

2016 Docent Training: Interactive Gallery Experience

Exhibit Name: *Popol Vuh: Watercolors of Diego Rivera*

Docent Name: Annette Barnes

Activity Name: "POINT OF VIEW"

Audiences: Check all that apply

Adults Families School Children: Grades 7 and up Homeschooled Students

Essential Question:

How do these images of the *Popol Vuh* reflect the moral teachings of the Quiche Maya?

Common Core Standards and Content Standards

English Language Arts

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

Reading: Literature Standards

Key Ideas and Data

Craft and Structure

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

History-Social Sciences Content Standards

7.7 Students compare and contrast the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the Meso-American and Andean civilizations.

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills 6-8

Research, Evidence and Point of View

Historical Interpretation

Visual and Performing Arts: Visual Arts Content Standards 7-12

Historical and Cultural Context

Aesthetic Valuing

List Touring Techniques

At the mural, students will be asked to look at the left hand side of the mural and to identify various elements. In the gallery, students will be asked to identify significant characters in each painting, to identify traits of the characters that are positive and or negative, and their relationships to one another. They are then asked to read, synthesize, and determine the moral for each story segment, giving reasons for their conclusions. They will try to point out as many points of view in each painting and how the story differs for each.

List Gallery and/or Interactive Learning Station Artifacts/Objects

The Mayas, Raul Anguiano

Popol Vuh: Watercolors of Diego Rivera

- The Creation of Man
- The Flood and the Destruction of the Wooden Men
- The Birth of Hunahpu and Xbalanque
- The Astonishment at the Previously Harvested Corn
- Man's Adoration for the Gods

Introduction/Theme/Purpose

The *Popol Vuh* was used by the Mayas as a sacred text which was consulted in times of crisis and which reflected their beliefs and traditions. By looking at selected Diego Rivera watercolors and reading a corresponding synopsis, students are encouraged to discuss and decide on the “moral teaching” inherent in the segment of the *Popol Vuh* Creation myth.

Activity Description/Steps in Presenting the Activity

I. Begin at Raul Anguiano’s Mayas Mural:

IAQ: What do you see in this mural that assures us that the ancient Maya were literate?

Scribe, book, glyph.

Transition: One great work of Mayan literature is the *Popol Vuh*, or Book of Council. We are fortunate to have Diego Rivera’s rarely seen watercolors of this Quiché Maya creation myth in the next gallery. The Creator gods wanted to create beings who would praise and nurture the gods. Creation, in ancient Maya belief, took more than one attempt in order to please the gods.

II. Move into the *Popol Vuh* gallery where participants will divide into three groups and be assigned/choose one of the following five watercolors:

- The Creation of Man
- The Flood and the Destruction of the Wooden Men
- The Birth of Hunahpu and Xbalanque
- The Astonishment at the Previously Harvested Corn
- Man’s Adoration for the Gods

III. Presenter will distribute cards for each painting. Each card will provide a brief synopsis or background information and quotes from the *Popol Vuh*. One person will be the “reader” who reads aloud the synopsis for each painting and the corresponding quotation from the *Popol Vuh*. Another will be the “reporter” who reports back to the whole group their group’s conclusions.

In your small group, discuss the following:

1. Describe this work of art. What do you think the relationship is between the characters? What do you see that makes you say that?
2. How many different points of view are in the painting? What viewpoints might not be so obvious? What do you think is the artist’s point of view?
3. Tell the story of this work of art from each point of view. Imagine a dialogue between the characters. How is the story different if told from each character’s point of view?
4. What can you infer about the values of the ancient Quiché Maya?
5. Choose one person to be spokesperson and report to the other painting groups.

From *Art Tells a Story*, Jennings, Martha Holder, Toledo Museum of Art

Sample interactive questions (2-3) for the Audience

See questions above and on the paintings below.

Conclusion/Review/Reflection

By the conclusion of the activity students will have participated in discussion, compared and contrasted different characters of the *Popol Vuh*, and have had to determine what some of the basic values or morals were of the ancient Maya.

Date approved by the Education Committee: _____

Exhibit: *Popol Vuh: Watercolors of Diego Rivera*

I. The Creation of Man (The Mud People)

When the Creator gods finished making the Earth, they wanted to create beings who would praise and nurture the gods.
“Of earth and mud was its flesh composed.... It merely fell apart and dissolved.... At first it spoke, but without knowledge. Straightaway it would dissolve in water, for it was not strong.”



1. What is going on in this painting?
2. What are the characters doing? How do they relate to one another?
3. How many points of view are in the painting?
4. What is the moral or societal value expressed?

II. The Flood and Destruction of the Wooden Men

Dissatisfied with their creation of the Mud People, the Creator gods tried again.
“Their dogs and turkeys said to them, pain you have caused us.”
Then their grinding stones said to them: We were ground upon by you...holi, holi, huki, huki on our faces.”



1. What is going on in this painting?
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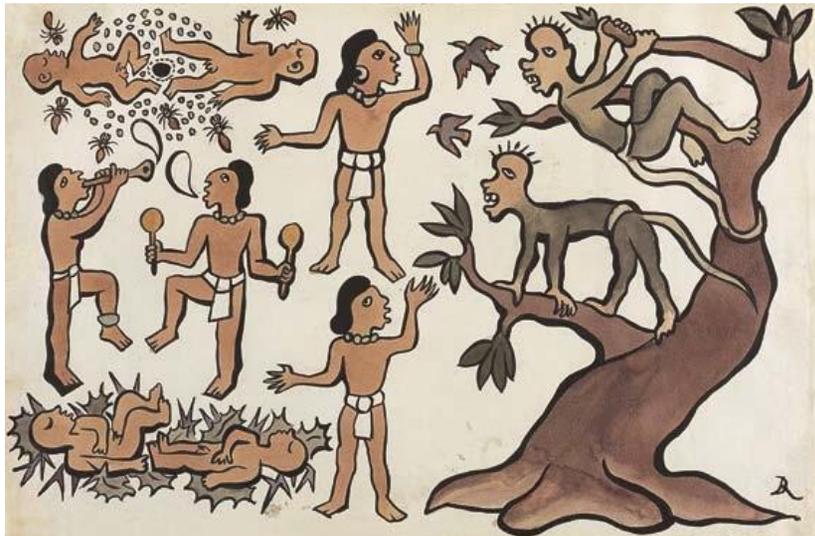
III. The Birth of Hunahpu and Xbalanque

(This should be viewed as two different episodes of the same story. Please look at the painting from LEFT to Right, LEFT side is one third of the painting, RIGHT side is two-thirds of the painting.)

The Hero Twins were brought to their Grandmother's house, and, as they cried too much ...

“This was done by [the older half-brothers], for they would have had them die there on the anthill and on the thornbush. They wanted this because of [their own] treachery and jealousy.”

“[Hunahpu and Xbalanque] did not become enraged or angry. They tolerated it, for they knew their own nature, and this was a light by which they could see.”



The Hero Twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque, were brought to their Grandmother's house.

As newborns they cried too much and were put outside on an anthill, yet they slept through the night.

Then they were placed on thorns, yet again they slept through the night.

One-Artisan and One-Monkey, their twin half-brothers, who were great artists and scribes, were jealous of them. The Hero twins were made to go hunting for birds with their blowguns. Their older brothers would take away the birds and not share.

One day the Hero Twins invited their brothers to help them retrieve some birds that they had shot but were stuck in a tree.

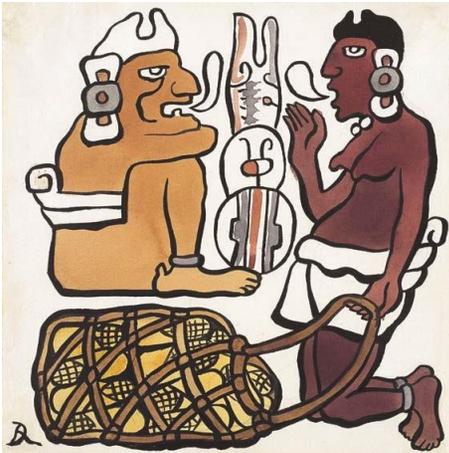
As the older brothers climbed the tree it grew magically and they could not come down. When they loosened their sashes to help them climb down they were transformed into monkeys.

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IV. The Astonishment at the Previously Harvested Corn

The maiden, finding herself with child, fled Xibalba...
The Grandmother said, "I do not want you. You are not my daughter-in-law"....
"Go and harvest a great netful of maize and return with it."

There was only a single ear of maize in the field. ...[the maiden, Lady Blood] took hold of the corn silk...and pulled it upward...it multiplied there in the net until the great net overflowed.

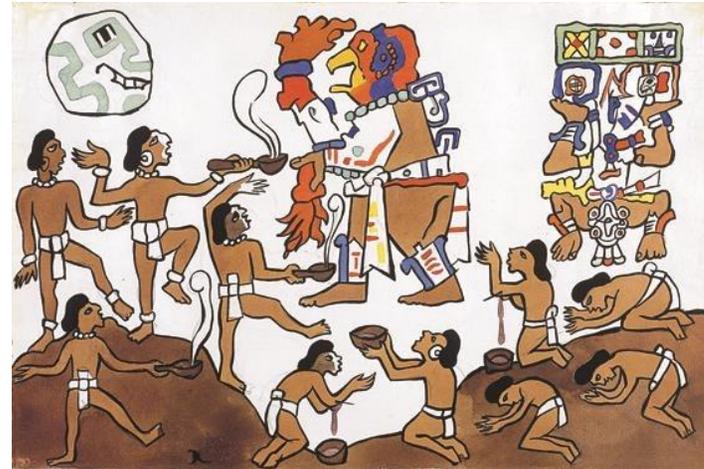


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2. What are the characters doing? How do they relate to one another?
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V. Man's Adoration for the Gods

Of these we shall speak only of the nations that became great among the allied nations...
"Many people arrived in darkness in the days of their increase, for the sun was yet to be born...These were people of esteemed words, of esteem, honor and respect".

"You are the god in the sky and on the earth, you, Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth. May our sign, our word be given for as long as there is sun and light...[the leaders of the people] were great sages, bloodletters and honorers...."



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