

LESSON PLAN

Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center

Curriculum Title: Pedro Linares and His Alebrijes/Alebrije Sculptures

Time: 120 minutes Ages/Group: 13-17 Lesson Number: One Medium: Nature Sculptures

GOALS/OBJECTIVES	Students will learn about the Mexican folk-art tradition of alebrijes including their history and the “Uprooted Dreams” alebrije installation at the MACC. Students will make their own alebrije sculpture from nature found objects.
How do these goals preserve, create, present or promote cultural arts of Mexican Americans or other Latin@ cultures? Is it socially relevant? Will your lesson address the 5 E’s? (Engage, explore, explain, elaborate-extend, evaluate)	Students will learn about the history of alebrijes and how they originated. Students will explore the ESB-MACC’s “Uprooted Dreams” virtual exhibit on the Smithsonian Lab and learn about a contemporary alebrijes project. Students will use their imagination to create an alebrije sculpture out of objects they find in nature.

AGENDA

TIME

<u>Check-In/Opening Ritual:</u> Check in with your name and what kind of art do you like to make?	5 minutes
<u>Warm-Up/Introductory Activity:</u> Quick draw monster game—everyone will draw a different part of a monster. Start by arranging everyone around the table and giving everyone a plain piece of paper. Start a series of timers for thirty seconds for each student. The students begin by drawing the beginning of a monster on their paper. Once the timer is up, students will pass their paper to their right. The next person gets thirty seconds and so on until everyone has added to the monster. Ask volunteers to group share the final drafts of their monsters.	10 minutes
<u>Core Activity:</u>	
1. Begin discussion about folk art by asking students what kind of art is traditional in their family or heritage.	10
2. Ask students if they have heard of alebrijes before. Have students take turns reading paragraphs from Pedro Linares’ Story (attached) about how he started making alebrijes.	10
3. View and discuss alebrije images and videos at the MACC in the Smithsonian Learning Lab found here: https://learninglab.si.edu/collections/uprooted-dreams/uJPaDm0jec2nsa0L#r (you can make a free account or just view our collections).	20
4. Have students take a nature walk around their backyard or neighborhood to collect found objects for their alebrije sculpture.	10
5. Students will take their objects and use pencil and paper to design alebrije.	10

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<p>6. Students will paint alebrije parts and attach them with hot glue.</p>	30
<p>7. Once the students have completed their work, take volunteers to share what they have made.</p> <p><u>Discussion Questions:</u></p> <p>Why is folk art important to communities?</p> <p><u>Vocabulary:</u> alebrijes, sculpture, Pedro Linares, Oaxaca, MX, folk art</p> <p><u>Additional Resources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find more about alebrijes at: https://www.amo-alebrijes.com/ 	10
<p><u>Check-Out/Closing Ritual:</u> Each student will check-out with one thing they learned in the class.</p>	5

PLANNING

REFLECTION

<u>Special Supplies Needed/Things to Prepare Ahead of Time</u>	<u>Challenges/Successes/Notes for Coordinator</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils</i> <i>Blank white paper</i> <i>Pencils</i> <i>Found Objects from Nature</i> <i>Computer with internet and projector/tv connection</i> <i>Acrylic Paints</i> <i>Paint Brushes</i> <i>Hot Glue</i> <i>Twine</i> 	

References

Adams, Arabella. "Alebrijes by Pedro Linares López." *Medium*, 7 May 2018. *medium.com*, https://medium.com/@aadams_68089/alebrijes-by-pedro-linares-l%C3%B3pez-b78edb6a6e17.

"Alebrijes." *COPAL*, <https://www.mexican-folk-art-guide.com/alebrijes.html#.XoOX8tZKgb0>. Accessed 31 Mar. 2020.

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"Alebrijes | Entretenimiento creativo y divertido para todos." *Amo Alebrijes*.

www.amo-alebrijes.com, <https://www.amo-alebrijes.com/>. Accessed 1 Apr. 2020.

Alebrijes: Surreal Oaxacan Folk Art - Chamizal National Memorial (U.S. National Park Service).

www.nps.gov, <https://www.nps.gov/cham/learn/historyculture/oaxacan-art.htm>.

Accessed 30 Mar. 2020.

"Uprooted Dreams." *Smithsonian Learning Lab*. learninglab.si.edu,

<https://learninglab.si.edu/collections/uprooted-dreams/uJPaDm0jec2nsa0L>. Accessed 1

Apr. 2020.

Supplemental Materials

“Pedro Linares and His Magical Alebrijes”

Habia una vez...

Once upon a time in Mexico, there was a 12-year-old boy named Pedro Linares, who worked making sculptures out of papier-mâché, or “*cartoneria*.” Like his father before him, Pedro began making masks, small figures, and skeletons from paper and glue.

Pedro wasn’t content with making these simple objects. He decided to stretch the craft far beyond the masks and small horses that his father had made to make pinatas that he sold in *mercados*, or markets, throughout the capitol, Mexico City. Expanding his papier-maché craft, he made skeletal figures called “*calaveras*” and pinatas honoring his client’s dead ancestors for Mexico’s *Día de Los Muertos* or Day of The Dead celebration November 1st and 2nd.

Years later at the age of thirty, Pedro became terribly ill one day con una fiebre, a fever. Not having access to medical attention, Pedro decided to lay in bed and rest. Soon after falling asleep, he dreamed of a forest that was strange yet peaceful at the same time. He saw a landscape where everything was bigger than in real life including oversized rocks and trees and an amazing sky. In the dream, Pedro didn’t feel the pain caused by the fever but rather he felt good as new. With newfound strength, Pedro walked through the paths of the bosques, or forests of his dream admiring the beautiful ambiente—environment. Suddenly, everything began to change shape. The clouds, rocks, and trees began to sprout arms, legs, and wings. These inanimate objects formed themselves into creatures that resembled animals yet were different than anything Pedro had seen in his young life.

Pedro saw “mules with dragonfly wings, roosters with antlers, creatures that resembled gryphons and dragons” and many others. They had brilliant colors and patterns covering their bodies. As these monstrous creatures began coming towards Linares, they began shouting the same word: “*Alebrijes, Alebrijes, Alebrijes!*” Pedro was afraid of these unusual and powerful beings that were repeating the same gibberish word over and over again. Pedro was unsure if the creatures were giving him a warning or threatening him harm. However, the noise of their chanting was tremendous, and it was so shocking that it caused him to wake-up.

When he awoke, his fever had subsided. The strange dream stayed with him and he decided to tell others what he had experienced. He made his way to his native land of Arrazola, Oaxaca in Mexico and he began using cartoneria to make the creatures that had come to him in his dream. Though he was a well-known artist, people were not eager to buy his new animal-like sculptures. At first people did not want to buy the alebrijes because they were too monstrous. However, Pedro’s work caught the eye of a gallery owner who helped to advertise his creations that were unlike anything already on the market. His work soon became popular and even renowned Mexican artists, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo began asking for *alebrijes* from Pedro.

After sharing his vision with the other artists in Arrazola, Manuel Jimenez took up the idea and began making the designs into vivid alebrijes. But, instead of using papier mâché, Manuel began making

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them out of copal wood. Wood carving was a tradition of the Native Zapotec peoples of Oaxaca and Jimenez merged the two styles to create the contemporary style of alebrijes we know today.

Linares did well at selling his work in Mexico and, but he received international fame after documentarian, Judith Bronowski made a film about his work in 1975 called *Pedro Linares: Artesano de Cartón*. This made Pedro famous throughout the world. In 1990, Pedro was even awarded the National Prize for Popular and Traditional Arts which, the highest award given to artists by the Mexican Government. Pedro Linares López passed away in 1992 at the age of 85 however his folk tradition of alebrijes are celebrated throughout Mexico and the world to this.

Pedro Linares and Manuel Jimenez's family continue the tradition of making alebrijes and the craft has become a national folk tradition. Many other artists such as Master Artesanos, Ranulfo Sergio Ibañes and Lucia Luria Sosa in Arrazola have also taken up the craft and begun to create their own unique designs and to teach others the artform. Now if you travel to Mexico you will see many other artists making alebrijes--each one very different than rest. Or to save a plane trip just come to the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center in Austin to see a permanent "Uprooted Dreams" an art installation that features over 19 individual alebrijes created by Austinites.