López Casillas, and the graphic designer José Luis Lugo, who took me to a direct descendant of the publisher Vanegas Arroyo, from whom I acquired most of the prints. Subsequently, I have collected additional prints through friends engaged in the used book trade.

VKD: You recently acquired the complete series of games that Posada produced. You have also created your own versions of *La Lotería* and *El Juego de la Oca* game boards. What significance do these games have for you?

AR: During my childhood, board games provided me moments of great joy with family and friends. I am fascinated by the different versions of board games created throughout history, both in Mexico and in other countries. I like to re-create those games in my own way.

VKD: At the end of the day, why are Posada's legacies of social satire,

sarcastic politics, and biting critical irony relevant today?

AR: Because our civilization is at a turning point. We are on the verge of achieving (or have already achieved) the collapse of our planet Earth and yet we continue to consume nonstop, stoking terrible wars.

VKD: And what do you imagine will happen after Death's victory, in your own monumental, imaginary narrative of *The Triumph of Death*?

AR: Maybe what lies ahead is the liberation of the planet—nature's relief after suffering this terrible plague called *homo sapiens*—and, maybe, just a tiny possibility, the rebirth of a humble, respectful humanity (Figure 22).

VKD: *Ojalá que así sea. Gracias, Artemio.*

(Facing Page) Figure 22. Artemio Rodríguez and son Mateo, San Miguel Tamacuaro, Tacámbaro, Mexico, 2013.





Plates and Exhibition Gallery Texts

“My encounter with José Guadalupe Posada’s unique prints made me comprehend that it was indeed possible to become an artist in every sense of the word through printmaking. This certainty opened my eyes and helped me focus entirely on this vocation.”

— *Artemio Rodríguez*

Introduction

In this exhibition, two masterful Mexican printmakers engage in a visual dialogue across the span of a century. Both employ political critique and social satire, while, on the other hand, also celebrating their communities’ popular tales and traditions. Working in Mexico City at the turn of the twentieth century, José Guadalupe Posada (1852–1913) was known as the “Printmaker of the People” as well as the “Mexican Goya.” Artemio Rodríguez (b. 1972) first flourished as an artist while living in the United States from 1994 to 2008. He embraced Posada’s foundational precedent as a bridge to Chicano artists’ own strategies to graphically represent their

socio-political context. Splicing narrative lessons learned from Posada with elements of Chicano and medieval European visual cultures, Rodríguez creates a syncretic art that expands Posada’s legacy into other art histories, other worlds.

Anchored within each artist’s respective contemporary milieu, the themes of Celebration and Satire structure this exhibition. These foundational through-lines serve as elastic platforms connecting the two artists’ diverse production. Posada and Rodríguez both shared a profound respect for communal heritage and beloved community traditions. They also raucously raise the dead into living, mischievous, satirical *calaveras* (skeletons): vehicles for grim humor, biting irony, and socio-political parody. Ultimately, each artist embraces and examines the popular culture of his particular place and time, utilizing parallel narrative tactics that unite them. The first exhibition to explore Posada’s and Rodríguez’s virtual partnership, *Calaveras y corazones* spotlights channels of inspiration and hybrid strains of innovation that run deep, dialogues spanning a century.

Figure 1 (Top):
Artemio Rodríguez,
Buenos vecinos [Good
Neighbors], 2004,
Linocut, 7 1/2 × 11 1/4
in. (19.1 × 28.6 cm),
Artemio Rodríguez
Collection.

Figure 2 (Bottom):
Artemio Rodríguez,
*Amor a quien amor
merece* [Love Those
Deserving Love], 2004,
Linocut, 5 3/4 × 11 1/2
in. (14.6 × 29.2 cm),
Artemio Rodríguez
Collection.



Decisive Historical Moments: 100 Years and A World Apart

This exhibition visually situates José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, 1913) and Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Páztcuaro, Mexico, present) in distinct, yet decisive historical moments. From both sides of the Mexico/United States border, they examine the evolving, fluctuating relationship between these two countries, each embracing socio-political parody and calavera iconography as critical tools to depict their communities’ realities a century ago, and today.

José Guadalupe Posada’s Era

Posada was active during the long years of the Porfiriato, Porfirio Díaz’s repressive dictatorial regime (1884–1911), eventually overthrown by the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). During this period, the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) was in recent memory, as was the subsequent U.S. annexation of 500,000 square miles of Mexican territory. To facilitate the growth of these newly acquired lands in today’s American Southwest, agents from the U.S. railroad, mining, and agricultural industries appealed to Mexican laborers—afflicted by low wages and the civil war—to cross the border to work. Posada only lived to see the first three years of the Revolution, but he was an astute witness to the roiling socio-political tensions that preceded it, which he documented raw upon the page.

Artemio Rodríguez’s Era

A century after Posada, in his work Rodríguez documented life in the country he parodied as “Freedomland” from an immigrant’s perspective: from the outside, looking in. His U.S. sojourn from 1994 to 2008 coincided with the aftermath of the first conflict in the Persian Gulf (1990–1991), the onset of the Second Gulf War (2003–2011), and the U.S.’s 1995 Immigration Reform Act, which increased the requirements for immigrants. He found his artistic voice in California, where Chicano artists and their communities embraced him. Anchored in their daily struggles, triumphs, popular traditions, and shared heritage, as well as this overarching context, Rodríguez depicts a version of the “American Dream” rooted in popular culture at an historical crossroad.



Figure 3. José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913), *¡No vayas al gringo!* [Don't Go with the Gringo!], detail, published in *El Diablito Rojo* [The Little Red Devil], 2nd epoch, vol. III, no. 103, 1910, Metal relief print on paper 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm). Benson Latin American Collection, LILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin.

Satire: *Calaveras* Critique and *The Triumph of Death*

The artworks in this section spotlight José Guadalupe Posada's and Artemio Rodríguez's shared penchant for socio-political critique. Images range from machete-wielding *calaveras* and sensationalized apocalyptic scenes, to satirical caricatures of political figures. Reflecting both dark humor and dry wit, Rodríguez even audaciously kills off pop culture icons Mickey Mouse and Superman, turning them into the *calaveras* *Mickey Muerto* and *Supermuerto*—just as Posada himself had daringly done with Mexican politicians of his era in his own satirical portraits.

Posada first popularized his *calaveras* as ironic depictions of the Mexican bourgeoisie beginning in the mid-1890s. Inspired as much by pre-Columbian artforms as by popular Day of the Dead traditions, Posada's skeletal figures unexpectedly enjoyed great popularity and renown as they evolved instead into beloved, everyday characters fighting for the underdog. Today, Posada's most famous creations, such as the demure *Calavera Catrina* and the revolutionary *Skeleton from Oaxaca*, belong to global popular culture, while also serving among Mexican and Chicano communities as symbols of shared heritage and icons for overcoming adversity. Rodríguez's *calaveras* turn fiercer in his tour-de-force "print mural" *The Triumph of Death*, a reinterpretation of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's original 1562 painting, which graphically illustrates Rodríguez's syncretic fusion of inspiration derived from Posada with other art historical traditions.

(Facing Page) Artemio Rodríguez, *El Triunfo de la Muerte* [*The Triumph of Death*], detail, 2003–2006, woodcut, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Museum purchase, 2024.567 .a-c.

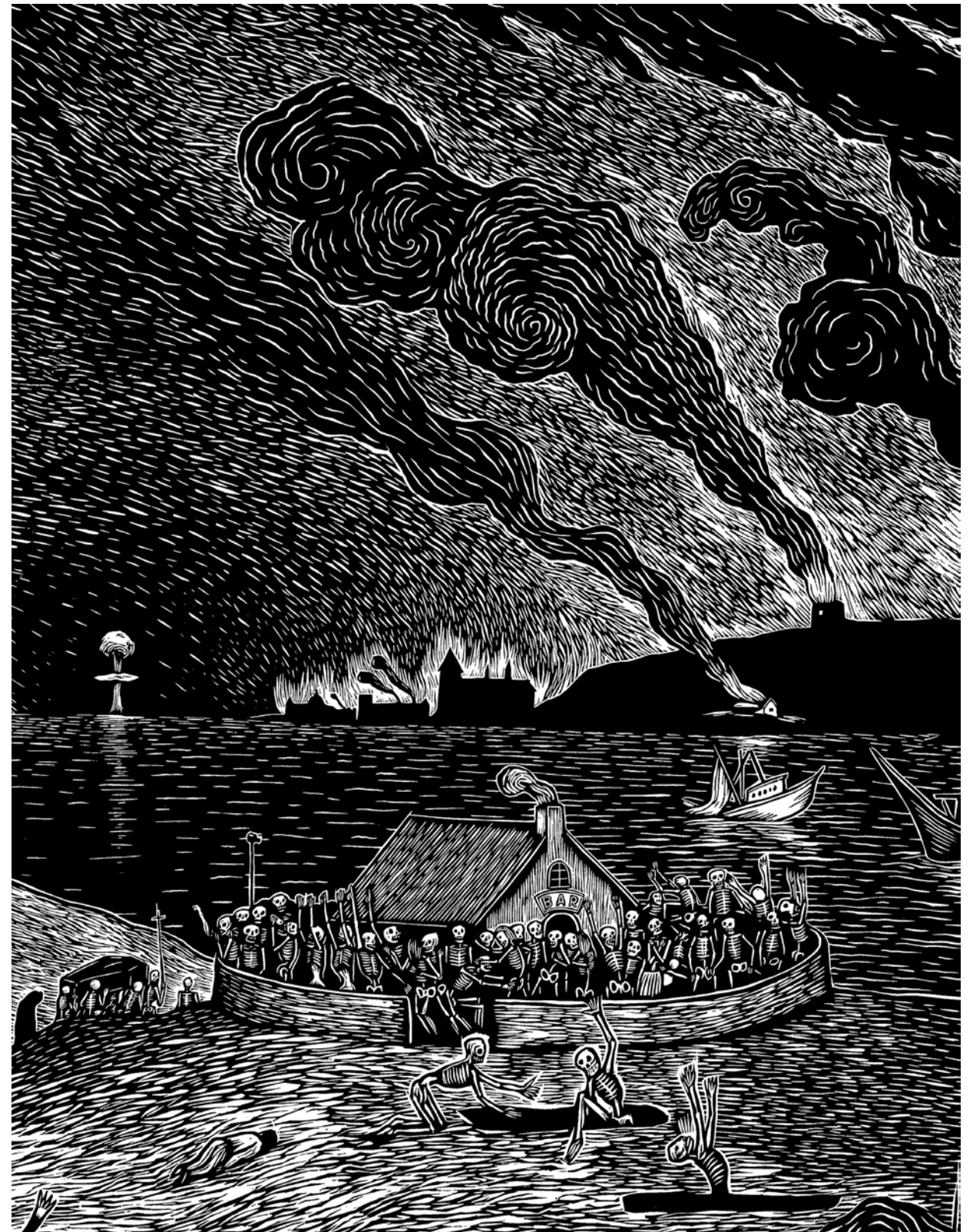




Plate 1
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Por Yanquilandia y por México [*For Yankeeland and for Mexico*], published in *El Diablito Rojo* [*The Little Red Devil*], 2nd epoch, vol. III, no. 118, 1910
 Metal relief print on paper
 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm)
 Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin



Plate 2
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Mickey va [*Mickey Goes*], 2006
 Woodcut
 14 × 10 in. (35.6 × 25.4 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 3
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
2a Parte ejemplo los siete vicios [Second Part of the Example of the Seven Deadly Sins], 1875
 Relief etching on type-metal
 5 1/16 × 11 9/16 in. (12.9 × 29.4 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Frank Ribelin, 2008.33



Plate 4
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
El Tío Sam tiene un mal día [Uncle Sam is Having a Bad Day], 2016
 Linocut
 15 × 16 in. (38.1 × 40.6 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores García, PA2024. CA.962

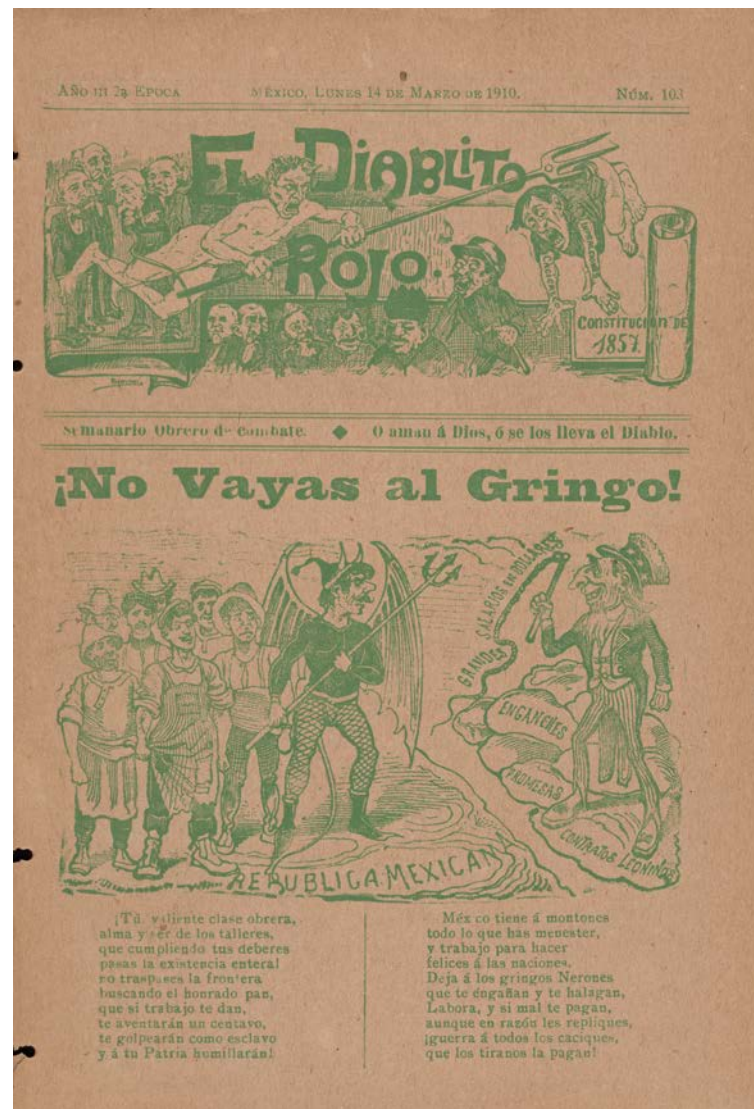


Plate 5
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
¡No vayas al gringo! [*Don't Go with the Gringo!*], detail, published in
El Diablito Rojo [*The Little Red Devil*], 2nd epoch, vol. III, no. 103, 1910
 Metal relief print on paper
 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm)
 Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American
 Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin



Plate 6
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Somos parte [*We Are Part of It*], 1995
 Linocut
 15 × 11 in. (38.1 × 28 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
 Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022.140



Plate 7
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Las “posadas” en provincia [*Popular Christmas Celebration in the Provinces*],
 published in *El Diablito Rojo* [*The Little Red Devil*], 2nd epoch, no. 43, 1908
 Metal relief print on paper
 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm)
 Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies
 and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin



Plate 8
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La frágil vida [*Fragile Life*], 2023
 Linocut
 21 × 14 1/2 in. (53.3 × 36.9 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 9
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Calavera de Don Quixote [*Don Quixote's Skeleton*], circa 1910–1913
 Relief etching on type metal and metalcut
 9 7/16 × 13 13/16 in. (24 × 35.1 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Frank Ribelin, 2008.30



Plate 10
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La guerra es dinero [*War Is Money*], 2007
 Linocut
 38 1/4 × 50 in. (97.2 × 127 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores García, PA2024. CA.1447

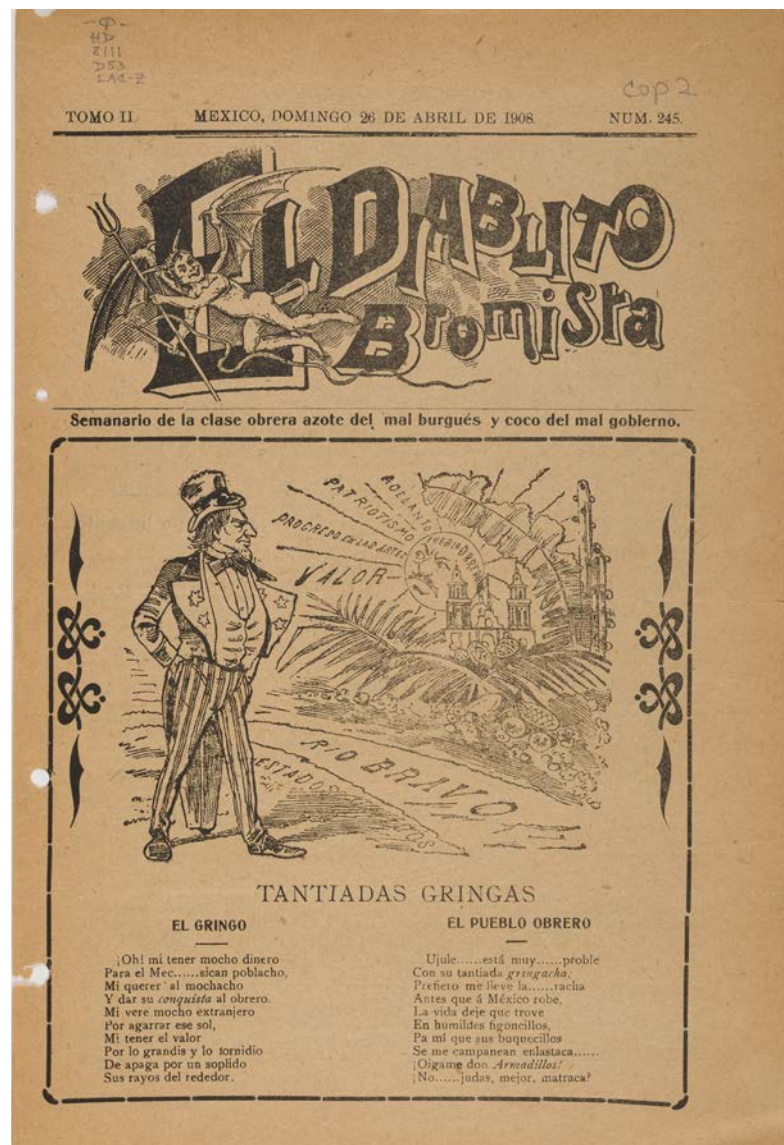


Plate 11
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Tantiadas gringas [*Gringo Half-Truths*], published in *El Diablito Bromista* [*The Trickster Little Devil*], vol. II, no. 245, 1908
 Metal relief print on paper
 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm)
 Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin



Plate 12
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
La Gran Calavera de Emiliano Zapata [*The Great Skeleton of Emiliano Zapata*], circa 1911–1916, printed 1930
 Photo-relief etching with engraving
 11 1/2 × 14 1/8 in. (29.2 × 35.9 cm)
 Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of Frank Ribelin, 2007.72
 Photograph © The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Will Michels



Plate 13
 Workshop of José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Calavera Huertista del portafolio *Monografía: Las obras de José Guadalupe Posada, grabador mexicano* [Huerta's Skeleton from the portfolio *Monograph: The Works of José Guadalupe Posada, Mexican Printmaker*], published by Mexican Folkways in 1930, circa 1890–1913
 Photo-relief etching with engraving
 13 11/16 × 9 1/4 in. (34.8 × 23.5 cm)
 Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.73



Plate 14
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La bestia que todo lo ve [*The Beast That Sees It All*], 2004
 Woodcut
 10 × 14 in. (25.4 × 35.6 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 15
José Guadalupe Posada
Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
En la fiesta de alegres calaveras [*At the Happy Skeletons' Party*],
circa 1908–1910
Type-metal engraving
23 3/8 × 15 3/4 in. (59.4 × 40 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 16
Artemio Rodríguez
Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Supermuerto [*Superdead*], 2017
Silkscreen
37 × 18.5 in. (94 × 47 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

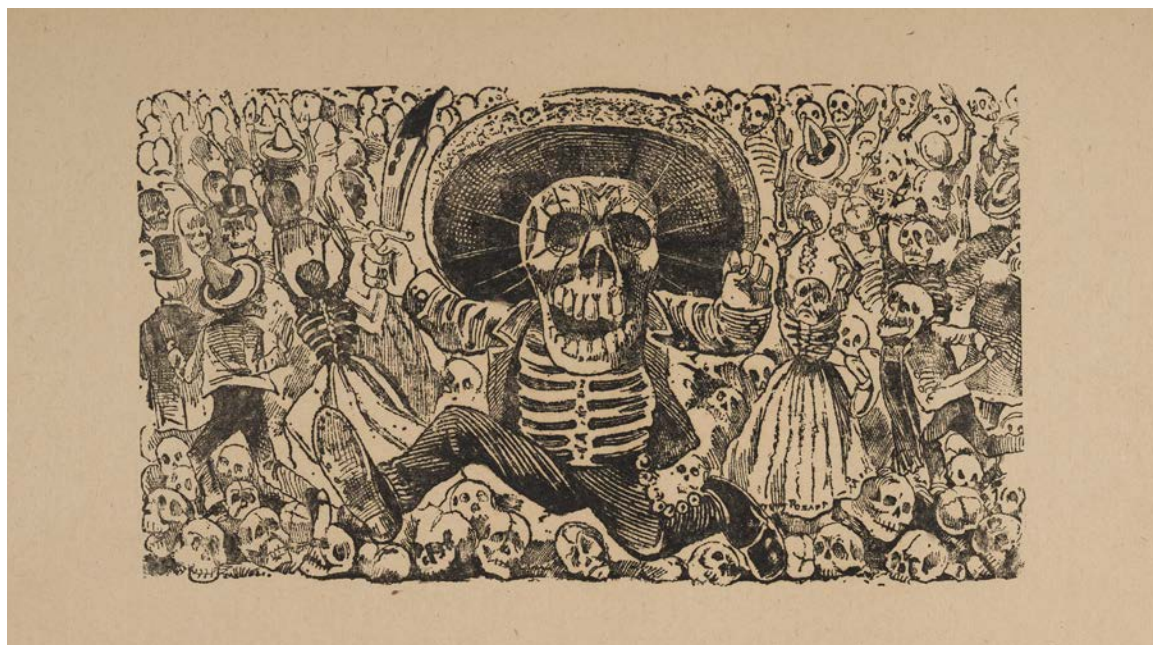


Plate 17
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Calavera Oaxaqueña [Skeleton from Oaxaca], ca. 1910
 Type-metal engraving
 9 1/4 × 13 11/16 in. (23.5 × 34.8 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 18
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Mickey Muerto [Dead Mickey], 2005
 Silkscreens
 Each: 25 1/2 × 17 1/2 in. (64.8 × 44.5 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 19
José Guadalupe Posada
Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
De este famoso hipódromo en la pista no faltará ni un solo periodista [Not a Single Journalist Will Be Missing from this Famous Racetrack] (recto), circa 1898–1902
23 3/8 × 15 3/4 in. (59.4 × 40 cm)
Mexic-Arte Museum, Gift of Antonio Wehnes



Plate 20
José Guadalupe Posada
Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Es esta calavera tan barata, para aquellos que son aficionados, que a pesar de tan buena y tan bonita, por ella aflojaron cinco centavos [Is This Calavera Cheap Enough, For Those Who Are Fans, That Even Though It Is So Good and So Pretty, They Would Waste Five Cents On It] (verso of Plate 19), circa 1898–1902
23 3/8 × 15 3/4 in. (59.4 × 40 cm)
Mexic-Arte Museum, Gift of Antonio Wehnes

El Diablito Rojo



Vale un centavo

Panteón Político

En terrenos de EL DIABLITO ROJO

EL PROGRESO

Lo matan, pero seguido,
la crisis, la lotería,
Baco, la pornografía,
los que a México han vendido,
y la politiquería.

LA INDEPENDENCIA

Desde Hidalgo hasta la prensa
fué la víctima del fuerte;
mas no murió, que es inmensa,
que no hay poder, ni hay ofensa
que puedan darle la muerte.

«EL IMPARCIAL»

Creció como los hongos,
subió como los ríos,
chupó como la esponja,
y fué gomin de los ajenos trigos.
Pero por fin, las dádivas
faltáronle, y el misero,
aquel arrogante Hércules,
ha muerto como un tísico.

EL COMERCIO

Ha muerto el pobre de tísis,
porque tomó el inocente,
medicinas de patente:
los impuestos y la crisis.

En estos negros anales
Alegro, y a la vez,
todos los que de algún modo
tengan cuentas infernales;
los plebeyos, los feudales
de escudo sobre sinople;
lo que vida ó muerte acople,
pues en Novbre. es costumbre
echar pólvora á la lumbre,
y el que se queme, que sopie.

La muerte á todos nivela con justiciera medida
y en la tumba el poderoso, junto al humilde reposa,
solo los cuerpos: las almas, abandonando la fosa,
se separan ó se alejan para empezar la subida
á la región espantable que nos es desconocida.
Allá sin excusa iremos, y en la senda de la nada,
desde el niño hasta el anciano cumpliremos la jornada,
porque la ley de morir, que á todos sin vida deja,
es la única del Código, que por legal y pareja,
desde que se usa en mi Patria nunca ha sido reformada.

LA GRAN
CLASE OBRERA

Le dió su vida la Patria,
y la fomentó el estímulo;
fué un Hércules por el músculo,
mas la maltrató el altivo.
Subió al calvario en las fábricas
con desdenes y martirios,
mas de pie en la tumba espera
de la Independencia el grito,
para que el obrero encavase
sus ideales altísimos.

«EL DIABLITO ROJO»

Fué duro como el acero,
no hirió á la mala á ninguno,
fué verídico, oportuno,
gran defensor del obrero;
como diablo, parrandero,
como periodista tierno.
Murió... pero en el averno,
cuida, porque no es farugo,
que no salga ni un verdugo
de las llamas del infierno.

LA PRENSA
INDEPENDIENTE

Murió ahogada por la fuerza,
y en su tumba, este epitafio
leerán el noble y el safo:
"La muerte antes que me fuerza."

LOS GENDARMES

Han muerto, y para consuelo,
aunque por entrar se mueren,
ni en el infierno los quieren,
porque no son de ese pelo.

LOS CACIQUES

Fueron al fuego en montón
y al verlos dijo con ternos
el diablo: ¡cuánto lebrón!
no lo admito ni en los cuernos.
¡Fuera! que tanto carbón
me va á tizar los infiernos!

EL PERIODISMO

Murió en un estrecho abrazo
porque ahora en vivir se empeña
en darse cada porrazo,
que aquí se arranca un pedazo,
y allí se arranca una greña

LOS MOTORISTAS

Murieron muy á propósito
de muerte justa y sencilla,
los arrebató la chilla,
pues juntos en el depósito
cayó un rayo en la Indianilla.

LA CONSTITUCION DE 1857

La llevan disque á enterrar
la mar con todos sus peces,
una gran porción de veces,
porque la quieren matar;
pero á la tumba al llegar,
¡oh! Gran Libro! los atrojas,
y entran todos en congojas,
y sudan, temen y pujan,
mas no te matan... te estrujan
ó te arrancan unas hojas!

LA LIBERTAD

Cuantos la quieren matar
no pueden, porque Dios plugo,
darle invencible lugar,
pues la manda iluminar,
hasta el alma del verdugo.

El Diablito Rojo



Vale un centavo

Panteón Político

En terrenos de EL DIABLITO ROJO

En estos negros anales
Alegro, y a la vez,
todos los que de algún modo
tengan cuentas infernales;
los plebeyos, los feudales
de escudo sobre sinople;
lo que vida ó muerte acople,
pues en Novbre. es costumbre
echar pólvora á la lumbre,
y el que se queme, que sopie.

Plates 21 and 22

José Guadalupe Posada

Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913

Panteón político [*Political Pantheon*], and detail (facing page),
published in *El Diablito Rojo* [*The Little Red Devil*], 2nd epoch, vol. III,
no. 136, 1910

Metal relief print on paper

12 3/6 × 18 9/10 in. (32 × 48 cm)

Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American
Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin



Plate 23
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–
 Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
El Triunfo de la Muerte [*The
 Triumph of Death*], 2003–2006
 Woodcut print
 96 × 144 in. (243.8 × 365.8 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The
 University of Texas at Austin,
 Museum purchase, 2024.567.a-c



Plate 24
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
El Triunfo de la Muerte [*The Triumph of Death*], detail, 2003–2006
 Woodcut print
 96 × 144 in. (243.8 × 365.8 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
 Museum purchase, 2024.567.a-c



Plate 25
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
El Triunfo de la Muerte [*The Triumph of Death*], detail, 2003–2006
 Woodcut print
 96 × 144 in. (243.8 × 365.8 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
 Museum purchase, 2024.567.a-c



Plate 26
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–
 Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
El Triunfo de la Muerte [*The
 Triumph of Death*], detail,
 2003–2006
 Woodcut print
 96 × 144 in. (243.8 × 365.8 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The
 University of Texas at Austin,
 Museum purchase, 2024.567.a-c



Plate 27
 Manuel Manilla
 Mexico City, Mexico, 1830–1895
El Fin del Mundo [*The End of the World*], ca. 1899
 Engraving
 14 15/16 × 11 13/16 in. (38 × 30 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 28
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Dialoguito de Mamá Tierra con D. Cometa Haley [*Mother Earth's Chat with Mr. Comet Haley*], circa 1889
 Relief print
 6 1/4 × 9 5/16 in. (15.9 × 23.7 cm)
 Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.123



Plates 29 and 30
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La existencia del Infierno [*The Existence of Hell*], and
 detail (facing page), 1998
 Linocut
 28 1/4 × 52 1/8 in. (71.8 × 132.4 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at
 Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto
 Cárdenas and Dolores García, PA2024.CA.199

Celebration: Community and Culture

José Guadalupe Posada and Artemio Rodríguez both evoke devotion to local traditions and common histories in their prolific prints. Posada's imagery of community celebration centered on his *calaveras*, those beloved characters enacting rituals of popular life and lore. Although rooted in a different time, Rodríguez similarly embraces popular Mexican and Chicano popular cultures, reframing scenes of everyday life into narratives of cultural affirmation, which often empower women or satirically underscore discrimination against them. In addition, the images paired here graphically illustrate disparities in gender relations and women's liberties from each artist's era.

(Facing Page)
Artemio Rodríguez,
*Todo lo que en el
cielo y en el amor
cabe* [*All That Fits
in Heaven and in
Love*], detail, 2012,
Linocut, 74 × 19 7/8
in. (188 × 50.5 cm),
Artemio Rodríguez
Collection.





Plate 31
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Buenos vecinos [*Good Neighbors*], 2004
 Linocut
 7 1/2 × 11 1/4 in. (19.1 × 28.6 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 32
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Amor a quien amor merece [*Love Those Deserving Love*], 2004
 Linocut
 5 3/4 × 11 1/2 in. (14.6 × 29.2 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection

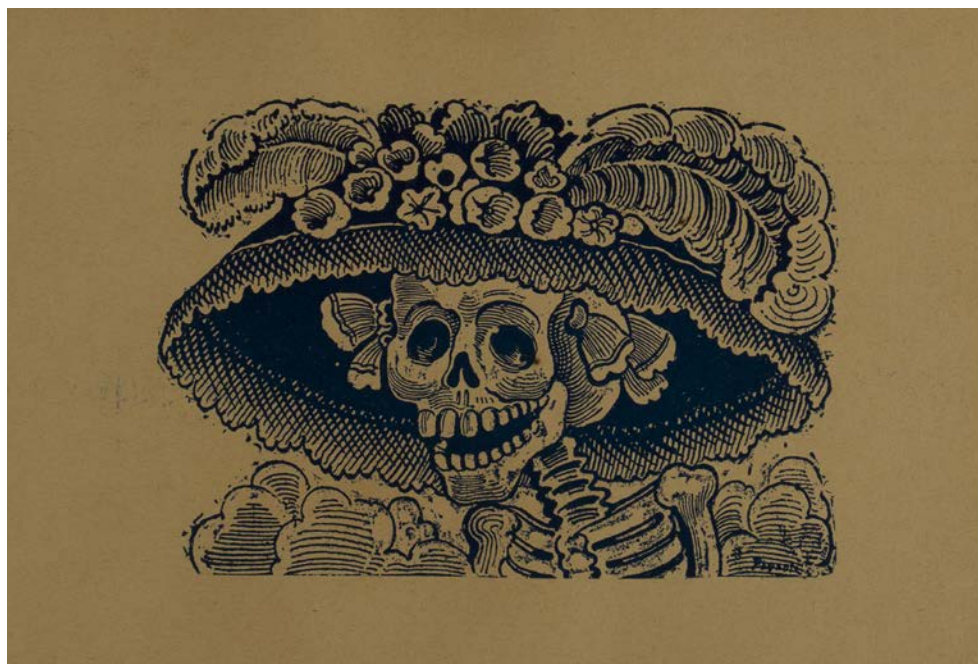


Plate 33
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Calavera de la Catrina [*Skeleton of the Female Dandy*], c. 1910
 Photo-relief etching with engraving
 6 1/4 × 9 1/8 in. (15.9 × 23.2 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
 Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and
 Dolores Garcia, PA2023.CA.633



Plate 34
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present

John Jota Leños
 Pomona, California, 1969–Santa Cruz, California, present

El Muertorider Katrina Car 2006
 Customized 1968 Chevrolet Impala lowrider
 Photograph by Artemio Rodríguez.



Plate 35
José Guadalupe Posada
Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913

Manuel Manilla
Mexico City, Mexico, 1830–1895

Aquí la Calavera está, señores, de todos los buenos valedores
[*Gentlemen, the Skeleton of All the Good Protectors Is Here*], 1914
Type-metal engraving
16 1/8 × 12 in. (41 × 30.5 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 36
Artemio Rodríguez
Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
¡Ay! Amorcito [Oh, My Little Love!], 1994
Linocut
15 × 14 1/8 in. (38.1 × 35.9 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and
Dolores Garcia, 2024.91



Plate 37
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Sin título [Untitled], circa 1890
 Lithograph
 11 × 13 3/4 in. (27.9 × 34.9 cm)
 Mexic-Arte Museum, Juan Antonio Sandoval Jr.
 Collection



Plate 38
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Todo lo que en el Cielo y en el amor cabe [All That Fits in Heaven and in Love], detail, 2012
 Linocut
 11.8 × 47 in. (29.8 × 119.4 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection

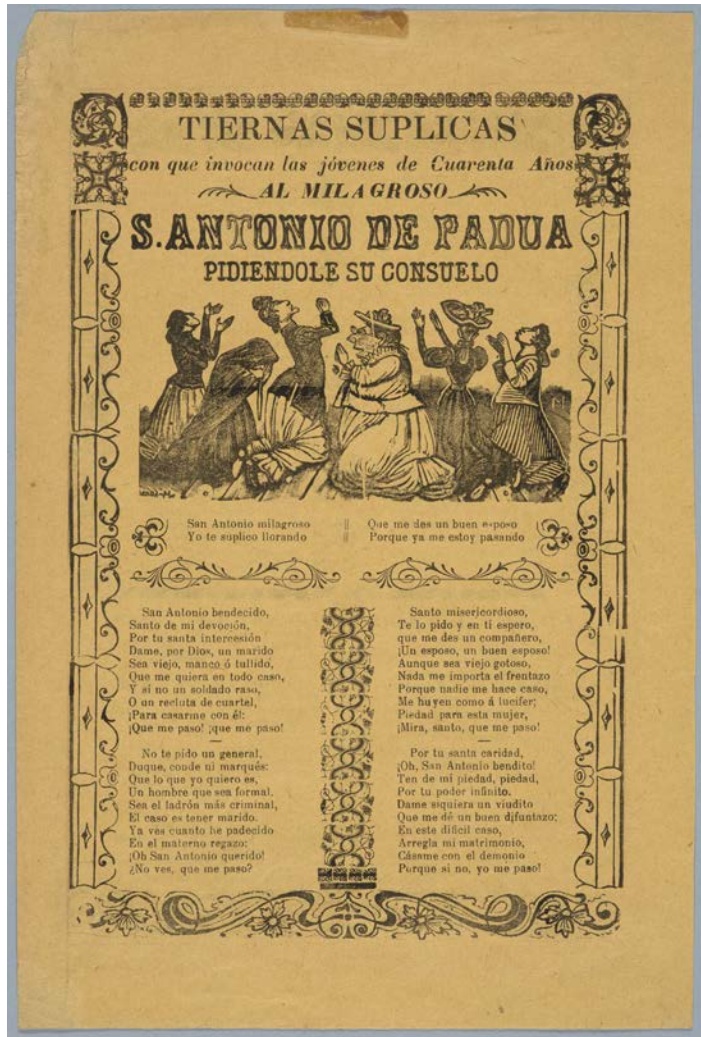


Plate 39
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Tiernas súplicas con que invocan las jóvenes de cuarenta años al milagroso San Antonio de Padua pidiéndole su consuelo [*The Tender Prayers that Young Forty-Year-Old Women Invoke to Ask St. Anthony of Padua for His Mercy*], 1914
 Type-metal engraving
 11 15/16 × 7 7/8 in. (30.3 × 20 cm)
 Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.147



Plate 40
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Eva fuera del Paraíso, del portafolio *Grabados de mujeres* [*Eve Out of Paradise*, from the portfolio *Woodcuts of Women*], 2001
 Linocut
 10 × 11 3/4 in. (25.4 × 29.8 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
 Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and
 Dolores Garcia, 2024.259



Plate 41
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Adán [Adam], 2000
 Linocut
 14 7/8 × 8 1/8 in. (37.8 × 20.6 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto
 Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.261



Plate 42
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Eva [Eve], 2000
 Linocut
 14 7/8 × 8 1/4 in. (37.8 × 21 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas
 Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.192

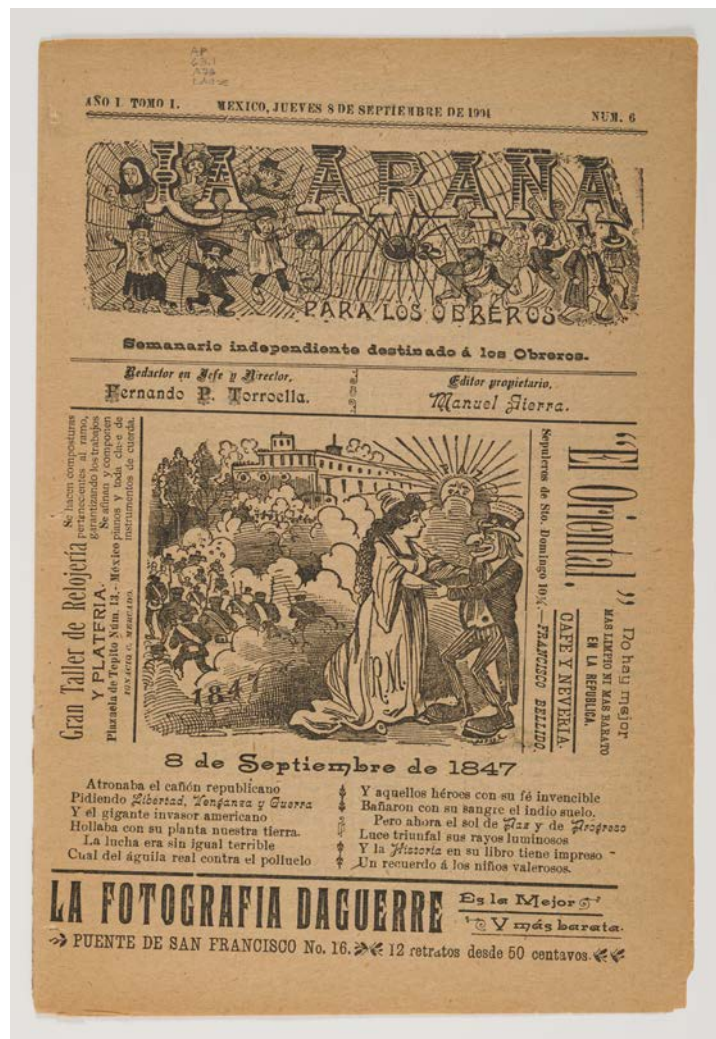


Plate 43
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
8 de septiembre de 1847 [8 of September of 1847], published in *La Araña* [The Spider], vol. I, no. 1, 1904
 Metal relief print
 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm)
 Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin



Plate 44
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Mujer I, del portafolio *Grabados de mujeres* [Woman I, from the portfolio *Woodcuts of Women*], 2001
 11 1/4 × 10 in. (28.6 × 25.4 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores García, 2024.257



Plate 45
José Guadalupe Posada
Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
¡Las mujeres martirizadas!! [*Martyred Women!!*], circa
1890-1920
Engraving
11 13/16 × 7 7/8 in. (30 × 20 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 46
Artemio Rodríguez
Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Mayela, del portafolio *Grabados de mujeres* [*Mayela*, from the portfolio
Woodcuts of Women], 2001
Linocut
11 3/4 × 10 in. (29.8 × 25.4 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas
Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.254



Plate 47
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
El diablito bromista: Un abrazo muy tierno y muy gringo, [A Very Tender and Gringo Hug], detail, published in *El Diablito Bromista* [The Trickster Little Devil], vol. 6, no. 14, 1903
 Metal relief print
 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm)
 Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin



Plate 48
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Bar, del portafolio *Grabados de mujeres* [Bar, from the portfolio *Woodcuts of Women*], 2000
 Linocut
 11 7/8 × 10 5/8 in. (30.2 × 27 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.247

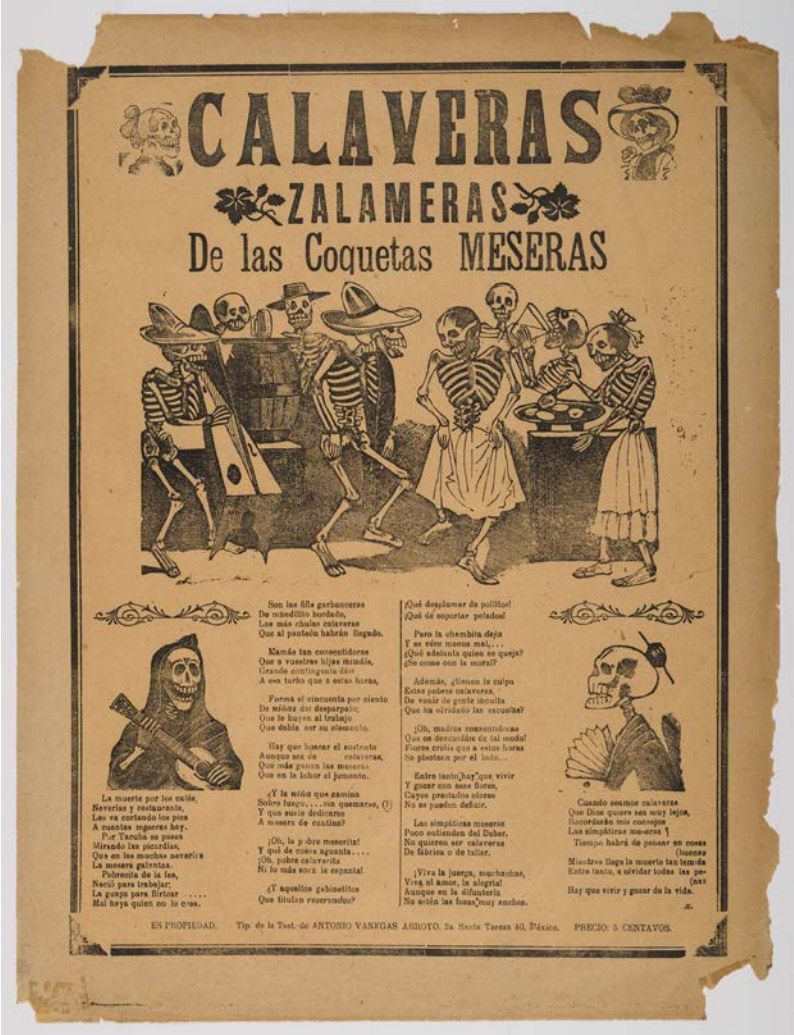


Plate 49
José Guadalupe Posada
Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Calaveras zalameras de las coquetas meseras [*Flattering
Skeletons of the Flirtatious Servers*], 1917
Etching
15 13/16 × 11 15/16 in. (40.2 × 30.3 cm)
Mexic-Arte Museum



Plate 50
Artemio Rodríguez
Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Noche infinita [*Infinite Night*], 2004
Linocut
32 1/2 × 50 3/4 in. (82.6 × 128.9 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund,
2022.108



Plate 51
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
El testerazo del diablo: Juguete pastoril en un acto [*The Devil's Head Bump: A pastoral skit in one act*], play cover, 1875.
 Relief etching on type metal and metalcut
 8 × 5 1/16 in. (20.4 × 12.9 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Alvin and Ethel Romansky, 1982.589



Plate 52
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Avaricia (verde y amarillo) [*Avarice (Green and Yellow)*], 2005
 Silkscreen
 34 × 33 1/4 in. (86.4 × 84.5 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 53
José Guadalupe Posada
Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
El Purgatorio artístico [*The Artistic Purgatory*], detail, 1900–1910
Offset lithograph
13 3/4 × 11 in. (35 × 27.9 cm)
Mexic-Arte Museum, Juan Antonio Sandoval Jr. Collection



Plate 54
Artemio Rodríguez
Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La Segunda Fundación [*The Second Founding*], 2014
Linocut
8 3/4 × 8 in. (22.2 × 20.3 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 55
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
La Lotería [Lottery], circa 1890-1920
 Woodcut on paper
 13 1/4 × 11 1/2 in. (33.7 × 29.2 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 56
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La Lotería IX [The Lottery IX], 1998
 Linocut
 18 1/8 × 15 in. (46 × 38 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at
 Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto
 Cárdenas and Dolores García, 2023.262



Plates 57 and 58
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La Lotería VI [*Lottery VI*], and detail, Sor Juana Inés
 de la Cruz (facing page), 1997
 Linocut
 17 7/8 × 14 7/8 in. (45.4 × 37.8 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at
 Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto
 Cárdenas and Dolores García, 2023.248



Plate 59
Artemio Rodríguez
Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La Lotería II [*The Lottery II*], 1995
Linocut
17 3/4 × 15 in. (45 × 38 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at
Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto
Cárdenas and Dolores García, 2023.258



Plate 60
Artemio Rodríguez
Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La Lotería XII [*The Lottery XII*], 1999
Linocut
15 × 14 3/4 in. (38.1 × 37.5 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and
Dolores García, 2024.92

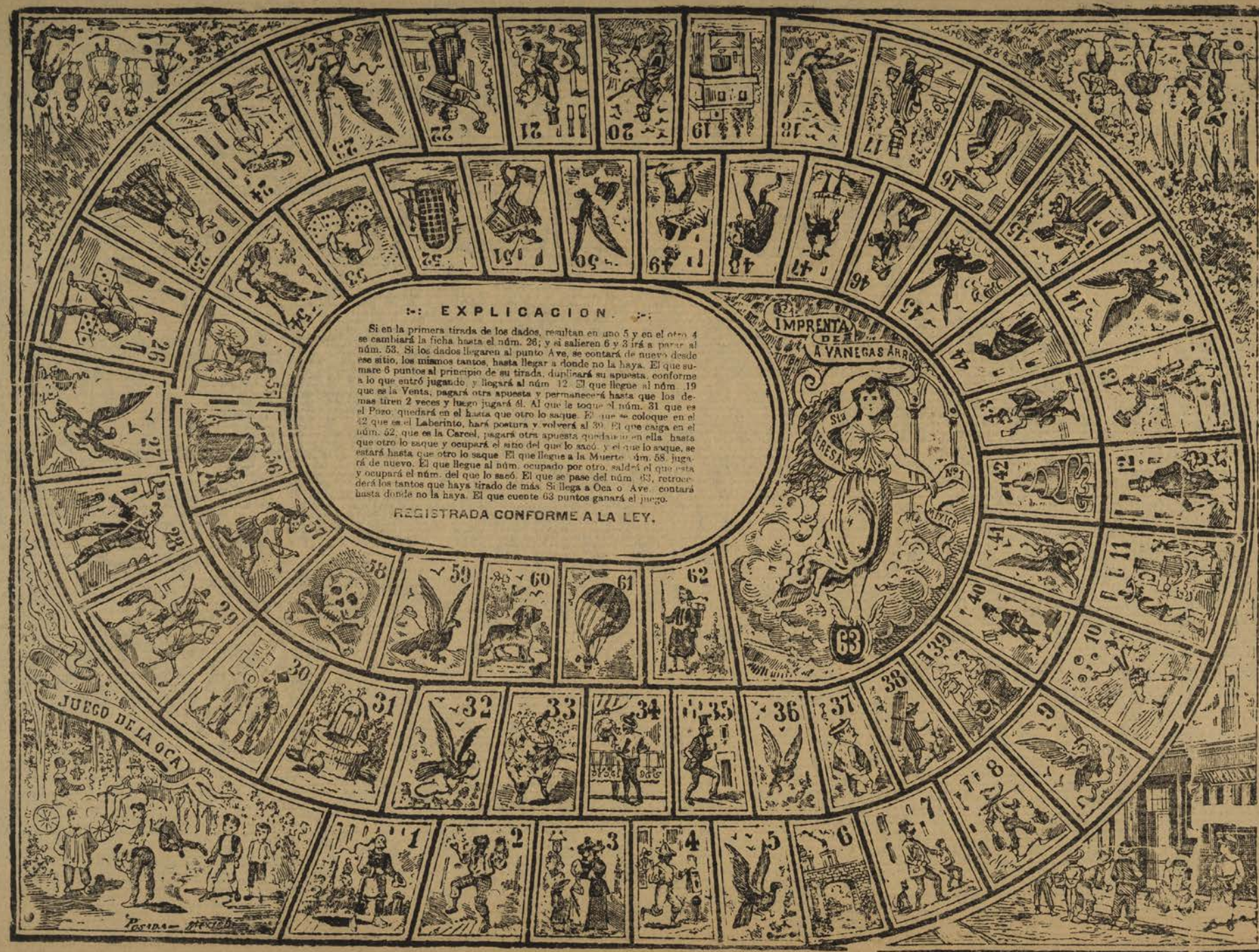


Plate 61
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–
 Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
El Juego de la Oca [Game of the
 Goose], circa 1900
 Engraving
 16 3/4 × 20 in. (42.5 × 50.8 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection

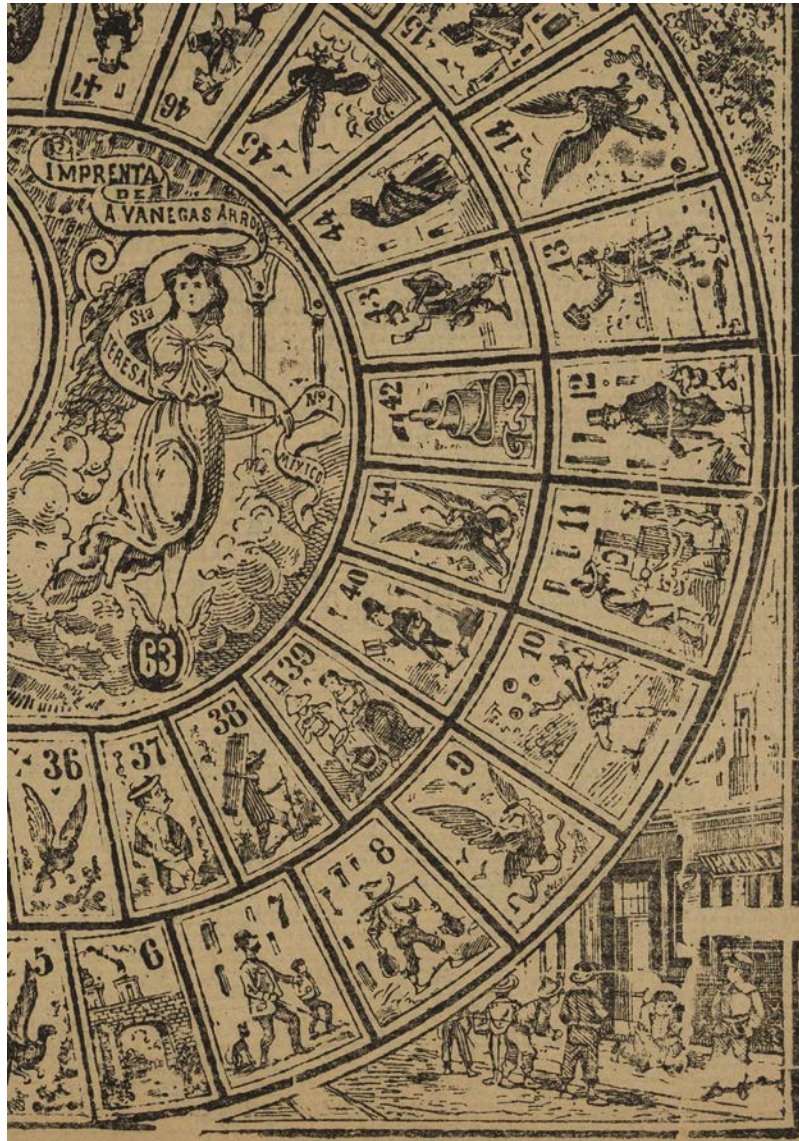


Plate 63
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
El Juego de la Oca [Game of the Goose], detail, circa 1900
 Engraving
 16 3/4 × 20 in. (42.5 × 50.8 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 64
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
El Juego de la Oca [Game of the Goose], detail, 2003
 Linocut
 17 1/2 × 24 1/4 in. (44.5 × 61.6 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 65
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
 Taco de impresión de *Ira*, para el libro *Saligia* [Printing
 block of *Wrath*, for the book *The Seven Deadly Sins*],
 2011
 Linoleum printing block
 Overall: 4 × 3 3/8 in. (10.2 × 8.6 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection

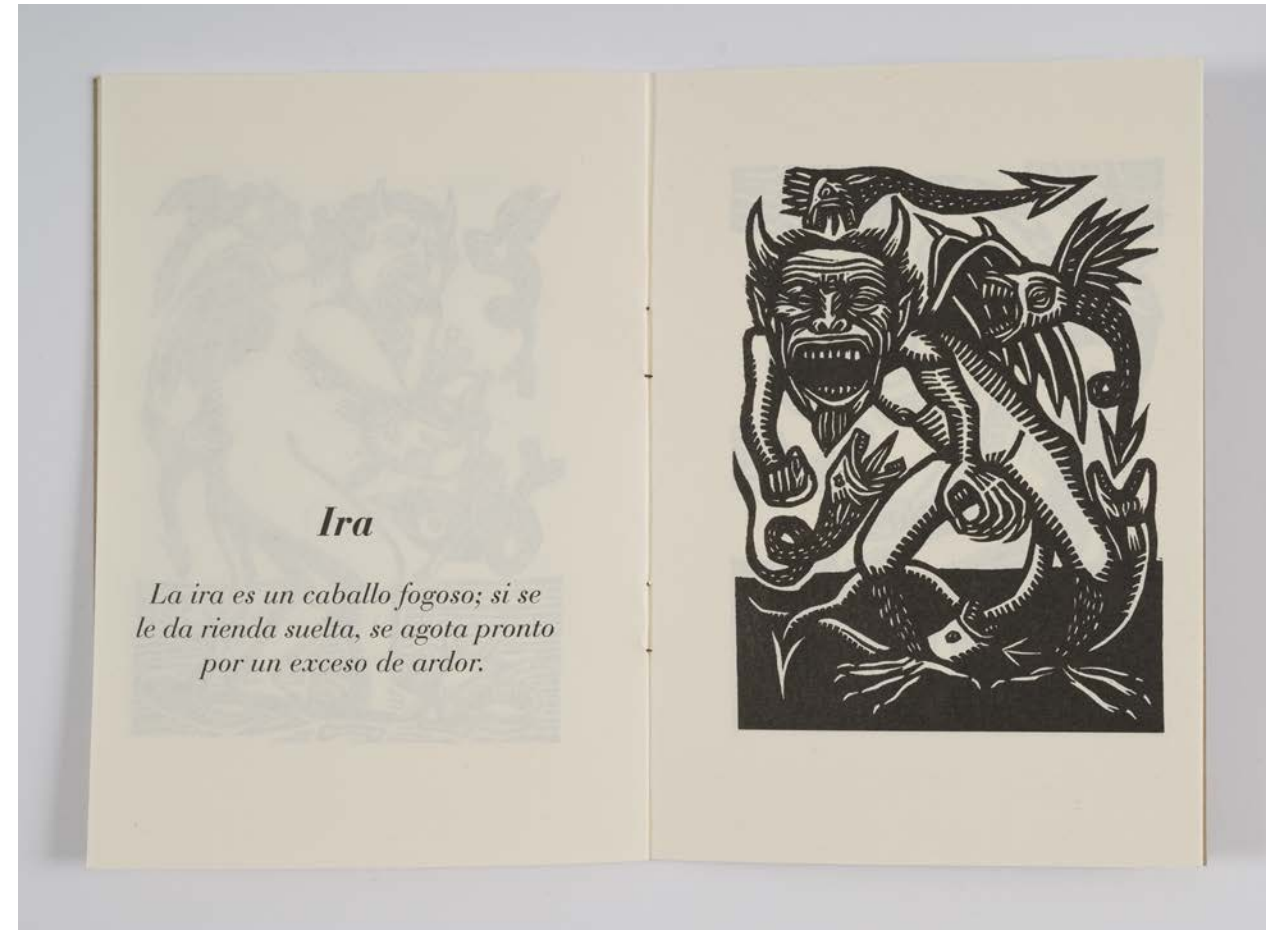


Plate 66
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Ira, en *Saligia* [*Wrath*, in *The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2011
 Artist's book with six linocuts
 5 1/2 × 3 7/8 in. (14 × 9.8 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
 Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and
 Dolores Garcia, PA2024.CA.1939



Plate 67
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
 Taco de impresión de *Superbia*, para el libro *Saligia*
 [Printing block of *Arrogance*, for the book *The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2011
 Linoleum printing block
 4 × 3 3/8 in. (10.2 × 8.6 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 68
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972—Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Superbia, en *Saligia* [*Arrogance*, in *The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2011
 Artist's book with six linocuts
 4 1/4 × 3 1/4 in. (10.8 × 8.3 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 69
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
 Taco de impresión de *Invidia*, para el libro *Saligia* [Printing
 block of *Envy*, for the book *The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2010
 Linoleum printing block
 4 × 3 1/8 in. (10.2 × 7.9 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection

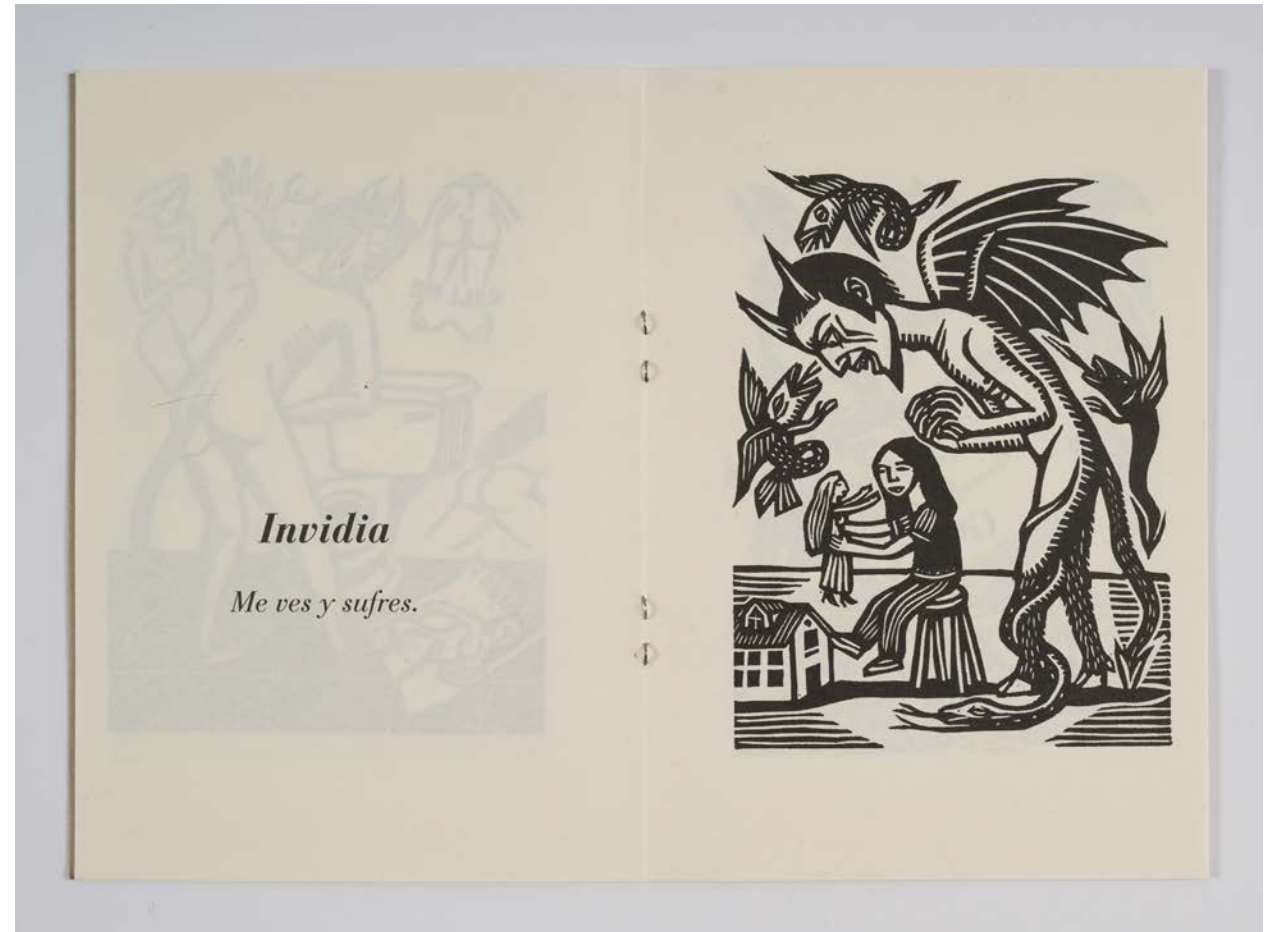


Plate 70
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Invidia, en *Saligia* [*Envy*, in *The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2010
 Artist's book with six linocuts
 5 1/2 × 3 7/8 in. (14 × 9.8 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
 Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and
 Dolores Garcia, PA2024.CA.1939

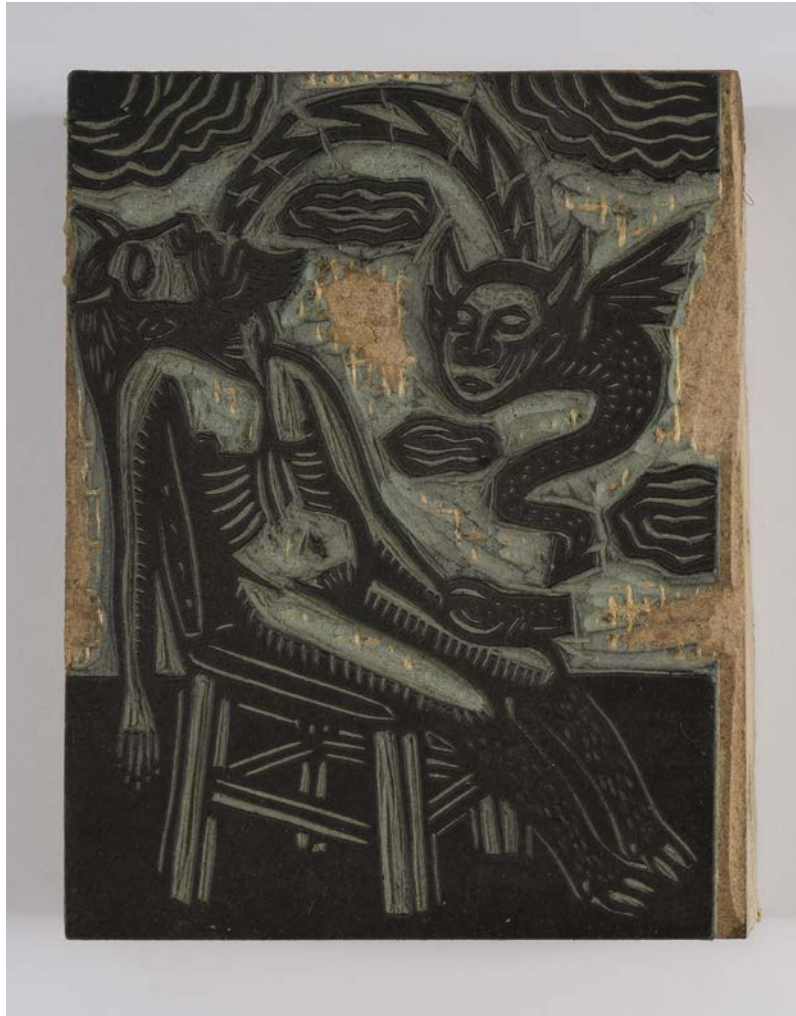


Plate 71
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
 Taco de impresión de *Acedia*, para el libro *Saligia* [Printing
 block of *Laziness*, for the book *The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2011
 Linoleum printing block
 4 × 3 3/8 in. (10.2 × 8.6 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection

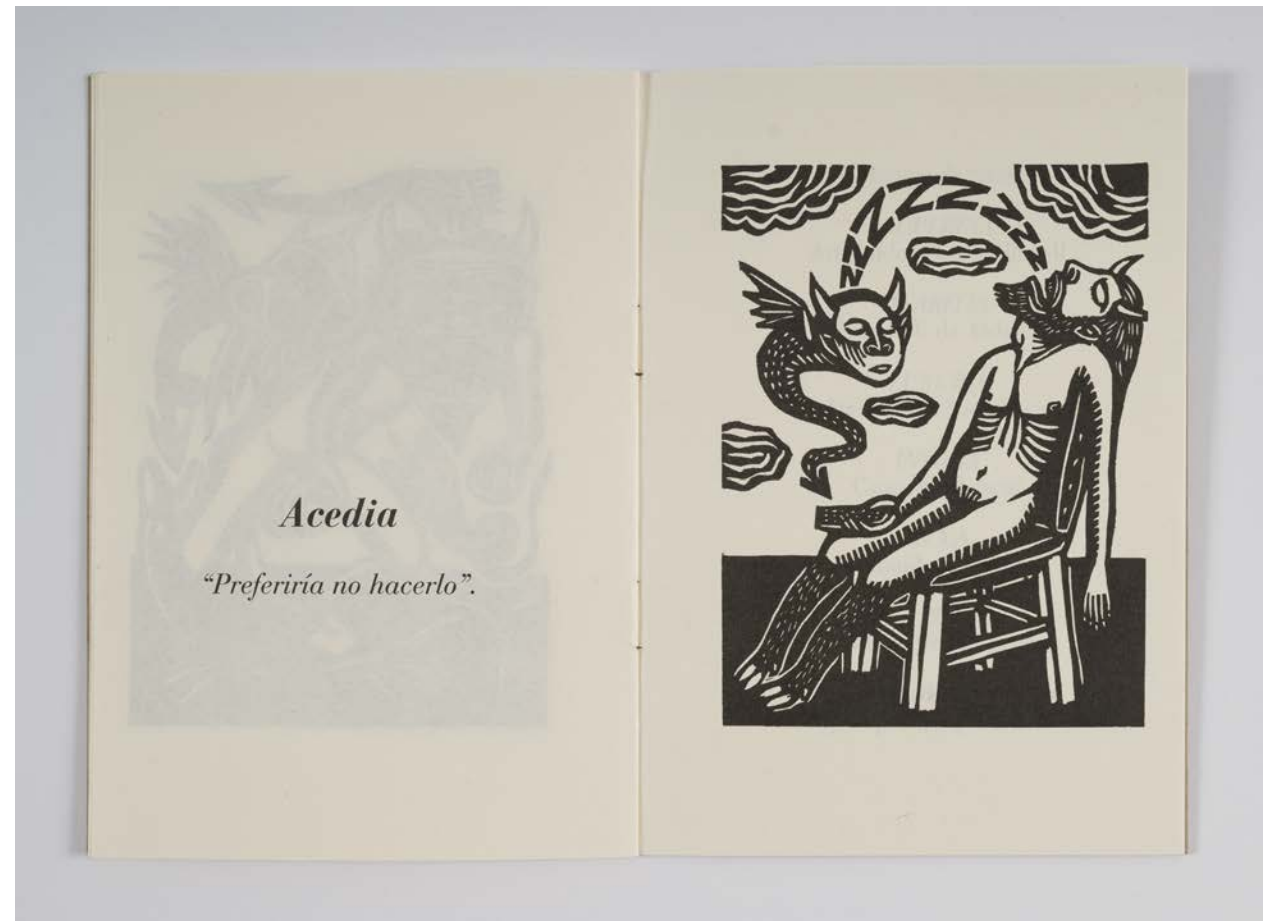


Plate 72
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Acedia, en *Saligia* [*Laziness*, in *The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2011
 Artist's book with six linocuts
 Overall: 4 1/2 × 3 1/4 in. (11.4 × 8.3 cm)
 Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,
 Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and
 Dolores Garcia, PA2024.CA.1939



Plate 73 [PRINT]
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Vete al infierno [Go to Hell], 2006
 Linocut
 4 × 3 3/8 in. (10.2 × 8.6 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection

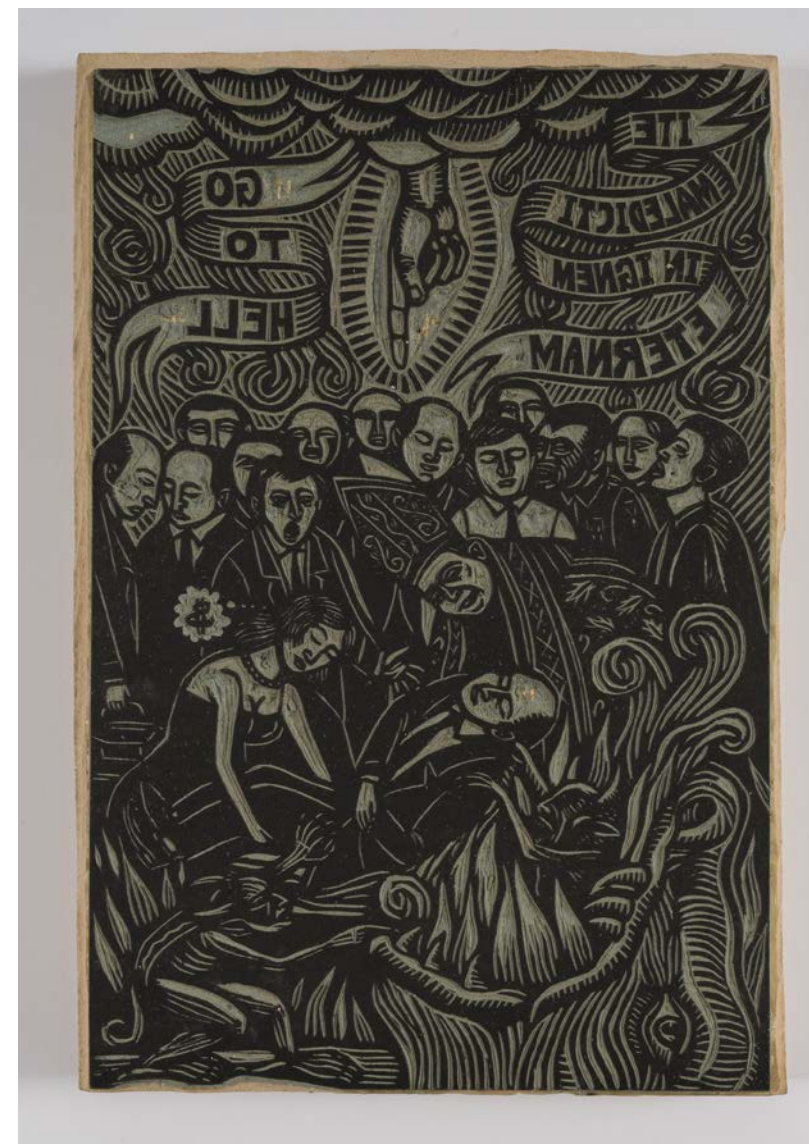


Plate 74 [BLOCK]
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
Vete al infierno [Go to Hell], 2006
 Linoleum printing plate
 4 × 3 3/8 in. (10.2 × 8.6 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 75 [PRINT]
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La frágil vida [*Fragile Life*], 2023
 Linocut
 21 × 14 1/2 in. (53.3 × 36.9 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 76 [BLOCK]
 Artemio Rodríguez
 Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present
La frágil vida [*Fragile Life*], 2023
 Linoleum printing plate
 17 × 10 1/2 in. (43.2 × 26.7 cm)
 Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Plate 77 [BLOCK]
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Calavera alta con reloj de arena [*Tall Skeleton Holding Hourglass*], circa 1890–1913
 Zinc printing block
 11 7/16 × 2 9/16 × 7/8 in. (29.1 × 6.5 × 2.2 cm)
 Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.351

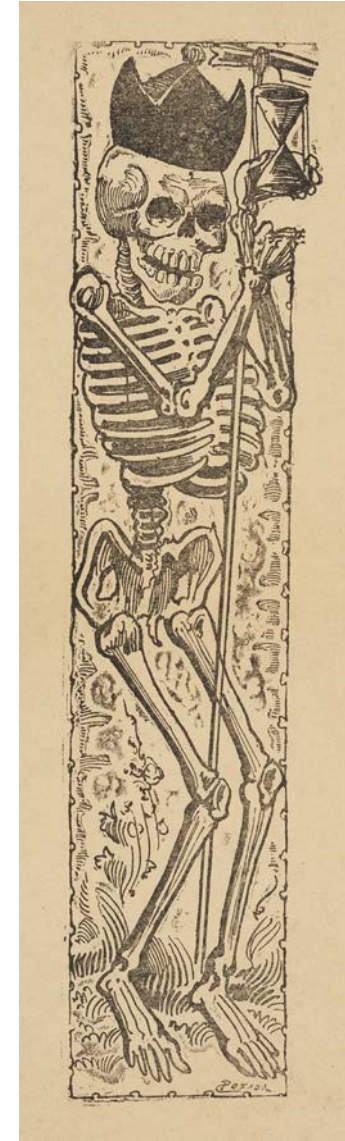


Plate 78 [PRINT]
 José Guadalupe Posada
 Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
Calavera con reloj de arena [*Skeleton with Hourglass*], circa 1890–1913
 Relief print
 12 1/2 × 9 5/8 in. (31.8 × 24.4 cm)
 Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.75



Buen Regalo a las Lindas Garbanceras



En la Fiesta de Alegres Calaveras



Las gatas remigadas
Por ladronas y por pillas,
Se verán arrinconadas
Entre huesos y canillas.



A todas las garbanceras
Les llegó ya la ocasión
De marchar para el panteón
A volverse calaveras.



Exhibition Installation Views

The exhibition *In Creative Harmony: Three Artistic Partnerships*. Arshile Gorky and Isamu Noguchi; José Guadalupe Posada and Artemio Rodríguez; Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse was on view in the Butler Galleries of the Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, February 16, 2025–July 20, 2025.

In Creative Harmony: Three Artistic Partnerships is organized by the Blanton Museum of Art. Major support for this exhibition is provided by The Moody Foundation.

This exhibition is supported in part by David and Ellen Berman.



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Small text label on the wall, likely providing information about the artwork.



Photo-aided memory with engraving
*Barbara M. Brown, School of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilbert
 Lindsay Collection, 1011 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78712-1001,
 USA*

John Jota Lenthien

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This part of studies, as mentioned earlier in history

parenting across the ages of time.

just as the Mexican Revolution was unfolding he called her *La California Californista*, using the

and against their indigenous ways, to her too this heavy indigenous was presented as a model.

Carson also wrote an "anti-dread" *Wingspread* in the penny press. *La Carota* became a success.

continued relevance as a cultural icon. Rodriguez
with John José Lachera on *El Muro de B...*

with whose skeletal lengths measurements of Pinar Aguilera, Rodriguez and Latorre versus the Cuy

was prominent frequent chant, "No Blood for Me" (a reference to the biblical story of Cain and Abel).

and La Crosse's leading contributors among
Marxist and Chinese communists.



Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law

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2

10



**Decline Historical Moments
100 Years and a Month Ago**

The decline of the world's great powers is a process that has been going on for a long time. It is a process that is not only a result of the decline of the great powers, but also a result of the decline of the world's great powers. The decline of the world's great powers is a process that is not only a result of the decline of the great powers, but also a result of the decline of the world's great powers.

José Gudiño's Portrait of a Man

Portrait of a man, José Gudiño, 1900. The portrait is a black and white illustration of a man with a mustache, wearing a suit and tie. The man is looking directly at the viewer with a slight smile. The background is a simple, light-colored wall.

Artistic Rodriguez's Life

Artistic Rodriguez's life is a story of a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity.

Warrior's History and the World of the World

The warrior's history is a story of a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity.

La vida de José Gudiño's Portrait

La vida de José Gudiño's Portrait is a story of a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity.

La vida de Artistic Rodriguez

La vida de Artistic Rodriguez is a story of a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity. He was a man who lived a life of art and creativity.





Celebration: Community and Culture

The celebration of community and culture is a central theme in the work of the artist. This section explores the ways in which community and culture are celebrated and how they shape the lives of individuals. The artist's work is a testament to the power of community and culture to create a sense of belonging and purpose.

Celebración: Comunidad y cultura

La celebración de la comunidad y la cultura es un tema central en el trabajo del artista. Esta sección explora las formas en que la comunidad y la cultura son celebradas y cómo moldean la vida de las personas. El trabajo del artista es un testimonio del poder de la comunidad y la cultura para crear un sentido de pertenencia y propósito.













Calaveras de Montón
Este libro contiene la lista
de los calaveras de Montón
que se han publicado en
los periódicos de México
y de los Estados Unidos
desde el año 1840 hasta
el presente. El libro es
de gran utilidad para
los que deseen conocer
la historia de esta
literatura popular.



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TODAY'S
ADVENTURE
MICKEY
GOES
AROUND
THE
WORLD



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TODAY'S
ADVENTURE
MICKEY
GOES
AROUND
THE
WORLD



Celebration



Small text block, likely a caption or description of the artwork.



Small informational text card.



Small informational text card.

Small informational text card.





Text label on the left wall, partially obscured by the artwork.



Collection

Satire



Text label on the right wall, partially obscured by the artwork.



Celebration

Satire



Textual information, likely a label or description, placed below the small framed artworks.

Textual information, likely a label or description, placed below the first large framed artwork.



Satire





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3/7

"WAR IS MONEY"

Antonio Rodriguez

Checklist of the Exhibition

José Guadalupe Posada Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913
<u>Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas</u>
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Calavera alta con reloj de arena</i> [<i>Tall Calavera Holding Hourglass</i>], circa 1890–1913 Zinc printing block 11 7/16 × 2 9/16 × 7/8 in. (29.1 × 6.5 × 2.2 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.351
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Calavera con reloj de arena</i> [<i>Calavera with Hourglass</i>], circa 1890–1913 Relief print 13 11/16 × 9 1/4 in. (34.8 × 23.5 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.5
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Calavera con reloj de arena</i> [<i>Calavera with Hourglass</i>], circa 1890–1913 Relief print 12 1/2 × 9 5/8 in. (31.8 × 24.4 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.75
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Calavera de un lagartijo</i> [<i>Skeleton of a Gold Digger</i>], circa 1890–1913 Relief print 9 3/8 × 6 5/16 in. (23.8 × 16 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.23
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Calavera de un revolucionario</i> [<i>Skeleton of a Revolutionary</i>], circa 1910–12 Relief print 9 1/4 × 6 5/16 in. (23.5 × 16 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.32

José Guadalupe Posada <i>Calaveras de caudillos de silla presidencial</i> [<i>Skeletons of Political Bosses That Aspire to the Presidency</i>], circa 1890–1913 Zinc etching 15 15/16 × 11 7/8 in. (40.5 × 30.2 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.52
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Dialoguito de Mamá Tierra con D. Cometa Halley</i> [<i>Chat of Mother Earth with Mr. Comet Halley</i>], circa 1889 Relief print 6 1/4 × 9 5/16 in. (15.9 × 23.7 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.123
José Guadalupe Posada <i>¡El Fin del Mundo se aproxima!</i> [<i>The End of the World Nears!</i>], 1912 Type-metal engraving 9 7/8 × 6 3/8 in. (25 × 16.2 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.97
José Guadalupe Posada <i>El gran panteón amoroso</i> [<i>The Great Pantheon of Love</i>], circa 1890–1913 Relief print 9 1/4 × 6 5/16 in. (23.5 × 16 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.61
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Escena con cañón y bestias en el cielo</i> [<i>Scene with Cannon and Beasts in Sky</i>], circa 1890–1913 Zinc printing block 4 × 6 in. (10.2 × 15.2 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.358
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Espantosísimo y terrible acontecimiento en la ciudad de Silao en los primeros días del siglo XX</i> [<i>Terrifying and Terrible Event in the City of Silao in the Early Days of the Twentieth Century</i>], circa 1900 Type-metal engraving 11 13/16 × 7 15/16 in. (30 × 20.2 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.89

José Guadalupe Posada <i>Horroroso ejemplar</i> [<i>Horrific Example</i>], circa 1890–1913 Type-metal engraving 11 7/8 × 7 7/8 in. (30.2 × 20 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.107
José Guadalupe Posada <i>La calavera de los papeleros y de los boleros</i> [<i>The Skeleton of Paper Boys and Shoe Shiners</i>], circa 1890–1913 Zinc etching 15 15/16 × 11 7/8 in. (40.5 × 30.2 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.5
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Renegando del matrimonio</i> [<i>Renouncing Marriage</i>], circa 1890–1913 Relief print 8 5/8 × 6 15/16 in. (22 × 17.6 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.30
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Tiernas súplicas con que invocan las jóvenes de cuarenta años al milagroso San Antonio de Padua pidiéndole su Consuelo</i> [<i>The Tender Prayers That Young Forty-Year-Old Women Invoke to Ask St. Anthony of Padua for His Mercy</i>], reprinted 1914 Type-metal engraving 11 15/16 × 7 7/8 in. (30.3 × 20 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.147
Workshop of José Guadalupe Posada <i>Calavera huertista del portafolio Monografía: Las obras de José Guadalupe Posada, grabador mexicano</i> [<i>Huerta’s Skeleton from the portfolio Monograph: The Works of José Guadalupe Posada, Mexican Printmaker</i>], circa 1914, reprinted by Mexican Folkways in 1930 Photo-relief etching with engraving 9 1/4 × 13 11/16 in. (23.5 × 34.8 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.73
Workshop of José Guadalupe Posada <i>Calavera huertista del portafolio Monografía: Las obras de José Guadalupe Posada, grabador mexicano</i> [<i>Huerta’s Skeleton from the portfolio Monograph: The Works of José Guadalupe Posada,</i>

<i>Mexican Printmaker</i>], circa 1914, reprinted by Mexican Folkways in 1930 Photo-relief etching with engraving 13 11/16 × 9 1/4 in. (34.8 × 23.5 cm) Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1978.384.81
<u>Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin</u>
José Guadalupe Posada <i>El arte</i> [<i>Art</i>], published in <i>La Araña</i> [<i>The Spider</i>], vol. 1, no. 3, 1908 Metal relief print on paper 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm) Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Filosofías populares. ¡¡No raspen, que descascaran!!</i> [<i>Popular Philosophies. Don't Scrape!! You'll Peel!!</i>], published in <i>El Diablito Rojo</i> [<i>The Little Red Devil</i>], vol. 2, no. 2, 1901, 1901 Metal relief print on paper 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm) Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Justicia Federal, 8 de septiembre de 1847</i> [<i>Federal Justice, September 8, 1847</i>], published in <i>La Araña</i> [<i>The Spider</i>], vol. 1, no. 1, 1904 Metal relief print on paper 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm) Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin
José Guadalupe Posada <i>Las “posadas” en provincia</i> [<i>Popular Christmas Celebration in the Provinces</i>], published in <i>El Diablito Rojo</i> [<i>The Little Red Devil</i>], 2nd epoch, no. 43, 1908 Metal relief print on paper 12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm) Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin

José Guadalupe Posada
¡No vayas al gringo! [*Don't Go with the Gringo!*], published in *El Diablito Rojo* [*The Little Red Devil*], 2nd epoch, vol. 3, no. 103, 1910
Metal relief print on paper
12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm)
Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin

José Guadalupe Posada
Panteón político [*Political Pantheon*], published in *El Diablito Rojo* [*The Little Red Devil*], 2nd epoch, vol. 3, no. 136, 1910
Metal relief print
12 3/6 × 18 9/10 in. (32 × 48 cm)
Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin

José Guadalupe Posada
Por Yanquilandia y por México [*For Yankeeeland and for Mexico*], published in *El Diablito Rojo* [*The Little Red Devil*], 2nd epoch, vol. 3, no. 118, 1910
Metal relief print on paper
12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm)
Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin

José Guadalupe Posada
Tantiadas gringas [*Gringo Half-Truths*], published in *El Diablito Bromista* [*The Trickster Little Devil*], vol. 2, no. 245, 1908
Metal relief print on paper
12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm)
Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin

José Guadalupe Posada
Un abrazo muy tierno y muy gringo [*A Very Tender and Gringo Hug*], published in *El Diablito Bromista* [*The Trickster Little Devil*], vol. 6, no. 14, 1903
Metal relief print on paper
12 3/5 × 9 9/20 in. (32 × 24 cm)
Benson Latin American Collection, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, The University of Texas at Austin

The Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin

José Guadalupe Posada
Calavera de la Catrina [*Skeleton of the Female Dandy*], circa 1910
6 1/4 × 9 1/8 in. (15.9 × 23.2 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores García, PA2023.CA.633

José Guadalupe Posada
Calavera de Don Quixote [*Don Quixote's Skeleton*], circa 1910–1913
Relief etching on type metal and metalcut
9 7/16 × 13 13/16 in. (24 × 35.1 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Frank Ribelin, 2008.30

José Guadalupe Posada
El testerazo del diablo, juguete pastoril en un acto [*The Devil Butts with His Head, Pastoral Playlet in One Act*], play cover, 1875
Relief etching on type metal and metalcut
8 × 5 1/16 in. (20.4 × 12.9 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Alvin and Ethel Romansky, 1982.589

José Guadalupe Posada
2a Parte ejemplo los siete vicios [*Second Part of the Example of the Seven Deadly Sins*], after 1888
Relief etching on type metal
5 1/16 × 11 9/16 in. (12.9 × 29.4 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Frank Ribelin, 2008.33

Mexic-Arte Museum

José Guadalupe Posada
Calaveras zalameras de las coquetas meseras [*Flattering Skeletons of the Flirtatious Waitresses*], reprinted 1917
Etching
14 × 10 in. (35.6 × 5.4 cm)
Mexic-Arte Museum

José Guadalupe Posada (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1852–Mexico City, Mexico, 1913)
Manuel Manilla (Mexico City, Mexico, 1830–1890)
De este famoso hipódromo en la pista no faltará

ni un solo periodista [*Not a Single Journalist Will Be Missing from This Famous Racetrack*], circa 1898–1902
Etching
23 1/2 × 15 3/4 in.
Mexic-Arte Museum, Gift of Antonio Wehnes

José Guadalupe Posada
El Purgatorio artístico [*The Artistic Purgatory*], 1900–1910
Offset lithograph
13 3/4 × 11 in. (35 × 28 cm)
Mexic-Arte Museum, Juan Antonio Sandoval Jr. Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
Sin título [*Untitled*], Undated
Offset lithograph
11 × 13 3/4 in. (28 × 35 cm)
Mexic-Arte Museum, Juan Antonio Sandoval Jr. Collection

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

José Guadalupe Posada
Calavera Criminal [*Criminal Skeleton*], circa 1910, reprinted 1943
Relief etching
13 3/4 × 9 3/8 in. 35 × 23.6 cm
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of the Friends of Freda Radoff, 56.27.19

José Guadalupe Posada
Hija desnaturalizada [*Uncaring Daughter*], 1943
Relief etching
12 × 9 1/2 in (35 × 24 cm)
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of the Friends of Freda Radoff, 56.27.16.A,.B

José Guadalupe Posada
La Calavera Amorosa [*The Skeleton of Love*], 1907, printed 1911
Photo-relief etching with engraving on newsprint
16 × 11 1/2 in. (40.6 × 29.2 cm)
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum purchase funded by Joe Walker in loving memory of Marianne and Graham Gray, 2013.328

José Guadalupe Posada
La Gran Calavera de Emiliano Zapata [*The Great*

Skeleton of Emiliano Zapata], circa 1911–1916, printed 1930
Photo-relief etching with engraving
11 1/2 × 14 1/8 in. (29.2 × 35.9 cm)
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of Frank Ribelin, 2007.72

Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

José Guadalupe Posada
Calaveras del montón, No. 1 [*Skeletons from the Heap, No. 1*], 1910
Broadside (relief etching and letterpress)
15 7/10 × 12 in. (40 × 30.1 cm)
Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin, 78.53.7b

Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
Aquí la calavera está, señores, de todos los buenos valedores [*Gentlemen, the Skeleton of All the Good Protectors Is Here*], reprinted 1914
Type metal engraving
15 3/4 × 11 3/4 in. (40 × 29.8 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
Calavera: Guerra Mundial [*Skeleton: World War*], 1911
Original engraving on type metal
17 1/4 × 12 3/4 in. (43.8 × 32.4 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
Calavera oaxaqueña [*Calavera from Oaxaca*], circa 1910
Type metal engraving
11 7/8 × 15 7/8 in. (30.2 × 40.3 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
El juego de la oca [*Game of the Goose*], circa 1900
Engraving
16 3/4 × 20 in. (42.5 × 50.8 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
En la fiesta de alegres calaveras [*At the Happy Skeletons’ Party*], circa 1908–1910
Type-metal engraving
15 3/4 × 11 3/4 in. (40 × 29.8 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
El mosquito americano [*The American Mosquito*], circa 1890–1913
Metal relief engraving and type
11 5/8 × 7 1/2 in. (29.5 × 19.1 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
Gran calavera eléctrica [*Great Electric Calavera*], 1907
Etching
11 3/4 × 15 3/4 in. (29.8 × 40 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
La calavera turista [*The Tourist Skeleton*], circa 1890–1913
Zinc etching and type-metal engraving
15 7/8 × 11 3/8 in. (40.3 × 28.9 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
La lotería [*Lottery*], circa 1890–1920
Woodcut on paper
13 1/4 × 11 1/2 in. (33.7 × 29.2 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
¡¡Las mujeres martirizadas!! [*Martyred Women!!*], circa 1890–1920
Engraving
11 13/16 × 7 7/8 in. (30 × 20 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

José Guadalupe Posada
Pleito de casados que siempre están enojados [*Fighting Married Couples That Are Always Angry*], 1907
Engraving and woodcut
11 1/4 × 7 1/4 in. (28.6 × 18.4 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Manuel Manilla
Mexico City, Mexico, 1830–1890

Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Manuel Manilla
El Fin del Mundo [*The End of the World*], circa 1899
Engraving
19 7/8 × 15 3/4 in. (50.5 × 40 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Manuel Manilla
Panteón antiguo. Epitafios [*Ancient Pantheon. Epitaphs*], published by Vanegas Arroyo Press, Mexico City, circa 1890
Type-metal engraving
14 1/2 × 11 7/8 in. (36.8 cm × 30 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

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Artemio Rodríguez
Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972—Páztcuaro, Mexico, present

Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin

Artemio Rodríguez
Adán [*Adam*], 2000
Linocut
14 7/8 × 8 1/8 in. (37.8 × 20.6 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.261

Artemio Rodríguez
¡Ay! amorcito [*Oh, My Little Love!*], 1994
Linocut
15 × 14 1/8 in. (38.1 × 35.9 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.91

Artemio Rodríguez
De la lucha cruelísima [*The Cruellest Fight*], 1994
Linocut
22 1/4 × 18 7/8 in. (56.5 × 47.9 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas

at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022.124

Artemio Rodríguez
Día de los Muertos [*Day of the Dead*], 1995
Color screenprint
35 1/4 × 28 3/8 in. (89.5 × 72 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Ricardo and Harriett Romo, 1996.249

Artemio Rodríguez
El tiempo... llega [*Time... Comes*], 1995
Linocut
11 1/8 × 10 1/8 in. (28.3 × 25.7 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.242

Artemio Rodríguez
El triunfo de la Muerte [*The Triumph of Death*], 2003–2006
Woodcut print
96 × 144 in. (243.8 × 365.6 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Museum purchase, 2024.567.a-c

Artemio Rodríguez
Eva [*Eve*], 2000
Linocut
14 7/8 × 8 1/4 in. (37.8 × 21 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.192

Artemio Rodríguez
I Don’t Want to Be a Voyeur [*No quiero ser un mirón*], 2001
Linocut
11 1/4 × 10 in. (28.6 × 25.4 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.245

Artemio Rodríguez
La existencia del Infierno [*The Existence of Hell*], 1998
28 1/4 × 52 1/8 in. (71.8 × 132.4 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, PA2024.CA.199

Artemio Rodríguez
La Lotería I [*Lottery I*], 1994

Linocut
18 × 15 in. (45.7 × 38 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2023.251

Artemio Rodríguez
La Lotería II [*Lottery II*], 1995
Linocut
17 3/4 × 15 in. (45 × 38 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2023.258

Artemio Rodríguez
La Lotería VI [*Lottery VI*], 1997
Linocut
17 7/8 × 14 7/8 in. (45.4 × 37.8 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2023.248

Artemio Rodríguez
La Lotería VIII [*Lottery VIII*], 1998
Linocut
18 × 14 3/4 in. (45.7 × 37.5 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2023.259

Artemio Rodríguez
La Lotería IX [*Lottery IX*], 1998
Linocut
18 1/8 × 15 in. (46 × 38 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2023.262

Artemio Rodríguez
La Lotería XII [*Lottery XII*], 1999
Linocut
15 × 14 3/4 in. (38.1 × 37.5 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.92

Artemio Rodríguez
Noche infinita [*Infinite Night*], 2004
Linocut
32 1/2 × 50 3/4 in. (82.6 × 129 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022.108

Artemio Rodríguez
Saligia [*The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2011
Artist's book with six linocuts
5 7/8 × 4 1/8 in. (14.9 × 10.5 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.562

Artemio Rodríguez
Somos parte [*We Are Part of It*], 1995
Linocut
15 × 11 in. (38 × 28 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022.140

Artemio Rodríguez
Uncle Sam is having a bad day [*El Tío Sam tiene un mal día*], 2016
Linocut
15 × 16 in. (38.1 × 40.6 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, PA2024.CA.962

Artemio Rodríguez
War Is Money [*La guerra es dinero*], 2007
38 1/4 × 50 in. (97.2 × 127 cm)
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, PA2024.CA.1447

Artemio Rodríguez
From the portfolio Woodcuts of Women [*Del portfolio Grabados de mujeres*], 2001

Bar
11 7/8 x 10 5/8 in. (30.2 x 27 cm)
Eve Out of Paradise [*Eva fuera del Paraíso*]
10 x 11 3/4 in. (25.4 x 29.8 cm)
Mayela
11 3/4 x 10 in. (29.8 x 25.4 cm)
Shout [*Grito*]
11 7/8 x 10 1/4 in. (30.2 x 26 cm)
Woman I [*Mujer I*]
11 1/4 x 10 in. (28.6 x 25.4 cm)

Linocuts
Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2024.247, 2024.259, 2024.254, 2024.246, PA2023.CA.186

Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Amor a quien amor merece [*Love Those Deserving Love*], 2004
Linocut
5 3/4 × 11 1/2 in. (14.6 × 29.2 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Avaricia (verde y amarillo) [*Avarice (Green and Yellow)*], 2005
Silkscreen
34 × 33 1/4 in. (86.4 × 84.5 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Bajo el mismo sol [*Under the Same Sun*], 2004
Linocut
22 1/4 × 15 in. (56.5 × 38.1 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Buenos vecinos [*Good Neighbors*], 2004
Linocut
7 1/2 × 11 1/4 in. (19.1 × 28.6 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Campesino [*Farmer*], 2001
Linocut
21 3/4 × 14 3/4 in. (55.2 × 37.5 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Diablito [*Little Devil*], 2016
Linocut
8 1/2 × 1/2 in. (21.6 × 1.3 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
El Juego de la Oca [*Game of the Goose*], 2003
Linocut
17 1/2 × 24 1/4 in. (44.5 × 61.6 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
La bestia que todo lo ve [*The Animal That Sees All*], 2004
Woodcut
20 3/4 × 25 1/8 in. (52.7 × 63.8 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
La frágil vida [*Fragile Life*], 2023
Linoleum printing block
17 1/4 × 11 in. (43.8 × 27.9 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
La frágil vida [*Fragile Life*], 2023
Linocut
21 × 14 3/4 in. (53.3 × 37.5 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
La Segunda Fundación [*The Second Founding*], 2014
Linocut
8 3/4 × 8 in. (22.2 × 20.3 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Mickey muerto [*Dead Mickey*], 2005
Silkscreen
27 5/8 × 19 5/8 in. (70.2 × 49.8 cm) each
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Mickey va [*Mickey Goes*], 2006
Woodcut
20 3/4 × 14 1/2 in. (52.7 × 36.8 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Retrato de Posada y su hijo [*Portrait of Posada and His Son*], 2002
Linocut
20 x 1/4 in. (50.8 x 0.6 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez

Acedia [*Laziness*], 2011
4 1/2 × 3 1/4 in. (11.4 × 8.3 cm)
Invidia [*Envy*], 2010
5 1/2 × 3 7/8 in. (14 × 9.8 cm)
Ira [*Wrath*], 2010
4 1/2 × 3 3/8 in. (11.4 × 8.6 cm)
Subergia [*Arrogance*], 2011
4 1/4 × 3 1/4 in. (10.8 × 8.3 cm)

From *Saligia* [*The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2010-2011
Linocut prints in artist's book
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez

Acedia [*Laziness*], 2011
4 × 3 3/8 in. (10.2 × 8.6 cm)
Invidia [*Envy*], 2010
4 × 3 1/8 in. (10.2 × 7.9 cm)
Ira [*Wrath*], 2011
4 × 3 3/8 in. (10.2 × 8.6 cm)
Subergia [*Arrogance*], 2011
4 × 3 3/8 in. (10.2 × 8.6 cm)

From *Saligia* [*The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2010-11
Linoleum printing blocks for artist's book
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Supermuerto [*Superdead*], 2017
Silkscreen
40 × 21 in. (101.6 × 53.3 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Todo lo que en el cielo y en el amor cabe [*All That Fits in Heaven and in Love*], 2012
Linocut
74 × 19 7/8 in. (188 × 50.5 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Un discurso más [*Just Another Speech*], 2012
Etching
11 × 15 in. (27.9 × 38.1 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Vete al infierno [*Go to Hell*], 2006
Linoleum printing block
7 3/4 × 5 1/4 in. (19.7 × 13.3 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Vete al infierno [*Go to Hell*], 2006
Linocut print
7 7/8 × 5 in. (20 × 12.7 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection

Artemio Rodríguez
Zompantli [*Skull Rack*], 2001
Woodcut
33 3/4 × 31 1/2 in. (85.7 × 80 cm)
Artemio Rodríguez Collection



Contributor Biographies

José Guadalupe Posada

José Guadalupe Posada was born in Aguascalientes, Mexico in 1852, to a humble family, and died in Mexico City in 1913. His life thus spans a half-century of struggles for independence: first from colonial power, then from the pervasive corruption of the Porfiriato (1876-1911) and finally the eruption of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. As an artist and illustrator, he rendered this tumultuous time raw upon the page, lifting up the exploited masses, and denigrating those who would exploit them in satirical imagery that redefined pictured political critique in the turn-of-the-century Mexican penny press.

Posada was mostly self-taught, although it is believed that he attended classes in his early teens at the Academy of Drawing, Sculpture, and Architecture in Aguascalientes. In the 1867 census, when Posada was only fifteen years old, he is recorded with the profession of “Painter.” That aspiration was not to be, however, for the following year he began his four-year apprenticeship with José Trinidad Pedroza (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 1839–1918), a lithographer. Posada learned lithography along with woodcut and possibly metal relief printing, an also gained an education in politics at the publishing house El Esfuerzo [The Endeavor]. First established by radical thinker, revolutionary, and publisher José María Chávez (1812–1864), this press had become the local center where political problems and cultural issues were discussed—and Posada listened carefully. His first published illustrations in 1871 in El Jicote [The Wasp] vilified the Aguascalientes ruling elite so irreverently and sardonically that Pedroza and Posada had to flee to León, fearing retribution.

Posada remained in León for sixteen years (1872-1888), eventually becoming owner of that shop and creating a multiplicity of materials, ranging from book and newspaper illustrations, religious stamps, cigar and matchbox covers, to portraits, calling cards, personal announcements, and even a city map. He also created the logo for León’s daily newspaper La Gacetilla, illustrating many issues. As his national profile among publishers of the Mexican penny press increased, and after a flood ruined his workshop, he decided to try his luck in Mexico City in 1888.

Posada joined the staff of Antonio Vanegas Arroyo’s Publishing House soon after, holding the post of Chief Engraver and Illustrator from 1890 to the end of his life. He now began primarily engraving on type metal and, after 1900, turned to relief etching on zinc plates. Vanegas Arroyo’s prolific list of contacts meant Posada could contribute to over fifty-two distinct periodicals while at the Press, mostly producing illustrations for sensationalist broadsides, street gazettes, and penny papers marketed for the popular masses. His subjects ranged from love, fortune-telling, and miracles, to crime, politics, and imaginatively dark social satire, earning him the posthumous reputation of both “The Printmaker of the People” and “The Mexican Goya.” It is estimated that in his forty-year career, Posada produced over 20,000 images, leaving behind a monumental and enduring legacy that is celebrated to this day.

Artemio Rodríguez

Artemio Rodríguez was born in Tacámbaro, Michoacán, in Western Mexico, in 1972. He began his career in his hometown at the age of eighteen as a printer’s apprentice with Juan Pascoe (b. Juan Nicanor Pascoe Pierce in Chicago, Illinois, 1946), at the renowned letterpress studio Taller Martín Pescador [Kingfisher Workshop]. At the age of twenty-one, Rodríguez migrated to Los Angeles and there became a printmaker. First taught and encouraged by Self Help Graphics and their larger Chicano artists’ communities, who embraced him, in 2002 he and partner Silvia Capistrán founded La Mano Press: their own gallery, printmaking and publishing studio. Rodríguez relocated to Michoacán in 2008, where he co-directs La Mano Gráfica gallery and the Biblioteca del Libro Ilustrado [Library of Illustrated Books], including its traveling library, the *Bibliográfico*, a converted 1977 Toyota, one of his many public projects and a companion to the *Graficomovil*, a 1948 delivery truck converted into a gallery and printmaking studio in Los Angeles, California.

Rodríguez is known for linocuts and woodcuts of all sizes, ranging from small prints to mural-size projects, as well as illustrated books and graphically altered vehicles. Influenced by such diverse sources

as European medieval woodcuts, Mexican cultural symbolism developed by artists like José Guadalupe Posada, and Chicano visual culture. Rodríguez’s style emphasizes simplicity and clarity, imbued with a personal narrative. A poet at heart, Rodríguez uses the printmaking process to tell stories through images, enacted by his best-loved characters: skeletons, devils, animals, and humans, in acts of celebration, satire, and play. His work has been exhibited internationally, and is in the collections of many public institutions, including the Hammer Museum, the Library of Congress, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museo José Guadalupe Posada in Aguascalientes, Mexico, the Petersen Automotive Museum, the Phoenix Art Museum, and the Seattle Art Museum. In addition, his work figures prominently in the Blanton Museum of Art permanent collection.

Vanessa K. Davidson

A curator at the Blanton Museum of Art since 2019, Vanessa K. Davidson earned an undergraduate degree in Hispano-American Literature from Harvard University, and a PhD in Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art History from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. A Fulbright Scholar, she dedicated nearly two years to archival research in Argentina and Brazil for a dissertation on Mail Art, text-based Conceptualism, and Performance in those two nations in the 1960s and 1970s.

During her eight-year tenure as the Shawn and Joe Lampe Curator of Latin American Art at Phoenix Art Museum, she organized thirteen exhibitions, including the retrospective *Valeska Soares: Any Moment Now*, co-curated with Julie Joyce (Santa Barbara Museum of Art) for the Getty Foundation’s Pacific Standard Time LA/LA Initiative. She also collaboratively organized two traveling exhibitions with institutions in Latin America: *Past/Future/Present: Contemporary Brazilian Art from the Museum of Modern Art, São Paulo* (2017–2019, with Dr. Cauê Alves, MAM-SP), and *Horacio Zabala: Mapping the Monochrome/La pureza está en la mezcla* (2016–17, at the Colección de Arte Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat, Buenos Aires). Davidson’s 2021-22

Oscar Muñoz: Invisibilia was this renowned Colombian artist’s first US retrospective.

Davidson served as the sole foreigner on the curatorial team for the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art’s 2022 Biennial, entitled *Under the Ashes, Embers*, which was recognized as one of Brazil’s three best exhibitions of 2022 by the Brazilian Association of Art Critics (ABCA). Her most recent project at the Blanton was the bilingual book and exhibition *Meet Melecio Galván: The Secret Artist & His Mexican Contemporaries*, the first U.S. museum exhibition of this under-studied artist’s works, forty-one of which Davidson had acquired for the Blanton in 2019-2020. Davidson’s next endeavor is an exhibition project with Mexican artist Betsabeé Romero, *Betsabeé Romero: Al reverso de la pista [On the Other Side of the Track]*.

Acknowledgements
Vanessa K. Davidson



Artemio Rodríguez,
Ira, en Saligia [*Wrath, in The Seven Deadly Sins*], 2011, Artist's book with six linocuts, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores García, PA2024. CA.1939

Enabling three curators in different fields to work in concert, this exhibition's curatorial partnerships mirror the alliances and visual conversations seen upon the walls, providing much material for rich intersections. As such, I first wish to thank Blanton Museum Director Simone Wicha and Chief Curator and Deputy Director of Collections Carter Foster for their foundational support of this project. I give thanks to the Moody Foundation for their support of this unconventional approach; they now share in celebration of our diverse communities' enthusiasm, spreading like wildfire by word of mouth. Blanton National Leadership Board members Ellen and David Berman are also due great thanks for their heroic generosity in believing in the exhibition from the start, and for giving it wings to fly.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to board members Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores García, for so presciently supporting Artemio Rodríguez beginning in his earliest days, and for donating many extraordinary artworks by Rodríguez as well as by José Guadalupe Posada to the Blanton's permanent collection. And I must recognize and celebrate the cleverness and sharp eye of board member Judy Tate in her close looking at the works in the exhibition, as well as her and her husband Charles Tate's shared passion and unwavering support for art from this region at the Blanton.

We found phenomenal resources amongst our Texas neighbors focused on these artists, especially José Guadalupe Posada, and we are profoundly grateful to them for sharing their collections with our communities. The Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, Texas; the Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin; the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston; as well as the Harry Ranson Center and LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, both here at The University of Texas at Austin, all house divergent collections of Posada artworks, which together richly enhanced the scope of this exhibition. We thank Amon Carter Executive Director, Andrew Walker, for generously agreeing to lend many José Guadalupe Posada prints from their museum's renowned collection, and special thanks also go to Curator of Paintings, Sculpture, and Works on Paper, Shirley Reece Hughes; Head of Registration and Collections, Marci Driggs; and Assistant Curator of Paintings,

Sculpture, and Works on Paper, Michaela Haffner, for their invaluable help securing these loans. Mexic-Arte Director Sylvia Orozco is a Posada scholar herself, and she graciously agreed to lend several rare works from their collection that made the show shine. We extend gratitude to Ms. Orozco for her great generosity, and also to Mexic-Arte Curator of Exhibitions and Programs Isabel Servantez and Registrar Associate Amy Anderson for their help finessing the details. At the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, we had the occasion to borrow rare works that comprised linchpin complements to other Posada loans, and we are indebted to Director and Margaret Alkek Williams Chair of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gary Tinterow, as well as to Curator, Prints & Drawings, Dena M. Woodall; Chief Registrar, Julie Bakke; Assistant Registrar, Outgoing Loans, Tucker Garrison; Conservator, Works on Paper, Tina Tan; Manager, Imaging Services, Rights and Reproductions, Marty Stein; and to Rights and Reproductions Administrator Cynthia Odell, for helping many moving parts to fall into place.

On the University of Texas at Austin Campus, at the LLILAS-Benson library, Head of Special Collections and Senior Archivist Ryan Lynch and Exhibitions Curator, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, Veronica Valarino, together facilitated our access to the prensa obrera collection—a historical and artistic goldmine—aided by Dylan Joy, Latin American Archivist, and the wonderful Special Collections librarians. We are extremely grateful to LILAS-Benson for lending such delicate, fragile works so that we could show rare glimpses of Posada's most potent political satires, imagery rarely featured in museum exhibitions. The Harry Ransom Center lent us an iconic work, the murderous Calaveras del montón, which brought skeletal iconography to its most extreme parallel with Rodríguez's own calaveras ravaging The Triumph of Death landscape, hanging alongside. At the HRC, we are indebted to Curator of Art, Tracy Bonfitto; Art Registrar for Loans & Exhibitions, Ester Harrison; and Associate Director for Exhibitions and Public Programs, Erica Nunn-Kinias, for so presciently lending this key artwork to tie the show together.

Our other major source of artworks was the Blanton's own permanent collection, which encompasses a

considerable number of works by Posada and even more by Rodríguez. But the key to the exhibition's success was borrowing prints by Posada's hand from Artemio Rodríguez's own private collection of over 200 works by Posada and his colleague Manuel Manilla. This was the treasure trove, the curatorial playground in which I was given the opportunity to imagine for myself—without ever having met Artemio in person as of yet—what had caught his eye about particular Posadas broadsides in his particular choices of images acquired; what lessons he might have gleaned from certain stylistic tactics that he then applied, transformed, as a leitmotif all his own. Along with prints of his own facture, the Posada loans that Artemio lent forged the crux of the exhibition.

At the Blanton Museum of Art, my fellow Latin Americanists Assistant Curator Florencia Bazzano, Curatorial Assistant Holly McDonald, Thoma Curator of Spanish American Art, Rosario Granados Salinas, and Associate Curator of Latino Art, Claudia Zapata, as well as Mellon Fellow Pilar Dirickson Garrett, deserve my endless gratitude for their essential logistical support in everything from writing insightful texts, to penning extraordinary labels; from massaging tricky panel translations into shape, to serving as sounding boards—and just about everything in between. I would also like to recognize the extreme hard work and dedication of the two individuals who made this exhibition and catalogue project possible in their invaluable collaborations, and who also helped to herculean heights behind the scenes: Florencia Bazzano and Holly McDonald. They embraced a monumental scope of work (preparing innumerable drafts of an ever-changing checklist; requesting photography; embracing the project to write and edit sensitive object labels, a tricky task to which Claudia Zapata also brilliantly contributed; providing design feedback; and even formatting and printing exhibition labels and helping me to place them upon the walls) and executed it always excellently. Holly and Florencia are also the guardian angels behind the publication of this catalogue. As Publication Manager, Florencia constructed the framework of this virtual book, while I merely provided content to nestle within the infrastructure that she created, with Holly's great help with innumerable details. So this book is as much of Holly's and Florencia's structural authorship as it is mine; it

represents the very essence of creative collaboration. They both deserve prodigious recognition (and a great deal of chocolate) for the essential, pivotal part they have played in bringing this entire project to life. Brava!

Blanton curators Hannah Klemm and Claire Howard were wonderful companions as we built the show from the bottom up, and I am grateful to both for their collaboration, on one hand, and for the lessons in curatorial gymnastics we all learned from one another as the show came together, on the other. Director of Education Ray Williams was a constant source of support, ever helping to follow moving targets, and his editorial chops were truly crucial in an exhibition whose opinionated artists have a great deal to say. Truly heroic were both Blanton Collections Photographer Taryn Mills for photographing countless prints as works arrived onsite and our catalogue grew more ambitious; and also Chief Preparator of Works on Paper Annalise Gratoich for mounting and framing seemingly infinite artworks with good humor and deft expertise, as well as whip-smart problem-solving in tight spots.

Carpentry Preparator Andrew Anderson created brilliant solutions for mounting the most fragile of these 110-year-old artworks; he is to be commended many times over. Preparators Eric Mathis and James Turner, along with Head of Installation and Exhibition Design Matthew Langland, helped infinitely to keep spirits high as we worked together on a tricky installation to spark this virtual partnership to life. No one considered the show “done” until we made the works sing; the members of this crew are verily the unsung heroes, true fighters of the good fight. I also thank Matthew Langland for his patience as I taught myself to use new software for online floorplans, and for his exceedingly clever collaboration on exhibition design. Many thanks are also due to Director of Collections and Exhibitions Cassandra Smith, not only for her organizational finesse, but also for her and Registrar Meredith Sutton’s great help on the ground. Assistant Registrar Michael Carnes and Database Manager Shelby Lakins helped move mountains to make essential images and information accessible for both catalogue illustrations and for our TMS databases, and they merit many thanks as well.

Senior PR and Media Manager Katie Bruton, Senior Digital Content Manager Lizabel Stella, and Multimedia Producer Manny Alcalá helped the exhibition to gain a presence that was as intriguing as it was incisive, framing special presentations such as Artemio Rodríguez’s Artist’s Talk online with words and images as insightful as indeed the artist’s talk turned out to be. I would also like to thank Manager of Public Programs Rachel Manning, Public Programs Assistant Maria Estrada, and Manager of Visitor & Volunteer Services Susan Griffin for making such programming possible. Infinite thanks are also due to Chief of Security Mitch McDavid and his team for keeping these artworks in the capable hands of the Blanton’s wonderful Gallery Attendants, whose enthusiasm for the show proves contagious among our visitors.

My final thanks are due to Artemio Rodríguez himself. For agreeing to come along on this adventure in the first place; for his sincerity, his dedication, and his sheer brilliance in collaboration; for his blind faith that the exhibition would be rooted in scholarship—to which he actively contributed—rather than simple *calavera* comparisons; for his trust in my checklist choices, yet gentle nudges in new directions, towards new discoveries; and for the constant, extraordinary generosity of his spirit. *¡Mil gracias, Artemio!*

Y gracias a todos.

Artemio Rodríguez,
La Segunda Fundación
[*The Second Founding*],
2014, Linocut, 8 3/4 ×
8 in. (22.2 × 20.3 cm),
Artemio Rodríguez
Collection



Credits

José Guadalupe Posada and Artemio Rodríguez:
Tradition, Inspiration, Invention

Vanessa K. Davidson
Curator and Editor

Florencia Bazzano
Publication Manager

All artworks belonging to the Blanton Museum of Art and to the Artemio Rodríguez Collections were photographed Taryn Mills-Drummond, Blanton Collection Photographer.

All biographical photographs of Artemio Rodríguez were provided by the artist, and taken by him and his friends and family members. © Artemio Rodríguez

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Artemio Rodríguez (Tacámbaro, Mexico, 1972–Pátzcuaro, Mexico, present), *La Lotería VI* [*Lottery VI*], detail, 1997, linocut, 17 7/8 × 14 7/8 in. (45.4 × 37.8 cm). Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2023.248.



Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse: Lifelong

Interviewed by

Hannah Klemm

Part 1: Perspectives from the Clay

Beginning with the ground, with clay itself. You both, your family, and your ancestors have a long relationship with the earth and cultivating and shaping clay. What was important about learning ancestral processes for creating clay, the specific location of Santa Clara Pueblo in northern New Mexico, and your familial history in shaping your individual work and ways of being in the world?

Nora: Ever since I could remember almost everyone in my circle of relatives and community worked with clay in some fashion. My brothers lifted heavy buckets of clay, my father drew designs on burnished vessels. And from start to finish, my mother and aunties were in charge of the process, making sure the gathered clay became a vessel. Clay work was and continues to be a significant cultural and familial anchor. My father reminded his children, “Get up and have purpose.” My father’s sentiments were integrated into every aspect of our lives, including clay work.

Two summers ago, I went with my son Zak, his daughters, and others to gather clay in the mountains of northern New Mexico. What a perfect day to gather clay. Before we started the work ahead of us, we all took a moment to acknowledge our

relationship to the earth. Transferring this kind of respect from one generation to the next is part of our cultural continuum that defines Pueblo people. I think my more recent work with recycled materials is influenced by these enduring Pueblo principles.

The School for Advanced Research (SAR) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, has a large collection of Pueblo pottery.¹ One time, my mother and I visited SAR and were asked to wear gloves to handle the items, a common practice in most pottery collections. My mother had never been in an institutional space where you had to wear gloves to touch clay vessels. She put them on hesitantly, and when I asked her what she was thinking, she pointed to a vessel sitting on a shelf and said, “I helped polish that pot when I was twenty years old.” My mother is gone now, but her stories of her lifelong experiences with clay continue to encourage and inspire



Figure 1. Rose Naranjo coiling a wedding vase out of clay at her home, 1972.

my own relationship to the earth, and how I articulate that through my art (Figure 1).

Eliza: Today I am meeting the earth through farming and mud building mostly and I meet these efforts having the same sentiment as working with clay. I am creating a relationship with another living material.

It's neat to hear your story of growing up with clay and finding it so parallel to mine. You passed this information onto us through our life experiences as a mother, and through creativity created space for us to interpret how we use that knowledge (Figure 2). For us, gathering clay was a time to see cousins. It was a time when we got to have a can of Coca-Cola, and that was unusual. It was exciting and very beautiful. In the mountain landscape, everything—the ground, bushes, and trees—was covered with a glittering mica. The air was cool because it was a higher elevation. You felt it—that sense of significance, that you are witnessing a lesson—seeing the reverence that you and my grandmother would express to the earth. This modeling became a guide not only for gathering clay, but for any relationship to the land.

I remember being little and recognizing that my grandmother and family were having a deep interaction with

clay. You get instilled with this feeling that the land hears you and it is living. Even when I was young, I thought, “This clay is precious.” The experience was outside of school and the normal parts of the day. I didn't see it on TV. It was special, something to take note of, and it was also a really good time.

It's a precious thing to grow up with a lot of relatives in a large Pueblo family. Going to different houses when we were being babysat or getting our



Figure 2. Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse in Española, New Mexico, 1987.

first jobs at eleven from our auntie, who was happy to have our company for the summer. But any house we went to in our family, there was an art activity that flowed into every other activity and they all had common threads. There were people forming things with their hands. A lot of that was clay—you'd find rows of little pots in various states of progress. Or if you went to Uncle Michael (Naranjo)'s studio,² who was a sculptor in stone and bronze, there was the unusual environment of darkness because he was blind, so you entered into this creative and also sort of mysterious environment with all of these things that were his tools—not only as an artist, but also as a person who could not see. Then you'd go to my grandma (Rose Naranjo)'s³ house or Jody (Folwell)'s house, and all the artwork that was being made was different. What an incredible model of creative expression it was to see this kind of variety in one family. And they would get excited when they were trying something new. As children, I think we are aware of adults' sincere enthusiasm for an activity. A lot of that was shown to me through their art process.

This was huge in defining what an art process was for me. It didn't start with you going to the store and buying materials. It started with the preciousness that was instilled in that first interaction with the earth, or even when you loaded up your shovels and

buckets in the truck and then it blossomed into all these creative activities and expressions. It helped me to see that creativity is in everything. There were times I misplaced that information, and it was because I was insecure that it was enough. Media didn't put value into these kinds of ways.

Nora: The long history of Pueblo clay work inspires me. To think that Pueblo people in the 1100s, living in cliffs, were making vessels. How, when, and who decided that mixing volcanic ash with clay made the material more malleable for creating utilitarian ware. And knowing that our clay history continues today, and is articulated in so many creative ways, speaks to the force of cultural sustainability. I'm inspired by that.

Eliza: The commodification of the culture and creativity of Pueblo pottery is to me pretty fascinating, how it became a source of income and how styles evolved encouraged by the tourist market. Historically, the train coming through town established the possibility of creating income from this process that was nurturing our lives. Then the individualizing happened, “the Naranjo family” became a family of potters with individual and generational expressions. This was something we saw happen with some Pueblo families, which I think created

a loss from this process that belonged to everyone. Making sense of that commodification and what it means for an artist's life has been a dynamic thread to untangle. I feel amazed any time I look out at the variety of highly creative and capable efforts that our extended family brings into the world—from building houses to forms of social work, film and video, and research. As a positive, I think the opportunity to express and create income was encouraging. That paired with generational modeling of hard work and the practice of creative and critical, land-based thinking has been a beautiful thing in our family that came from this shift in what clay was used for.

There was this container of “Indian” art or clay in the 1980s, and then there was a pushing of those boundaries by people like you (Nora), Jody (Folwell),⁴ and Roxanne Swentzell who taught all of us younger artists. It was fascinating to witness growing up. But it was also affected by a market, mostly comprised of white, wealthy people who had an interest in “Indians.” I appreciate the critical thinking that was expressed through all your artworks, looking at this relationship between yourselves and the buyers of your creations.

Nora: And that has a long history. When the Harvey Tourist Company

would come into Santa Clara,⁵ the women and children would gather in the middle of the village with their pottery. The Harvey bus driver who brought tourists into the village would take note of vessels that were most popular among the tourists. The bus drivers would then encourage the women to make more of the vessels that sold the most. The process of commodification also became part of our knowledge, impacting the creative direction of the community.

Part 2: Community and Collaboration

Considering family as both a space for community and collaboration, what are the ways that you see collaboration existing and diverging within these structures? How do you see community extending outward? And in what ways do these ideas of community and collaboration—while coming from groups of specific people—unravel and reveal universal human messages?

Nora: Our community is an extension of the family. Several of the women who taught me the most about clay were not my biological aunties. All older women in my world were considered “aunties” and it was understood that these women wielded the same disciplinary powers as my parents. It was an understanding that made me



Figure 3. Generations of Eliza and Nora's family waiting for their bread to bake in an outdoor oven, 2022. Left to right: Tessie Naranjo, Devona Naranjo, Dolly Neikrug, and Edna Romeroven, 2022.

feel safe as I wandered from house to house learning from each auntie how to cook, work with clay, and see the world from a Pueblo woman's perspective (Figure 3).

I saw this strong sense of community over the summer when my granddaughter participated in our annual ceremonies for the first time.⁶ It was an emotional time for me, because my eight-year-old granddaughter committed and immersed herself in

the ceremony. My granddaughter listened to the songs and practiced the dance meant to invoke rain and she did this with older family and community members, who encouraged her along the way. The day my granddaughter walked out into the village with the other dancers, family members cried, because everyone understood the importance of this dance in my granddaughter's life and the life of our community. When someone dances in a ceremony—especially little kids—elders and relatives will pin \$1 bills onto the ceremonial dress. This act of giving US currency for a spiritual ceremony was always baffling to me. But when my granddaughter danced, I realized it was a symbolic way for family and community to offer support. Dancing is physically demanding, especially in the heat of summer. My granddaughter wasn't sure she'd be able to complete the dance but because she had so much encouragement in so many ways, she pushed herself to complete the ceremony.

When my granddaughter dances again, she'll have the will, support, and knowledge of her family and community pushing her forward. These elements are critical for our cultural continuity because they offer alternative ways of looking at the world and appreciating the relationship we have to animals, sky, water, and the earth.

Eliza: Witnessing my niece dance on our feast day was an emotional experience for me. Dancing is a physically, energetically full experience no matter how old you are. It's a test of will, an offering of yourself for a time, leaving behind the rhythm of contemporary life to enter a commitment with others. It's not for applause, it's to become part of a community, moving together in prayer for all life. To see children come into that commitment is a life-affirming experience. And thankfully it rained that afternoon. We passed each other and she was looking at me with the biggest smile, because we were in rhythm and we were nurtured, relieved by the rain. Her act of putting her energy into the ground is contributing to that rhythm and the symbiotic experience of being in the world where everything is giving life. When you feel that inside yourself, I think it affects your sense of your impact on the world around you and how the world impacts your life. The micro and the macro come together and you become a vessel for all life energy. You sweat with all the intention you've brought into this process, with that moisture and intention going into the ground. The prayers you're making for other people unfolds into well-being for the community, honoring the ground and soil toward a good harvest so that you can eat. And in an era where we get things from the store but we do still farm, there can still be that important connection to model in a community.

It can also be translated into all kinds of ways of being where actions as part of a whole have legitimate effect. What I've described is particular to our experience but there is a power in knowing that these expressions exist throughout cultures, and that they can also be intentionally made or created as it suits the needs of an individual, a group, or the environment. If an intentional connection to the earth is there—an offering and presence-ing of self to something more than self—then the ingredients are there for these kinds of grounding actions.

Nora: You put it beautifully. While you were talking, I was thinking too about your brother Zak. Every day he works on building a home for his family. Zak's children witness the challenge of building a structure, and no matter how difficult, Zak keeps moving forward. When you're a kid and a resourcefulness, tenacity, and consistency is modeled, that is foundational. The steadiness of a father accepting an enormous task and following through with it relates, in my mind, to the challenge of committing to a ceremony and completing it, not just for yourself but for others, which our spiritual life and ceremonies stress. The clay sculptures *We Come with Stories* in the exhibition *Lifelong* represent everything we're talking about, from my mother's clay

stories to my granddaughter's coming of age, these stories play an important role in our culture, life, knowledge, and understanding. That's why this particular exhibition has been huge for me. To share those stories through my work is important. Also because the burlap sculptures, *Healers from Some Other Place*, took three years to make during COVID, a time of great hardship for many. My concept for *Healers from Some Other Place* may have been vague at the beginning, but during COVID, when everyone was in isolation, there was plenty of time for me to experiment and move through the process in a way that had no pressure or expectations. During this time, my will to create was like a ceremony for me. I was creating *Healers from Some Other Place* not only for myself but as a prayer for our world.

Eliza: I think that now, especially with the current climate locally, nationally, and globally, the most important thing is the community that you have (which truly includes all of us globally). Tewa people have developed this highly honed sense of community as a need to survive, but it's more than survival, right? It's to strive to be within all of Earth's communities, because it is so beautiful and generous here. Maintaining what works, letting it develop and blossom in its changing environment becomes important in community. I don't know

any perfect person or community but there are many examples, especially in Indigenous communities, of ways to be in community with life. I appreciate that in our community there is this real sense of relationship to the land, to others, to houses, to everything around you. And I think that these examples—speaking of Santa Clara—are valuable modeling and messaging for aspects of how a community works, or could work, in a broader sense. I think that a lot could be learned from hearing how Pueblo and other Indigenous people maintain a sense of community. I think many of our national dysfunctions around the care of community come from ignoring the values that I believe keep community strong.

This is not a diversion, but an example. In the pueblo, many houses are connected through shared plumbing. One of the resident's plumbing was flooding and their neighbor, who she may have once had a difficult time with, didn't want to mess with their plumbing because hers was broken. But, because they're totally connected, everything has to be put aside. These things become resolved out of necessity. And her neighbor recognized that she was an elder and needs water, and so even if they had trouble with her for some reason, every disagreement has two sides, there is a communal resolving, which I think is an incredible modeling of how you get over little problems,

for the sake of the community and continuing.

We moved down from the Puye Cliffs in 1580, just before the colonizers came through;⁷ the system was forcibly restructured and we had to figure out how to survive. The director of the Tewa school I work at was encouraging staff a couple weeks ago, saying to us that we all are a representation of resilience, because from the thousands of people living in our Indigenous systems, a majority of that population is gone. And he said, “Look at us, we are sitting here in a cafeteria. Our language and culture is still here, and we are working as a group to keep this here because it has given us so much, and because it defines who we are, and we are all contributing to wellbeing.”

That stuck with me, and gave me this real sense of like, sure, we’re not perfect, because we’re humans and we’re trying to survive the outrageous odds that Pueblo people are even still here. But it’s the truth—we’re still here, and we’re actively trying to regroup and recenter and move forward. I think of it as a powerful model as we’re thinking about and asking, “How do we survive? How do we meet our current circumstance with action and grace?” And I think if we want to ask how that happens, ask people who have survived enormous atrocity.

Nora: While you were talking, I thought about *Always Becoming* (2007–) at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) Washington, DC.⁸ Hopefully the next chapter of these ephemeral sculptures will inspire new generations to think about the principles of *Always Becoming*, principles that center around family, culture, community, and environment. It offers a platform where cultural and environmental sustainability is celebrated and modeled. The effort of *Always Becoming* speaks to what Liza was just mentioning: We are still here. We are resilient people. We are not victims. We have been gifted with knowledge passed down that encourages cultural continuity with a strong, collective voice.

You worked collaboratively on the exhibition Lifelong—specifically the three large-scale burlap sculptures Healers from Some Other Place. Can you talk about that process?

Nora: During the COVID pandemic everyone retreated into their own space. Isolation afforded me time to reevaluate how I wanted to use my creative energies. I had plenty of material, plastic, and wire, so I started working on the three large sculptures of *Healers from Some Other Place*. At first, I wasn’t quite sure where I

was being led but I had a lot of time to find my creative footing. At one point I realized the concept was about these larger issues of consuming and discarding at an unsustainable rate, and how we humans needed to heal from such a devastating health crisis. Since the pieces kept getting bigger, I realized I needed help fabricating the sculptures, which meant I needed to find funding. I applied to the NDN Collective artist grants program and they awarded me a grant.⁹ I saw *Healers from Some Other Place*



Figure 4. Ko’o Dolly (Dolly Naranjo Neikrug), an elder from Kha’p’o Owenge and *Gather* participant, assists in stitching together pieces of burlap for the sculptures *Healers from Some Other Place*, 2021.

become a way of gathering people together for a purposeful project that focused on reestablishing community through making art. With the NDN funds, I started a community-based art project called *Gather*.¹⁰ Young women interested in working in a studio setting learned from elders eager to share their cultural and practical life lessons. We gathered to spend time together making art and establishing a community that is still active today (Figure 4).

After the COVID pandemic, we needed community. We needed to reconnect with others, and share our stories. That was part of our healing and *Healers from Some Other Place* was instrumental in helping us gather, learn, and reestablish connections to one another. We organically formed an art posse, going around and helping each other heal and make art together.

While the project timeline is over for *Gather*, I’m still working with some of the women who I check in with and who see me as a support system, an “auntie” ready to lend support. *Healers from Some Other Place* helped make that happen.

So that is the backstory. They’re important pieces that marked a challenging time for all of us. *Healers from Some Other Place* represent a real sense of hope. The burlap sculptures also inspired me to continue making

larger pieces that speak to environmental issues affecting us all.

Eliza: The modeling of assistance is powerful stuff. It can be applied in any circumstance, but art is the perfect place where we see that often people don't make artwork alone, whether they've hired people or asked for assistance to get some other aspect of life done while making art. It's not often for me that art is quick, like "oh, there it is!" It's labor, time, and energy intensive. The paintings that I made for the Blanton, my mom helped me; my husband, John, helped me; my brother Zak helped me; my sister-in-law helped; even their little girls helped! Sienna helped paint the sides of the canvases. Eliza was determined that she wanted to draw some stars as well. So there's this beautiful letting go of my vision having to be just my vision, and it's more like what comes when we assist each other. I feel so thankful for every person who showed up and said, "Hey, I'll help you for a couple hours." And it reminds me to ask, "How can I go help them?"

I also teach art to children, and a pretty common practice in my role is serving as an assistant. Everybody's coming with their vision of making something they value; I provide materials and hopefully some tricks and inspiration. I always ask, "Who needs an assistant today?" because

someone's got this ambitious idea that can't happen in an hour, and then I'll go over to someone who has already finished, and together we'll go help someone who isn't finished yet. And then this person gets the chance to feel this sense of support, and I work to enter us into a class rhythm of asking who they can assist. This act reflects the era of art making where it wasn't an individual effort; we bring this thing to life with the help of others. I think *Gather* was a beautiful modeling of that—those women were assistants to you to help make *Healers from Some Other Place*, but you were also helping them realize their own creative visions. Luca wanted to make a jean jacket and so you were her assistant in that, and you helped Alicia with clay. I think that's a great model.

Part 3: Creative Capacity

Finally, we wanted to address creative capacity. How do you see creativity fostering loving, equitable communities and helping us to see an alternative path forward for humanity?

Nora: Creativity encourages me to become a conscious human being. I see this with the sculptures of *Always Becoming*. The installation is heading

into its twentieth anniversary and the stewardship of the sculptures, when I'm not in Washington, has been a core group of women and men who are NMAI staff. These women model what we've been describing—collaboration, community, and self-strength. One of the women said to me, concerning the stewardship of *Always Becoming*, "We've got your back." That was meaningful to me because the project is so much bigger than just one person. To know that there are people who don't come from the same cultural background but who are willing to support the idea of *Always Becoming* and its principles is humbling—so much so that it encourages me to elevate myself as a human being. How powerful is that?

Eliza: Contributors to *Always Becoming* are so invested I feel because the message—of relationships and evolving and becoming—is needed and universal and so powerful. They are invested in the concept because they, too, are observing current life asking, "What is going on here?" As a team I think we are all people who support expressions that show alternative ways of thinking that center values that make sense to community and the health of land and all life. There is an investment from this team in lifting up this concept while adding in their particular area of expertise, and it's been wonderful.

Nora: Eliza and I travel out to *Always Becoming* once a year and spend a week with the NMAI conservation team (Figure 5). We're immediately on the same page, which makes us efficient. We are comfortable in the community we've all created. Again, that is very powerful. The first day when we walk to the *Always Becoming* section of NMAI is always a joyful reunion, like old friends getting together to collaborate and share information. At the end of the week, we usually gather around its teepee structure and spend time talking about what our year has been like. We celebrate our hard work and each other. It's a safe and life-affirming space around the sculptures that we collectively recognize. I am spiritually fulfilled by our work together. It's a reminder of how art is such a force in our lives, no matter who we are or



Figure 5. Eliza Naranjo Morse plastering with mud on the *Always Becoming* sculptures at the National Museum of the American Indian, 2016.

where we come from.

The exhibition *Lifelong* reflects the long history of Pueblo people—the resilience, our survival skills, and the cultural knowledge passed down through generations into every single one of those pieces in the exhibition. The *Pass It* prints Eliza and I worked on have been influenced by the personal, familial, and cultural histories that ignite our imagination and add to our creative voice as contemporary Indigenous women.

Eliza: I'm a real fan and advocate of creativity. I think there are many reasons it exists. It helps us connect and discover and know ourselves and each other. I am thankful that we live in a world that at least somewhat supports it; it's minimal support happening right now in this well of possibility. I think it's everyone's birthright to be creative. Concerning things happened in our histories that affected our ability to express this birthright, and it feels to me a real disservice to humanity and the human spirit that creative oppression has happened and that creativity hasn't been more nurtured. It has implications that affect things like government and the choices people make, because creative thinking, for me, is about what is possible. When we don't think things are possible and that there are no alternative

structures, we are very limited to what we can actually be on Earth.

If we don't start thinking more creatively, the possibility for change becomes limited, and that affects everything: our land, our breath, our ability to have happy, safe lives and communities. Sometimes I wonder what I would have been like if I hadn't had all these art models to see this as a possible way to live. I hope I would have sought out alternatives.

Creativity and relationships, to me, are really important forms of intelligence that will help us survive. On a personal level, thinking about creativity, I had the unusually fortunate circumstance of coming from a creatively prolific family where people welcomed me showing my artwork. But I hope I would be making art even if that didn't happen. I hope I would be making drawings in a notebook and keeping them. I really need art creation to feel like my life is well spent, whether it is for an audience or not. I'd feel like I did right by that part of myself if I keep creating.

So there is that personal component, and I think of the way that it has helped me process, and the audience becomes a more complicated thing that I don't really know how to make sense of, but I like being able to make these paintings. And I feel hopeful when aspects of them resonate with others. While making a painting for

this show, one of my aunts passed away and I still had to go to work. I still needed to make the painting, wash dishes, etcetera. The chance to talk about this person's preciousness, to tell a story about that, to process my love for her, becomes the truest value of this art. That particular painting allowed me the chance to sit with my aunt and mourn her and celebrate her and think about death in general and about how precious life and family are, how we are connected when someone leaves us or comes into our lives in this way that exists beyond any of these institutional or daily structures, its human essence. To be able to have something in your life that allows you to process that, I am thankful for the life tool of art.

I would love for people to leave the museum and say, "We are going to try *Pass It* at home with our kids." And then the kids grow up and share this form of connection with their children. I'm glad those works are in the show, so we can model this particular way to connect with yourself and another person in an easy, open manner. The only tricky part is allowing yourself to let go and telling yourself "It's okay, drawing anything is okay." And really, this little paper drawing's value is that it was a moment well spent. It's part of our message for this show. We want everyone know that art is a connector.

Endnotes

1 The School for Advanced Research sits on the ancestral lands of the Tewa people in O’gah’poh geh Owingeh, or Santa Fe, New Mexico. Its mission is to advance research in the social sciences, humanities, and Native American arts. It is also home to the Indian Arts Research Center (IARC), one of the largest collections of Southwestern Native American art in the world. Representing a broad range of works, this valuable collection is over 12,000 items, including pottery made at Santa Clara Pueblo.

2 Michael Naranjo, Nora Naranjo Morse’s brother, is a sculptor and veteran of the Vietnam War who suffered injuries while deployed and lost his sight. He is known for his large-scale public sculptures such as *Dancer* (1990) at the Albuquerque Museum.

3 Rose “Gia” Naranjo was an important Tewa potter and visual artist, and mother of artists Nora Naranjo Morse, Michael Naranjo, Teresita Naranjo, Rina Swentzell, and Jody Folwell. She began making pottery as a teenager and continued to craft pottery throughout her life, passing the skill on to her children.

4 Jody Folwell is known for revolutionizing Pueblo pottery—and Native art more broadly. She is known for placing personal, political, and social narratives onto her pottery and pushing the boundaries of form, content, and design while remaining firmly within the art traditions of her community. She was the subject of a recent monographic exhibition at the Fralin Museum of Art at

the University of Virginia in 2025, and the Minneapolis Institute of Art in 2024–25.

5 The Fred Harvey Company was a tourism company that operated restaurants, hotels, and tourist-related businesses in the US Southwest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The company was known for its “Harvey Girls” waitresses and “Indian Detours” tours.

6 Dances are performed on the annual Feast Day at Santa Clara Pueblo that features Buffalo, Harvest, or Corn dances and is held in August each year.

7 Puye Cliff Dwellings is a National Historic Landmark in Santa Clara Canyon, New Mexico. It is the site of an ancient pueblo that was occupied from around 900 CE to the late 1500s. The dwellings are carved into the soft volcanic rock of the Pajarito Plateau.

8 *Always Becoming* consists of a family of collaboratively hand-built clay sculptures that have stood on the grounds of NMAI since 2007. The work evolves and erodes over time, reflecting the message of growth, transformation, and Native peoples’ relationship with the land, in which it is common practice to leave clay utilitarian or ceremonial pots outside to melt back into the ground. This way of responding to cultural objects was one of the inspirations for *Always Becoming*. Nora, Eliza, and an extended community of participants tend to the site on a yearly basis, stewarding it through its evolution.

9 NDN Collective is an Indigenous-led organization

dedicated to building Indigenous power through organizing, activism, philanthropy, grantmaking, capacity-building, and narrative change. <https://ndncollective.org/>.

10 For more information on *Gather*: <https://noranaranjomorse.squarespace.com/gather-blog-1>.



Plates



Plate 1
Eliza Naranjo Morse
The Center of Stardust, 2024
Acrylic, clay, and glitter on canvas
48 × 48 × 2 in. (121.9 × 121.9 × 5.1 cm)



Plate 2
Eliza Naranjo Morse
Heard, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)



Plate 3
 Eliza Naranjo Morse
And Now You're Here, 2024
 Acrylic, clay, and glitter on canvas
 36 × 72 × 2 in. (91.4 × 182.9 × 5.1 cm)



Plate 4
 Eliza Naranjo Morse
In Good Company, 2024
 Acrylic, clay, and glitter on canvas
 48 × 60 × 2 in. (121.9 × 152.4 × 5.1 cm)



Plate 5
Eliza Naranjo Morse
Light from Love, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
48 × 60 × 2 in. (121.9 × 152.4 × 5.1 cm)

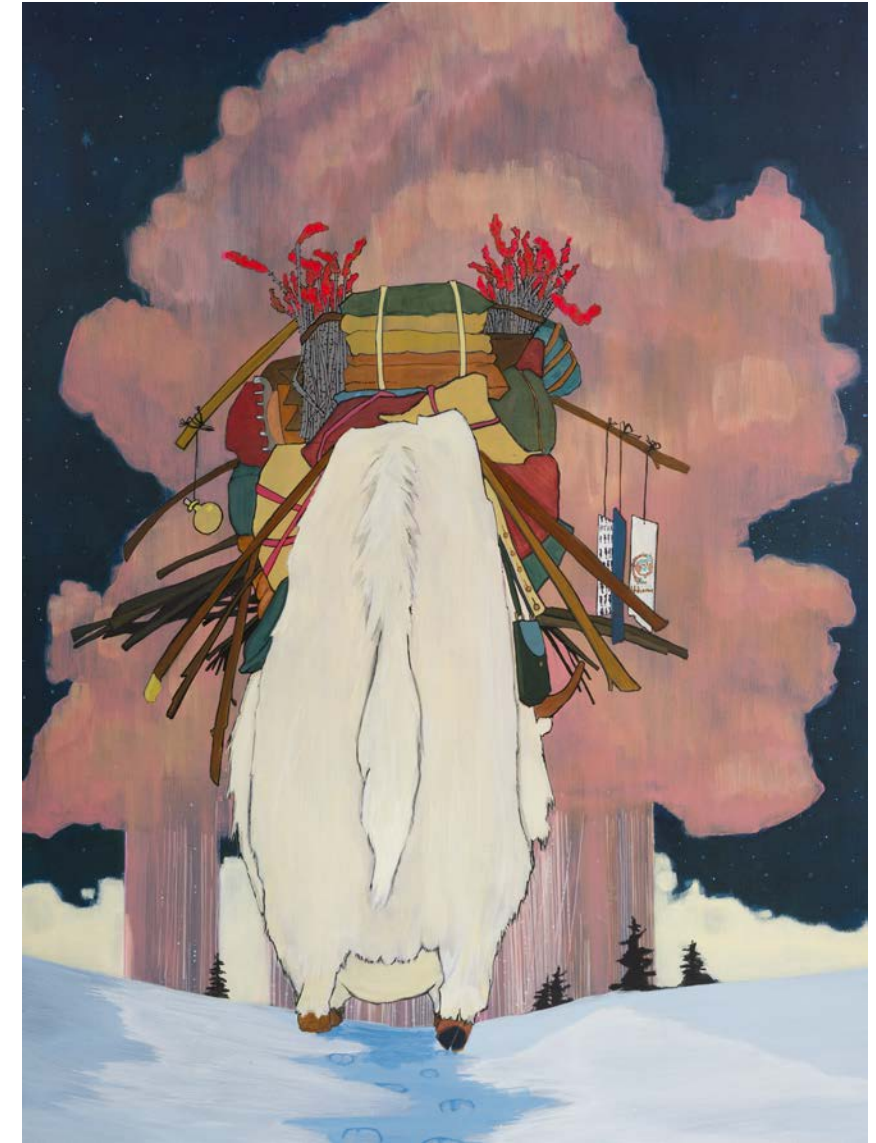


Plate 6
Eliza Naranjo Morse
A Prayer Making Its Way (Mammoth), 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)



Plate 7
Eliza Naranjo Morse
One Bundle, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)



Plate 8
Eliza Naranjo Morse
When the Sun Sets Differently, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
36 × 72 × 2 in. (91.4 × 182.9 × 5.1 cm)



Plate 9
Eliza Naranjo Morse
Tools, Talisman, and Treasures, 2024
 Acrylic and clay on canvas
 48 × 60 × 2 in. (121.9 × 152.4 × 5.1 cm)



Plate 10
Eliza Naranjo Morse
Finding Fall Light, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
36 × 72 × 2 in. (91.4 × 182.9 × 5.1 cm)



Plate 11
Nora Naranjo Morse
We Come with Stories, 2024
Clay
Left overall height: 78 1/2 in. (199.4 cm)
Center overall height: 70 in. (177.9 cm)
Right overall height: 94 in. (238.7 cm)



Plates 12–14
 Nora Naranjo Morse
Healers from Some Other Place, 2020–2024
 Burlap, paint, reclaimed materials, and clay
 Plate 12: 6 1/4 × 3 11/16 × 10 ft.
 Plate 13 (Facing Page, Top): 8 × 4 3/16 × 10 ft.
 Plate 14 (Facing Page, Bottom): 4 × 2 7/16 × 16 3/4 ft.

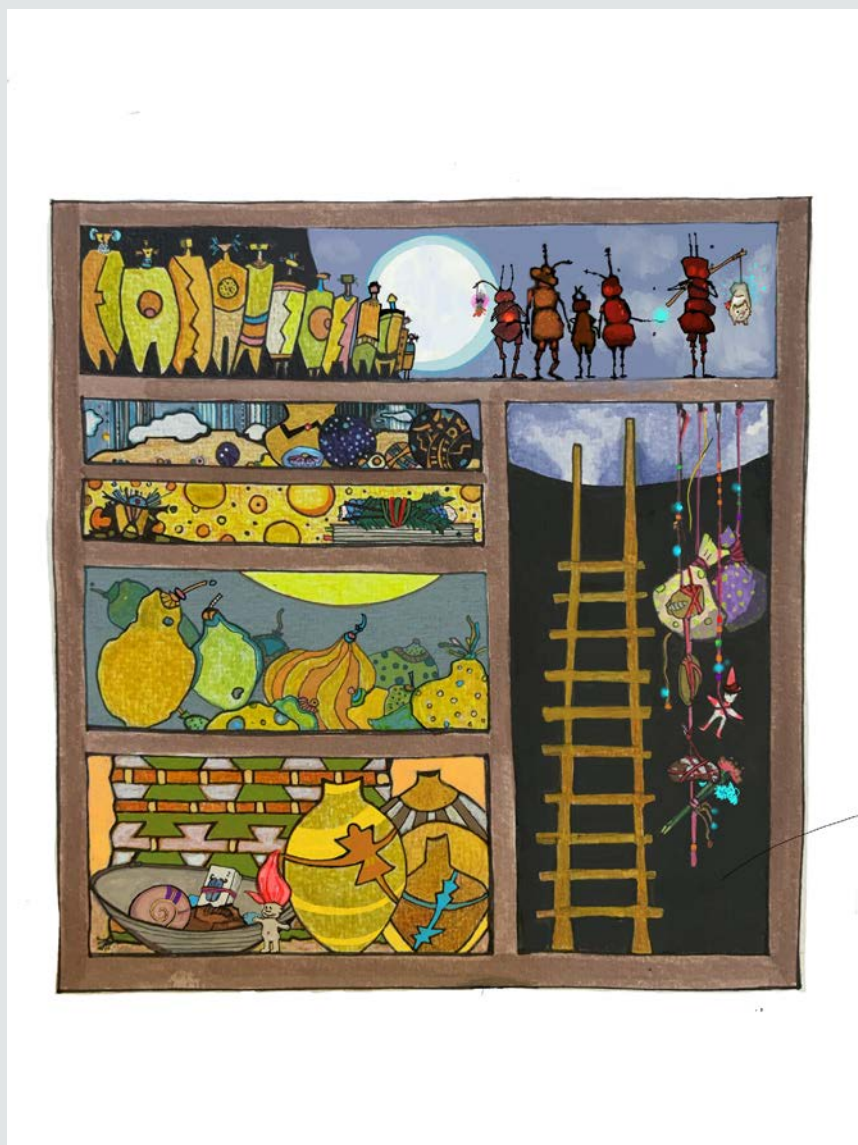


Plate 15
 Nora Naranjo Morse
 Eliza Naranjo Morse
Our Shelf, 2024, from the series *Pass It*
 Giclee printed collaboration
 36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)

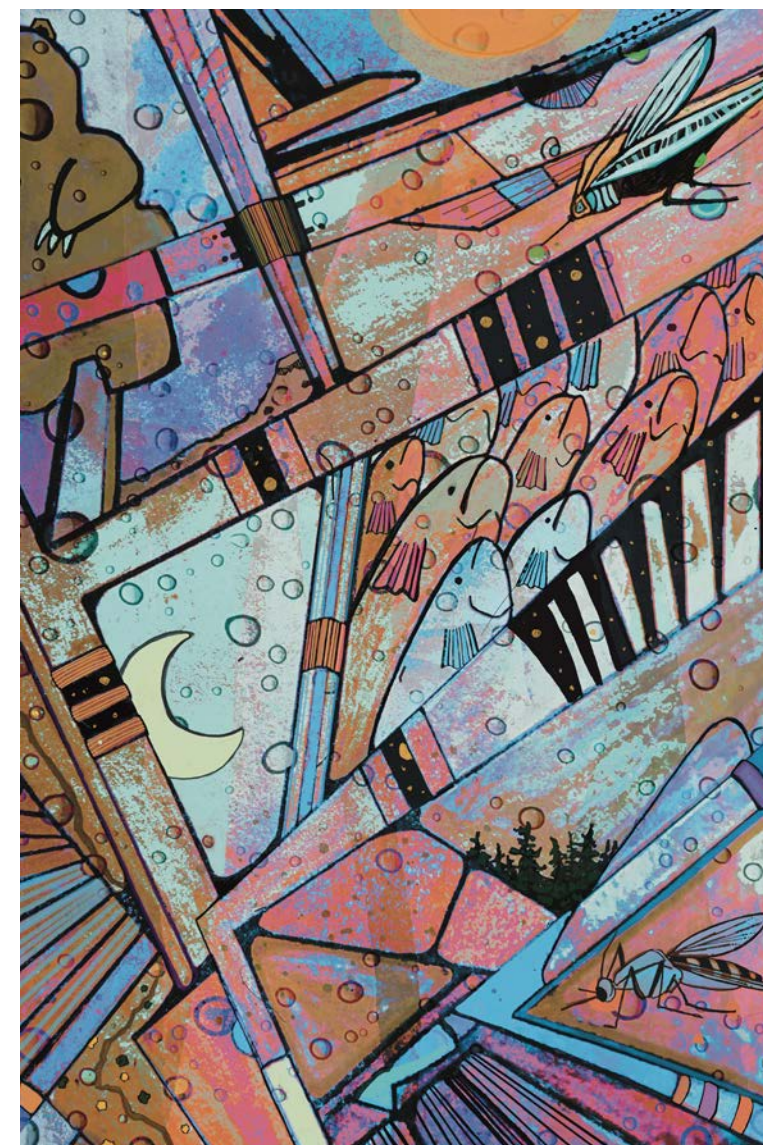


Plate 16
 Nora Naranjo Morse
 Eliza Naranjo Morse
Balance in the Wild, 2024, from the series *Pass It*
 Giclee printed collaboration
 36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)

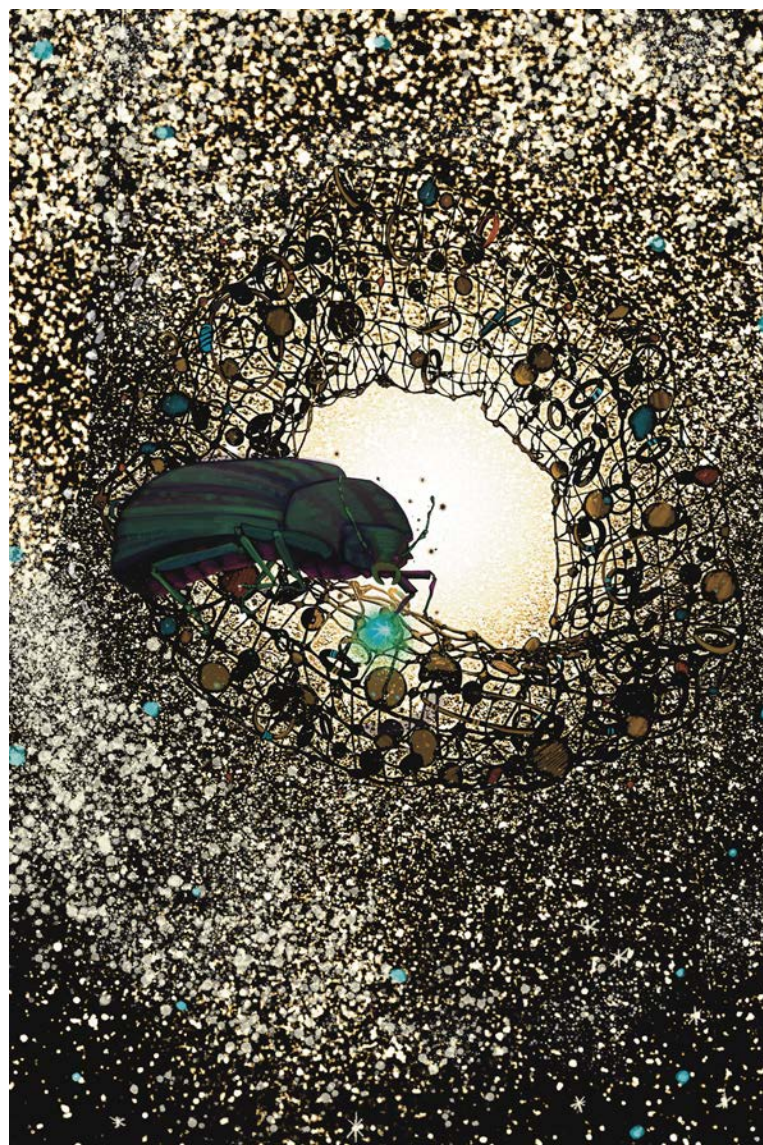


Plate 17
 Nora Naranjo Morse
 Eliza Naranjo Morse
Making Magic, 2024, from the series *Pass It*
 Giclee printed collaboration
 36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)

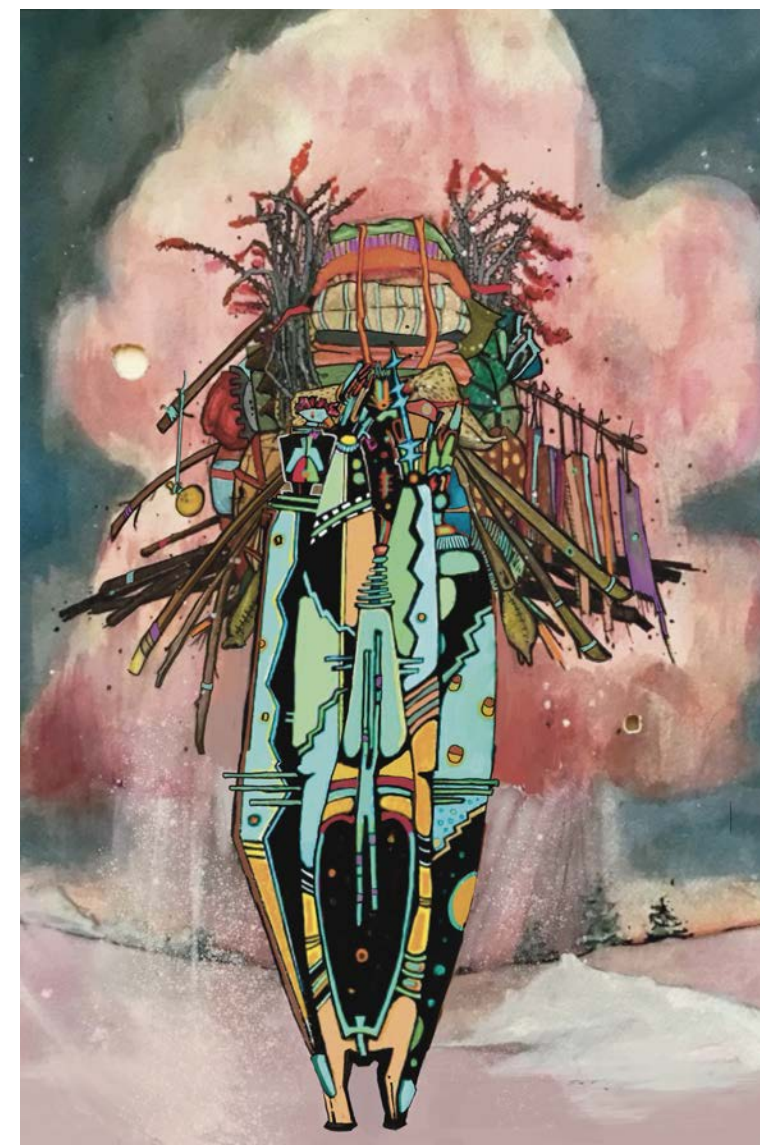


Plate 18
 Nora Naranjo Morse
 Eliza Naranjo Morse
Here and Everywhere, 2024, from the series *Pass It*
 Giclee printed collaboration
 36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)



DO NOT STEP

Checklist of the Exhibition

Eliza Naranjo Morse
Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico, 1980–present

The Center of Stardust, 2024
Acrylic, clay, and glitter on canvas
48 × 48 × 2 in. (121.9 × 121.9 × 5.1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

Heard, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

And Now You’re Here, 2024
Acrylic, clay, and glitter on canvas
36 × 72 × 2 in. (91.4 × 182.9 × 5.1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

In Good Company, 2024
Acrylic, clay, and glitter on canvas
48 × 60 × 2 in. (121.9 × 152.4 × 5.1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

Light from Love, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
48 × 60 × 2 in. (121.9 × 152.4 × 5.1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

A Prayer Making Its Way (Mammoth), 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

One Bundle, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

When the Sun Sets Differently, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
36 × 72 × 2 in. (91.4 × 182.9 × 5.1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

Tools, Talisman, and Treasures, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
48 × 60 × 2 in. (121.9 × 152.4 × 5.1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

Finding Fall Light, 2024
Acrylic and clay on canvas
36 × 72 × 2 in. (91.4 × 182.9 × 5.1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

Nora Naranjo Morse
Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico, 1953–present

We Come with Stories, 2024
Clay
Dimensions vary
Courtesy of the artist

Healers from Some Other Place, 2020–2024
Burlap, paint, reclaimed materials and clay
Dimensions vary
Courtesy of the artist

Collaborative Works:
Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse

Our Shelf, 2024, from the series *Pass It*
Giclee printed collaboration
Sheet: 36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)
Courtesy of the artists

Balance in the Wild, 2024, from the series *Pass It*
Giclee printed collaboration
Sheet: 36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)
Courtesy of the artists

Making Magic, 2024, from the series *Pass It*
Giclee printed collaboration
Sheet: 36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)
Courtesy of the artists

Here and Everywhere, 2024, from the series *Pass It*
Giclee printed collaboration
Sheet: 36 × 48 in. (91.4 × 121.9 cm)
Courtesy of the artists

Artist Biographies

Nora Naranjo Morse

Nora Naranjo Morse (b. 1953) is a poet and artist from Kha’p’o Owingeh (Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico). She works in a variety of materials, from clay to recycled and found objects. Steeped in the rich traditions of Kha’p’o Owingeh and its legacy of ceramics, she also embraces an understanding of contemporary global art, merging aspects of the two in her practice. Her works are in collections at the Smithsonian Institution, the Heard Museum, the Albuquerque Museum, the Denver Art Museum, and the Saint Louis Art Museum, to name a few. *Always Becoming*, an ephemeral installation by Naranjo Morse made of clays, packed earth, wood, and stone, can be seen at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian. Naranjo Morse is the author of the poetry collection *Mud Woman: Poems from the Clay* (1992), which combines poems with photographs of her clay figures.

Eliza Naranjo Morse

Eliza Naranjo Morse (b. 1980) is a mixed-media artist from Kha’p’o Owingeh (Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico). Her work engages drawing, land, collaboration, sculpture, and language. She receives an ongoing education from her extended family and holds a bachelor’s degree in art from Skidmore College. Working locally, but with global influence, her practice espouses communal expressions of the power of creativity. Her works have been featured in exhibitions at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC, Albuquerque Museum, SITE Santa Fe, and the Heard Museum in Phoenix, among others.

Acknowledgements
Hannah Klemm

Bringing *Lifelong* to fruition has been an act of reciprocity, care, and trust. Shaped by the beautiful vision of Nora and Eliza Naranjo Morse, this collaborative exhibition could not have emerged without the support of many hands and minds. I am truly thankful to both Nora and Eliza, who from the beginning embraced a grounded materiality, tenderness, and a radical, communal creative impulse. Their unwavering commitment to this project ensured our ability to center an Indigenous perspective that speaks across generations, geographies, and media. The collective wisdom and vision they articulate, both in their contributions to this catalogue and in the powerful works of art they created, speak to a world in which creativity is a profound act of belonging.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to the museum’s director, Simone J. Wicha, and Carter Foster, chief curator and deputy director of collections, who championed this project from the beginning. This exhibition’s unique structure served as both a celebration of artistic collaboration and a testament to curatorial partnership. My heartfelt thanks also go to my co-curators, Vanessa Davidson and Claire Howard, whose insight, camaraderie, and commitment to dialogue made this shared endeavor not only possible but joyful.

This show was brought to life by the extraordinary staff at the Blanton, who deserve deep recognition and thanks. We are all especially grateful to Cassandra Smith for her oversight and logistical planning, and to Allie Heath for her close coordination with us on packing and shipping the works from New Mexico and ensuring a seamless installation. The gorgeous presentation of all three parts of the exhibition was made possible by the dedication and gracious spirit of Matthew Langland, Eric Mathis, James Turner, and Andrew Anderson, who personally built the beautiful curvilinear platforms that allowed the sculptures to shine.

Special thanks go to curatorial assistant, Lillian Michel, who played an integral part from start to finish—supporting the artists, arranging travel, editing texts, managing countless logistics, and organizing and editing this publication. Our former curatorial assistant Meg Burns was an important support system in the early planning and conception

of this show, and Brit Schulte, Mellon Fellow for Modern and Contemporary Art, served as a generous thought partner throughout the process.

I am deeply grateful to Ray Williams for his work on interpretive frameworks, his thoughtful input on the texts, and his generous teaching with the works in the exhibition. Thanks also go out to the entire Blanton Education team—Siobhan McCusker, Maggie Fucile, and all the gallery teachers—who brought this work to life for the public. It was especially meaningful to witness how many children and university students had the opportunity to engage with the material.

Mitch McDavid and his team ensured both the safety of the objects and the accessibility of the show, and the Blanton’s gallery assistants were wonderful stewards of the exhibition. I’m also grateful to our marketing team, Katie Bruton and Lizabel Stella, for amplifying the show through social media and publicity. Manny Alcalá created beautiful video content, including a moving interview with the artists that will serve as a lasting document of Nora and Eliza’s vision.

Our development colleagues—Dawn Hewitt, Julia Roach, and Brandice Nelson—secured essential funding and helped bring new audiences through the exhibition. Every member of the Blanton staff contributed in some way to this project’s success. I’d like to extend special thanks to Leslie Adkins, Anna Berns, Michael Carnes, Stacey Cilek, Lisa Dirks, Sarah Hutchison, Shelby Lakins, Jennifer Lioy, Portia Martin, Taryn Mills, Virginia Rothenflue, Meredith Sutton, Carlotta Stankiewicz, Jennifer Swartley, and Shaien White.

Special thanks go to my friend and mentor Helen Kornblum, who first introduced me to Nora several years ago. I have learned so much from Helen over the years. Her steadfast dedication to women artists, and Indigenous women artists in particular, has deeply shaped my curatorial practice.

Finally, my deepest thanks go once again to Nora and Eliza. Words cannot fully express how meaningful this experience has been to me. It has been an honor and a privilege to witness your creative

process and to learn from you—about life, being, and making. Your commitment to the earth, community, and humanity offers a powerful example of what art and action can be.

Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse

We would like to acknowledge: Gia Khun, Dolly Naranjo-Neikrug, Zakary Naranjo Morse, Greg Morse, John Cross, Bethany Morse, Isabella Chenault, Michael Naranjo, Rose Naranjo, Sandy Doty, Edd Guarino, Andrea Hanley, Dr. Bess Murphy, Carmelita Romero, Dr. Steve Pett, Diane Reyna, John Reyna, Tito Naranjo, Kelly McHugh, Christine Orrichio, Tessie Naranjo, Jody Folwell, Edna Romero, Benny Romero, Manuel Gancedo, and Shannon Quist.



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Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse: Lifelong

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Nora Naranjo Morse: pages 309, 313, 317, 319

Greg Morse: page 310

Courtesy Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse: pages 340, 341, 342, 343

Published in conjunction with the exhibition *In Creative Harmony: Three Artistic Partnerships. Arshile Gorky and Isamu Noguchi; José Guadalupe Posada and Artemio Rodríguez; Nora Naranjo Morse and Eliza Naranjo Morse* at the Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, February 16, 2025–July 20, 2025.

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