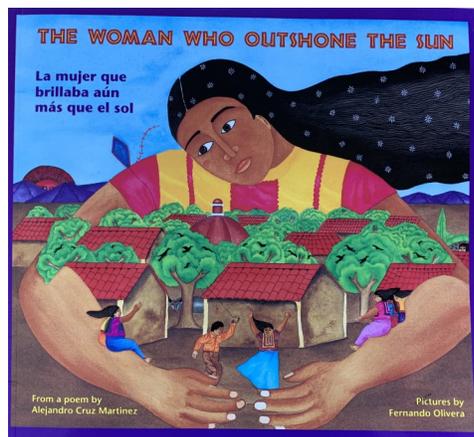


Let's Celebrate Cinco de Mayo!



In honor of **Cinco de Mayo** let's learn more about this Mexican holiday and then create some arts and crafts inspired from Mexican folk and fine arts!



Table of Contents

- 1. Learn about Cinco de Mayo** p. 3
- 2. Meet the Artist—Frida Kahlo** p.4
- 3. Frida Kahlo Inspired** p. 5-12
Self-Portrait Project
- 4. Virtual Field Trip—La Casa Azul** p. 13-18
with Origami Paper Craft
- 5. Zapotec Traditions** p. 19
- 6. Magical Oaxacan Animals** p. 20-24

Cinco de Mayo



Contrary to popular belief, Cinco de Mayo celebrates Mexico's victory over France in the **Franco-Mexican War** at the battle of Puebla, not Mexican Independence Day. The battle occurred on May 5, 1862. A small group of Mexican soldiers were able to defeat a large French army against all odds on this day.

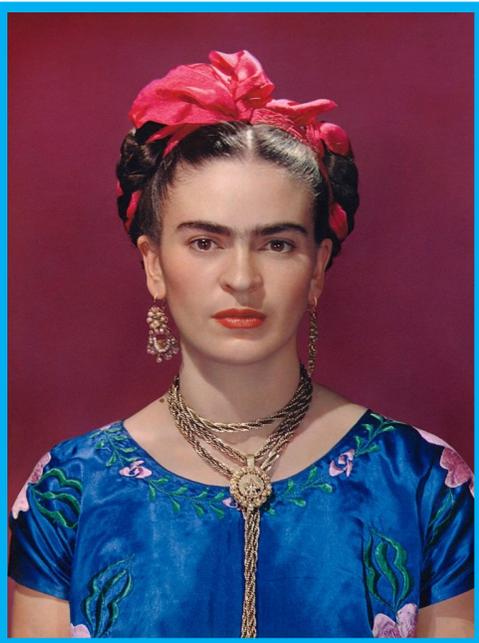
In Mexico, Cinco de Mayo is referred to as ***Día de la Batalla de Puebla***, or the day of the battle of Puebla. Every year on **May 5th** in Puebla, Veracruz, Mexico, the day is marked with speeches from politicians and a re-enactment of the miraculous battle. Cinco de Mayo is a much larger celebration in the United States than in Mexico. Fiestas are held with music, dancing, parades, and food. Whenever and however it is celebrated, it is a celebration of Mexican history and heritage.

Meet the Artist

Frida Kahlo

1907-1954

"I never paint dreams or nightmares. I paint my own reality."

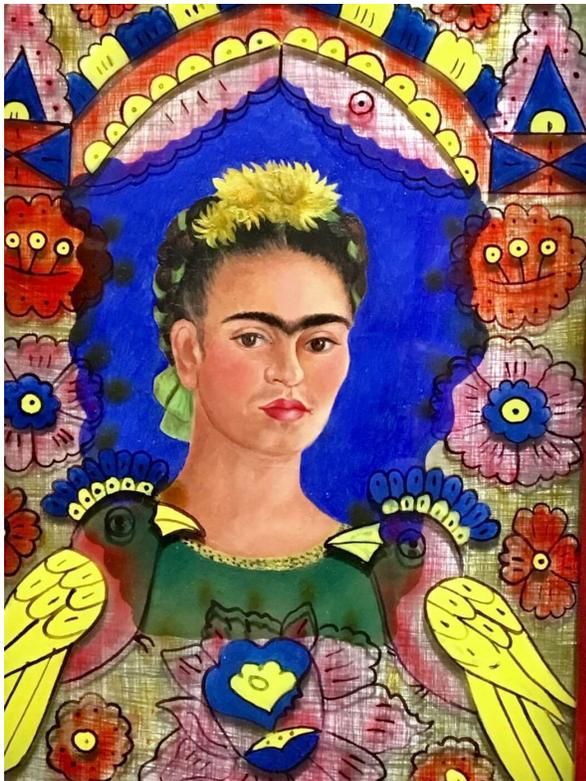


Frida Kahlo was a Mexican artist best known for her **self-portraits**. Her paintings use lots of bright colors, dramatic symbolism, and are strongly influenced by **Mexican folk culture**. Frida Kahlo grew up in a house called **La Casa Azul** with her parents and six sisters. That house is now the Frida Kahlo museum. As a child, Frida loved to draw. At age 6, she caught a disease called polio which damaged her right leg. She had to spend 9

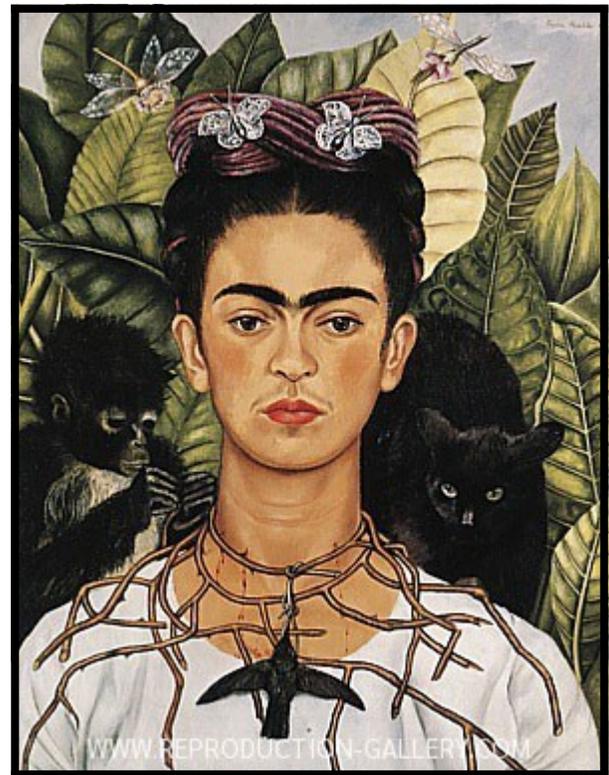
months confined to her bed. During that time, she created an imaginary friend who she would later paint in "**The Two Fridas**." Once she got better, Frida Kahlo was more determined than ever to live life to the fullest. Unfortunately when Frida was 18 a school bus accident left her injured and confined to her bed once again and that is when she discovered her love of painting. Her perseverance kept her going but she fought her whole life to recover from her injuries. In 1929 Frida married Mexican artist **Diego Rivera**. She exhibited her work in Mexico and the US and taught art. Frida is regarded as one of Mexico's greatest artists.

Frida Kahlo Inspired Self-Portrait

Frida often painted portraits of herself. She wanted to show people about her suffering, her inability to have children, and also the people in her life. She created one hundred and forty three paintings, and of these, fifty-five are self-portraits.



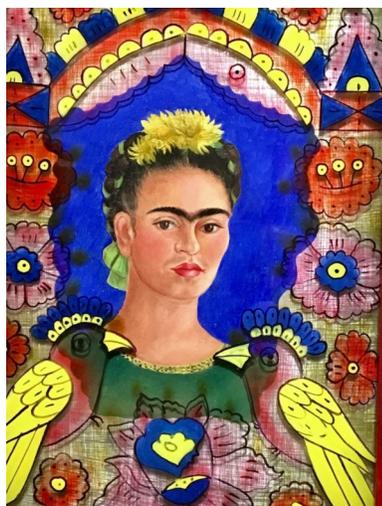
The Frame, 1938



Self-portrait with Thorn Necklace and

The Louvre in Paris purchased *The Frame* painting from Kahlo, making her the first Mexican artist to be featured in their collection

For this first project are going to create a self-portrait inspired by Frida Kahlo's style and Mexican Folk Culture depicted in *The Frame*.



Materials:

Blue construction paper, Black and white photocopy of a self-portrait, printouts of Mexican folkart images (found in packet pages 8-12), Colored pencils, Scissors, glue

Instructions:

1. First, use the colored pencils to hand-color the black and white photograph of yourself. Try experimenting with soft and hard pressure to create different values.



2. Next, cut out the self portrait and glue it to the center of the blue paper.

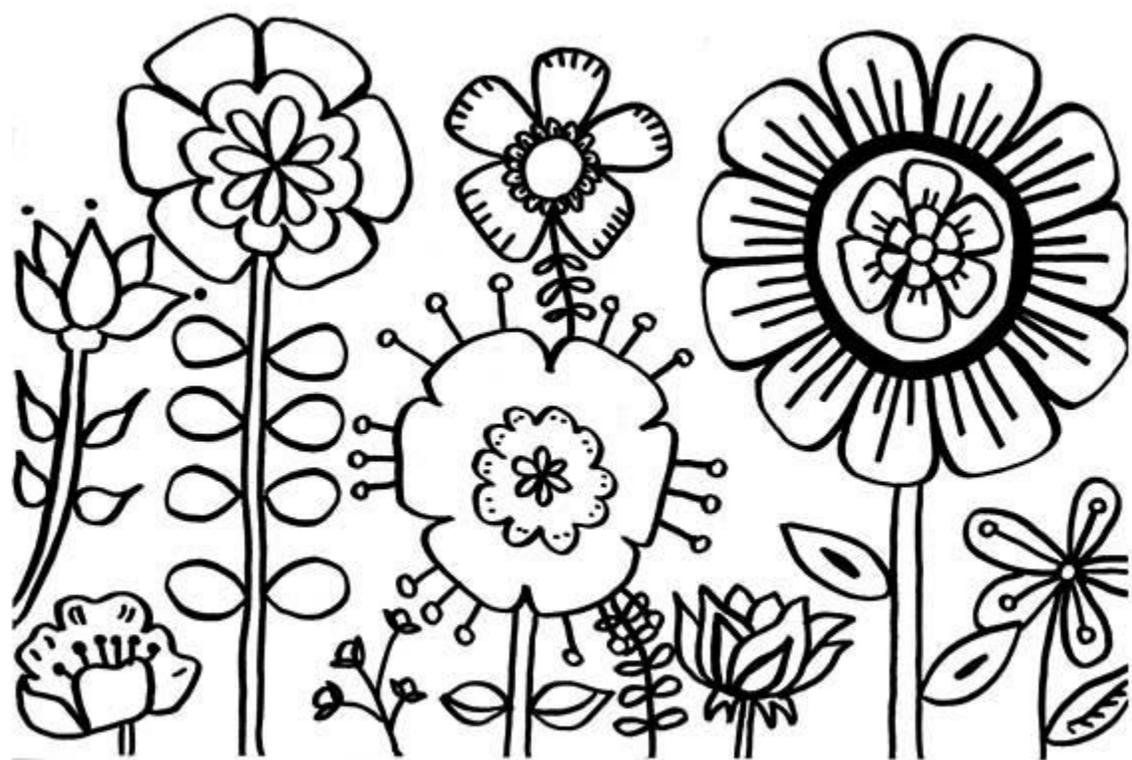


3. Have a look at the fanciful flowers and animals on the printouts and choose 8 or 10 to color and cut out.



4. Lay the images around 4 edges of the paper, creating a "frame" for your portrait. Experiment with different layouts until you find the one you like best. Glue the images down to create the frame.







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La Casa Azul



La Casa Azul (the Blue House) was built in 1904 and is located in Mexico City. It was originally the family **home of Frida Kahlo**. Since 1958, it has served as museum dedicated to her life and work.

Like most of the other structures in the area, the house is built around a central **courtyard** with garden space, a tradition since colonial times. Originally, the house enclosed only three sides of this courtyard, but later the fourth side was added to enclose it entirely. Its **cobalt blue** color lend it the name. The house consists of 10 rooms museum also contains a café and a small gift shop.



La Casa Azul is one of Mexico City's most-visited museums and contains orated with Mexican folk art, Kahlo's personal art collection, a large collection of pre-Hispanic artifacts, traditional Mexican cookware, linens, personal mementos such as photographs, postcards and letters, and works by José María Velasco, Paul Klee, and Diego Rivera. Much of the collection is in display cases designed for their preservation.

For this second project we are going to create an **Origami Paper Sculpture** of La Casa Azul, then you can take a **virtual tour** of the museum and draw some of the things you see there to decorate your house with.



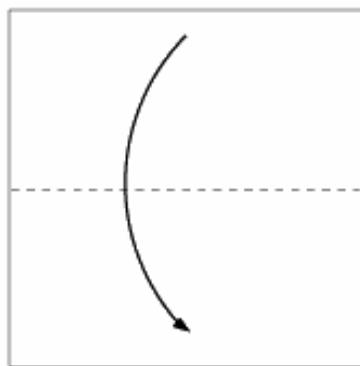
Materials:

Computer to access virtual tour, blue square of paper, white paper, colored pencils, scissors, glue.

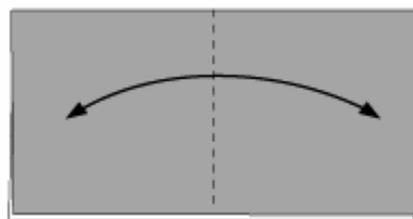
Instructions:

STEP 1:

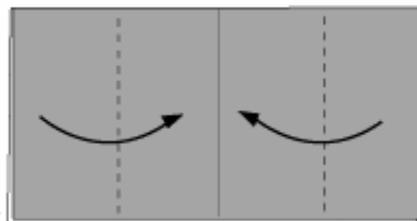
Follow these instructions to fold the blue square of paper into an origami house.



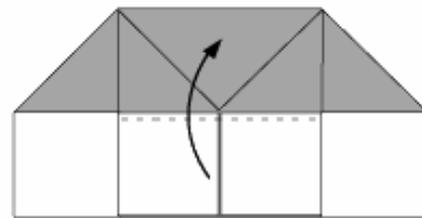
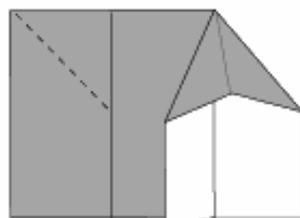
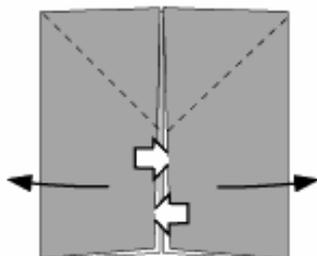
1 Fold in half

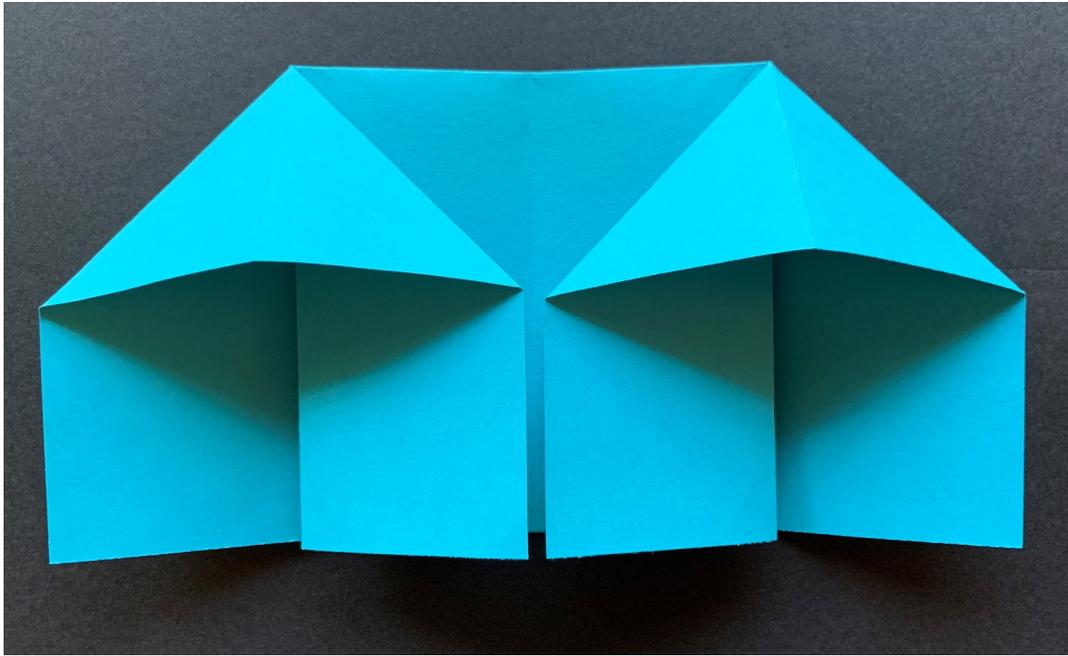


2 Fold in half to make a crease and fold back



3 Fold to meet the centerline and fold back





STEP 2:

Now that you have the blue house, let's take a virtual tour of **La Casa Azul**. Stop along the way and **sketch pictures** of things you see. We will use these to decorate the house with. On the next page you will find some tips about the layout of the museum to guide your tour.

Find the tour here:

<https://www.museofridakahlo.org.mx/en/the-blue-house/multimedia/#back-top>

The museum consists of ten rooms. Use these notes to help identify the things you see!

GROUND FLOOR

#1—On the ground floor is a room that contains some of **Kahlo's mostly minor works** such as *Frida y la cesárea*, 1907–1954, *Retrato de familia*, 1934, *Ruina*, 1947, *Retrato de Guillermo Kahlo*, 1952, *El marxismo dará salud*, 1954 (showing Frida throwing away her crutches), with a watercolor *Diario de Frida* in the center. **This room originally was the formal living room, where Frida and Diego entertained notable Mexican and international visitors and friends .**

#2—The second room is filled with **everyday items** Frida used, letters, photographs, and notes. On the walls are pre-Hispanic necklaces and folk **dresses**

#3—**Personal effects and mementos.** Paintings in the third room include *Retrato de Carmen Portes Gil*, 1921, *Ofrenda del día de muertos*, 1943, and *Mujer con cuerpo de guitarra*, 1916

#4—**Frida's art collection:** Including contemporary paintings by artists such as Paul Klee, José María Velasco, Joaquín Clausel, Celia Calderón Orozco, and a sculpture by Mardonio Magaña

#5—**More of Frida's art collection:** Including two large Judas figures, “mujeres bonitos” figures from Tlatilco, State of Mexico and figures from the Teotihuacan culture. The large papier-mâché Judas figures and other paper mache monsters were traditionally filled with firecrackers and exploded on the Saturday before Easter.

#6 & #7—**The sixth and seventh rooms are the kitchen and dining room.** Both are in classic Mexican style, with **bright yellow tile and the floor, blue and yellow tile counters and a long yellow table**, where Frida's sister Ruth stated that Frida spent much of her time. The two rooms are filled with large **earthenware pots, plates, utensils, glassware, and more which came from Metepec**, Oaxaca, Tlaquepaque, and Guanajuato, all known for their handcrafted items. Decorative features include **papier-mache Judas skeletons** hanging from its ceiling, and walls with tiny pots spelling the names of Frida and Diego next to a pair of doves tying a lovers' knot.

#8—Off the dining room was **Rivera's bedroom, with his hat, jacket, and work clothes** still hanging from a wall rack. Next to this is a stairwell that leads from the courtyard area to the upper floor. This area also contains a large number of folk art items and includes about 2,000 votive paintings from the colonial period to the 20th century, other colonial era work, and more Judas figures

UPPER FLOOR

#9 and #10 —**Frida's final bedroom and studio area.** The original furniture is still there. Her ashes are on display in an urn on a dresser, which is surrounded by a funeral mask, some personal items. On her bed is a painted plaster corset she was forced to wear to support her damaged spine, and under the canopy is a mirror facing down which she used to paint her many self-portraits.

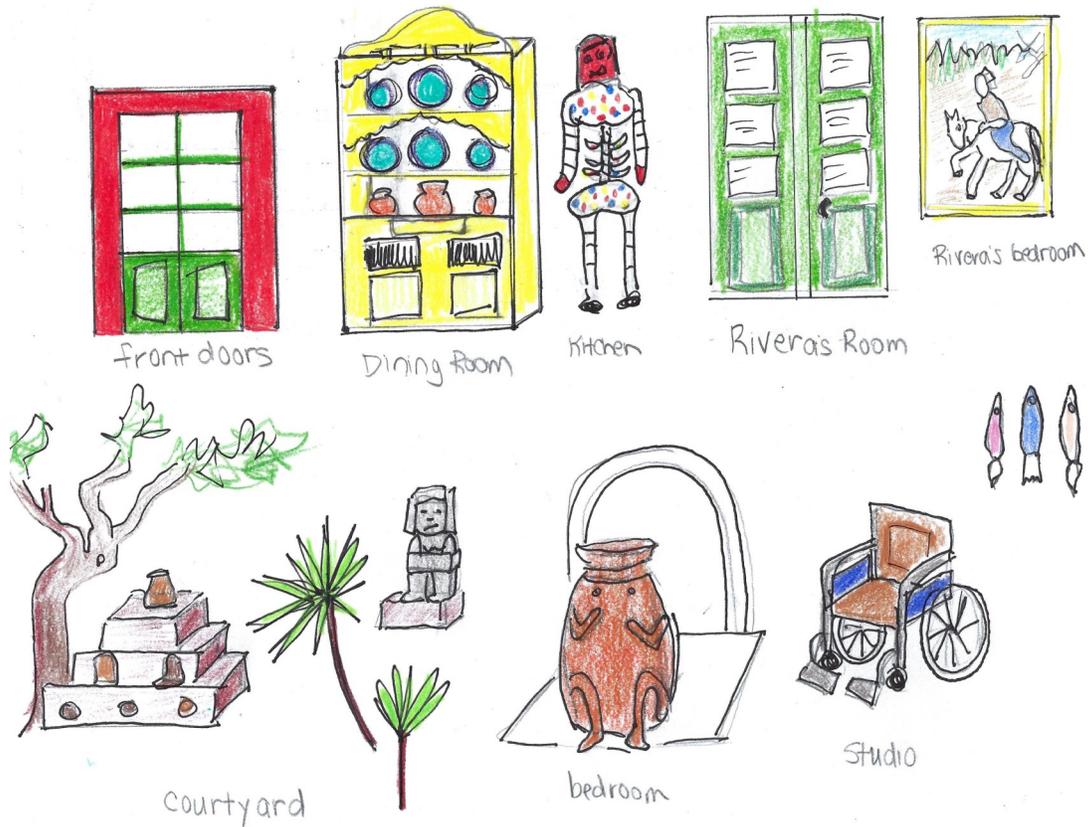
COURTYARD

The tour of the museum ends at the large courtyard garden which is completely enclosed by the four sides or wings of the structure. The courtyard area is divided by a stepped pyramid, a fountain, and a reflection pool.

STEP 1:

Sketch things that you see at La Casa Azul on your virtual tour. Be sure to make them a size that is small enough to fit in your blue house!

Example:



STEP 2:

Cut the images out and glue them to your house! You can divide the space into rooms if you would like and even use the back!

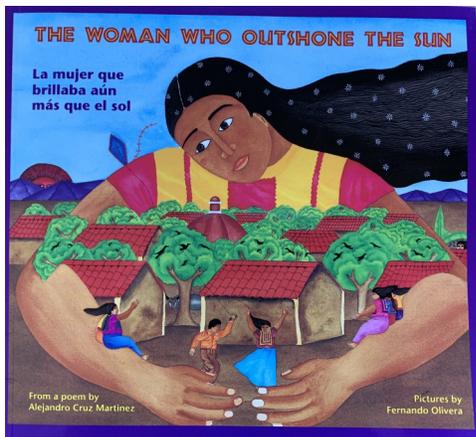


Zapotec Traditions

Just like we have Native Americans in the United States, Mexico has a variety of indigenous people, as well. One such group is the **Zapotec** people of Oaxaca (Wa-HAH-ka), Mexico, who are from the southwestern-central highlands region of Mexico. Their language is also called Zapotec.

The Zapotec are well known for their **folktales, geometric weavings and intricate animals they craft from copal wood.**

A **folktale** is an old story that's been told again and again, often for generations. ... Folktales are stories in the **oral tradition**, or tales that people tell each other out loud, rather than stories in written form. Let's listen to the video reading of "**The Woman Who Outshone the Sun**" then explore a little more about Zapotec culture.



What do you think is the **moral** or theme of this story? Many cultures around the world have versions of stories that share the same theme: Treat others as you would like to be treated, or "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you".

Mexican Animalitos

Magical Oaxacan Animals

Mexico has a LOT of animals! It contains about 10% of all known species of animals on the planet including quite a number that don't live anywhere else and many that are endangered species.

The Zapotec have a long tradition of crafting animal sculptures from copal wood (which is thought to be magical) then painting their carvings with multicolored, intricate patterns. Some of these animals look real, while others are pure fantasy, based on myths, folktales, and legends.



In many instances the animals were once **gods** and each animal **symbolizes different traits and ideas**. For example the crocodile's hard ridged surface and aquatic domain associated them with the concept of the earth floating over the sea. Turtles are associated with music as their shells are used to make instruments. The rabbit is best know as a symbol of the moon. Instead of a man in the moon the Zapotecs and Mayans saw a rabbit in the moon.

In the 1920s a Mexican artist named Pedro Linares began making paper-mache creatures of the imagination, called **Alebrijes** (ali-bre-haze). After seeing his work in galleries, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo began commissioning more alebrijes and they are still made today in Mexico.

For this last project we are going to create an Animalito sculpture. Have a look at the brightly painted Oaxacan examples on the next 3 pages then **create your own Animalito** from play dough or model magic!

You can create it in the likeness of an animal you like, or make it an **Alebrije** by combining several different animals and using your imagination to invent a new one! Be sure to add lots of **dots** and **pattern**.





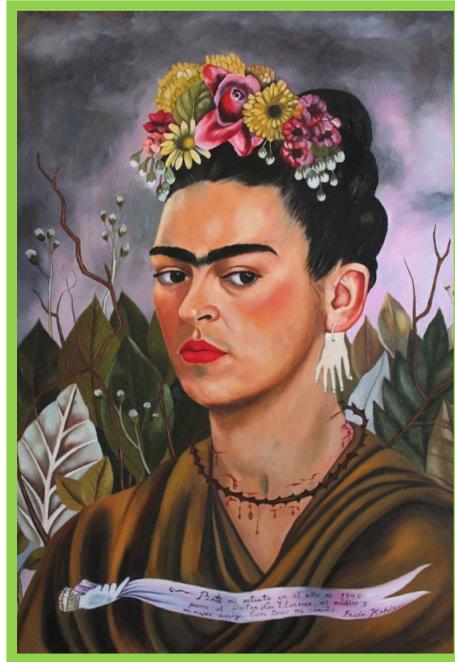




Watch a free video of this lesson on



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Frida Kahlo, *Self-portrait*, 1940

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