

MEXICAN ROOTS



Masks, Prints, and Traditional Arts of Mexico



MEXICAN ROOTS

Emphasizing Mexican masks and relief prints, this exhibit explores the thread of similarities that can be traced through the diversity of traditional Mexican artwork.

The art of Mexico runs like a river through time, recording and connecting its history, people, culture, and religion. Indigenous and traditional themes continue to surface in contemporary artwork of all media, including the masks and prints found in this exhibit. This common bond appears more pronounced than it may be in more secular, fragmented art histories of other cultures.

In some cases, the modernization of rural Mexico, through better roads, television, and internet access, has led to an erosion of traditional mask making and the associated dances. The persistent, cultural problem of “out with the old and in with the new”.

Recently, however, greater cultural awareness and changing attitudes toward indigenous and rural traditions are leading to a resurgence in artistic mask making. While frequently continuing traditional themes, contemporary artists are reaching beyond the masks traditional role, creating work both to accompany dances and to appeal to collectors.

In Mexican printmaking and sculpture themes of indigenous and traditional life are as strong as ever creating a recognizable connection between these diverse media.



THEMES

- The tradition of Masks in Latin America
- Mexican Masks
- Printmaking in Mexico & Oaxaca
- Taquanes masks of Zitlala
- Barbones masks
- The tastoanes of Tonalá
- Diablo masks of Michoacán
- Alebrijes of Oaxaca

SPECIFICATIONS

- 1,500-2,500 sq. ft.
- 8-10 foot minimum ceiling height recommended
- Recommended 2 month minimum rental

PRICING

Affordable rates with transportation included; please inquire

TO BE PROVIDED BY THE HOSTING VENUE

- Lights and barriers.
- Translation of text and panels if necessary.
- Equipment required for access, installation and dismantling.
- Storage facilities for transport cases.
- Promotion and publicity.
- Staffing during exhibition run.

The Tradition of Masks in Mexico and Latin America

Rituals, dances, and festivals incorporating masks are a longstanding tradition in Latin America. The root source of these date back to pre-Columbian times. While festivals using masks are still practiced in Europe, it is undoubtedly indigenous cultural traditions that account for the prevalence of masks from Bolivia to Mexico.

Borrowing from the existing traditions of native people, the Catholic church reinitiated many dances and rituals imposing new Christian themes in an effort to convert indigenous populations. Dances and ceremonies throughout Latin America reflect this mix of culture, incorporating Christian and pre-Christian icons and themes.





Printmaking in Oaxaca

While the printmaking tradition has always been strong in Mexico, artists such as Posada immediately come to mind, the city of Oaxaca has enjoyed a renaissance in the art. Relief prints such as woodcuts are the most common and many of the themes center around traditional culture and social protest. In addition to fine art, prints are often intended as public “street” art and can be seen applied to buildings around the city.





The Tastoanes of Tonalá

The “fiesta de santo Santiago” is celebrated in several Mexican states. The largest and most famous celebration occurs in the city of Tonalá outside Guadalajara.

The revered saint James or “Santo Santiago” represents the triumph of Spain and Christianity over the native people (tastoanes). However, the celebration has become infused with the story of the courage and suffering of the indigenous population at the hands of the Spanish.

During the fiesta a mock battle occurs in which St. James uses a whip against the tastoanes. He is killed or captured then revived. Eventually he triumphs over the tastoanes.

The tastoanes masks represent the ferocity of the natives. The painted spots and insects are symbolic of the smallpox and plagues brought by the Europeans.



Image by Alejandro Basah



Mexico's Indigenous "surrealism"

When outsiders view Mexican art it may seem surrealistic or be categorized as "magical realism". These qualities in Mexican work do not originate as much from any art movement as from the history of Mexico itself.



The depiction of the natural world, plants, animals, death, etc. stem from common themes of pre-Hispanic times. The collision of multiple cultures and religions has fused into a uniquely Mexican art world that may seem strange or exotic to those unfamiliar with it.







Featured Artists

Mask Artists

- Jacabo & Maria Angeles
- J. Castro
- Eliseo Garcia
- Juan Horta
- Felipe Horta
- Norberto Lucano
- Rafael Mesa Oliva
- Gerardo Ortega
- Hugo Horta Romas
- Martin Salgado

2D Artists

- Santiago Luis Arturo
- Daniel Barraza
- Alejandro Basan
- Dario Castillejos
- Silverio Herrera
- Alvaro Medina
- Gabriela Morac
- Amarildo Olmedo
- Eduardo Robledo
- Adrian Amarildo Olmedo Sanchez
- Jose Silverio

3D Artists

- David Hernandez Workshop
- Laura Hernandez
- Leticia Hernandez
- Jose Ortega
- Margarita Santiago
- Elisa Uribe
- Carlos Zurc

Artwork

- Up to 80 traditional & contemporary Mexican masks
- Up to 35 contemporary Mexican prints
- Up to 30 traditional and contemporary 3D works
- Up to 6 display cases







ABOUT GDI

Gaston Design specializes in paleontology restorations, & traveling exhibits.

Gaston Design Inc (GDI) was created in 1996, after founder Robert Gaston discovered the dinosaur *Gastonia*, named in his honor. Over the last 25 years GDI has reconstructed many newly discovered dinosaur skeletons for leading paleontological institutions. Since 2017, GDI has expanded beyond paleontology work. Producing cultural and natural history traveling exhibits .

SERVICES

Gaston Design Inc (GDI) specializes in the restoration, molding, and casting of fossil skeletons, as well as gift shop lines of smaller paleontological replicas (teeth, claws, skulls, etc.). In addition to cast replicas, Gaston Design offers museum services such as skeleton mounting, exhibit design and construction, and traveling exhibits.



MUSEUMS

Gaston Design Inc's works is on display, or in the collections and gift shops of many museums world-wide. Some of these include the following;

Denver Museum of Nature and Science
Utah Museum of Natural History
The Smithsonian Institution
The Carnegie Museum of Natural History
The National Museum of Science, Tokyo, Japan
The Field Museum, Chicago, IL
Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario, Canada
Museo Del Desierto, Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico
American Museum of Natural History

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