

MoNA

Museum of Northwest Art

Printmaking with José Guadalupe Posada

A HANDS-ON ART ACTIVITY
DESIGNED BY ANNE CHASE-
STAPLETON OF ANACORTES
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Materials

- *Skeletons as Artisans* and *La Calavera Catrina* by José Guadalupe Posada
- Video: The Power and Danger of Good Political Cartoons
- Pencils
- Scrap paper
- Styrofoam blocks/pieces
- Ballpoint pens
- Printing ink
- Printing plates (to roll ink on)
- Rollers
- White paper to print on (cardstock works well)

Age: Eighth Grade

Lesson Duration: Three to four hours

Subjects: Art, Social Studies, & Anatomy



Educator example

Source: Museum of Northwest Art

Description

During this activity, students will learn about the history of political cartoons and the process of mass printing. Using the political cartoons of José Guadalupe Posada as inspiration, students will make their own prints that express an idea.

Instructions

- 1)** Introduce students to political cartoons by showing them the attached video: The Power and Danger of Good Political Cartoons.
- 2)** Next, show students the pieces *Skeletons as Artisans* and *La Calavera Catrina* by José Posada and use VTS (Visual Thinking Strategies) to study the work.
 - VTS is an inquiry-based method of facilitating discussion. Tips and resources on VTS and a biography of the artist are included at the end of this lesson.
 - Encourage students to find visual symbols in this work.
- 3)** Pass out scrap paper and pencils. Students will now begin to make their own cartoons. It may be helpful to lead a brainstorming session to get them started and/or have them pair share their ideas about visual symbols they want to use.
 - Remind students that their designs will be reflected once they print them off the styrofoam blocks, so they will need to keep that in mind if they decide to use letters or words in their designs.
- 4)** After finishing their drawings, students will draw their final designs onto the styrofoam using a ballpoint pen.
 - Remind students that the parts that are not indented with the ballpoint pen will show up as the color ink they choose when they stamp their designs.
- 5)** Once students have finished drawing their designs on the styrofoam, help them squirt a small amount of ink onto the printing plate and use the ink roller to spread the ink across the printing plate. The ink will work best if it is rolled in two different directions (up-down and side-side) until the ink stands up in tiny peaks.
- 6)** Once the ink has been spread on the printing plate, students can use the roller to cover the entire surface of the drawn-on side of the styrofoam.
- 7)** Students will then press the design firmly onto the printing paper and use a clean roller or their entire body weight to make a strong imprint, before lifting to reveal their designs.
- 8)** When students have finished prints, allow them time to share their designs.

Relevant Vocabulary

- ✓ Visual symbols
- ✓ Printmaking
- ✓ Propaganda
- ✓ Political cartoons
- ✓ Anatomy
- ✓ Negative and positive space



Learning and State Standards

Fulfills **Washington State Arts Learning Standards:**

- **VA:Cr2.1.8** (Demonstrate willingness to experiment, innovate, and take risks to pursue ideas, forms, and meanings that emerge in the process of art-making or designing)
- **VA:Cr2.3.8** (Select, organize, and design images and words to make visually clear and compelling presentations)

Visual Thinking Strategies

MoNA's Education programs utilize Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), which is a research-based teaching method that promotes aesthetic development, including critical thinking and communication skills. Here in the MoNA, we use VTS to engage students and general visitors with art, encouraging them to observe closely, think critically and discuss respectfully; however, VTS can be effectively used across curricula. This approach teaches its participants how to take the time to observe closely, describe what they see in detail and provide evidence for their observations. Students learn that their reflections and thoughts are valued and appreciated in this inclusive teaching method.

In order to facilitate a VTS discussion, you first encourage viewers to take a quiet moment to observe the work you are going to explore. Then you ask the following questions and paraphrase the responses without adding any of your own judgements. You can insert additional vocabulary and point to specific parts of the artwork.

What's going on in this picture?

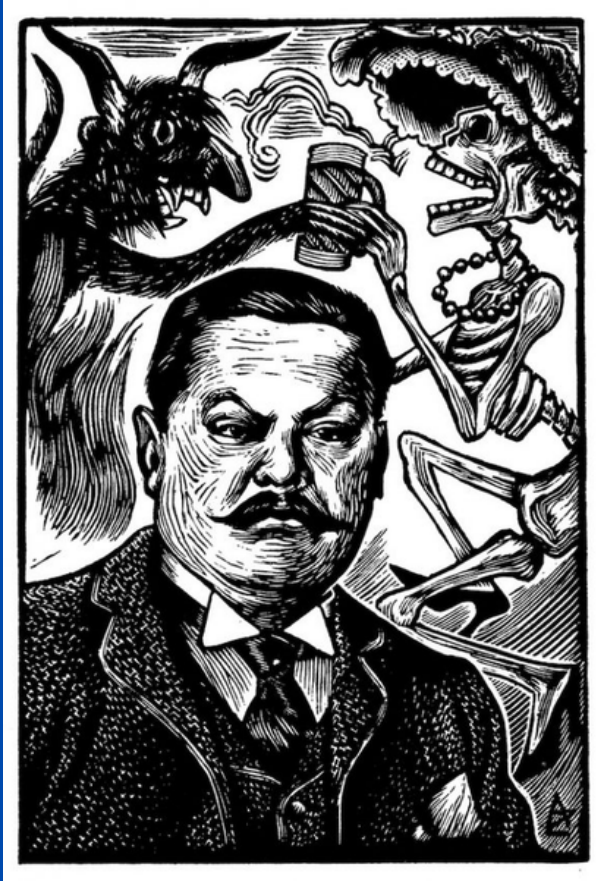
What do you see that makes you say...?

What more can you find?

Visual Thinking Strategy Links

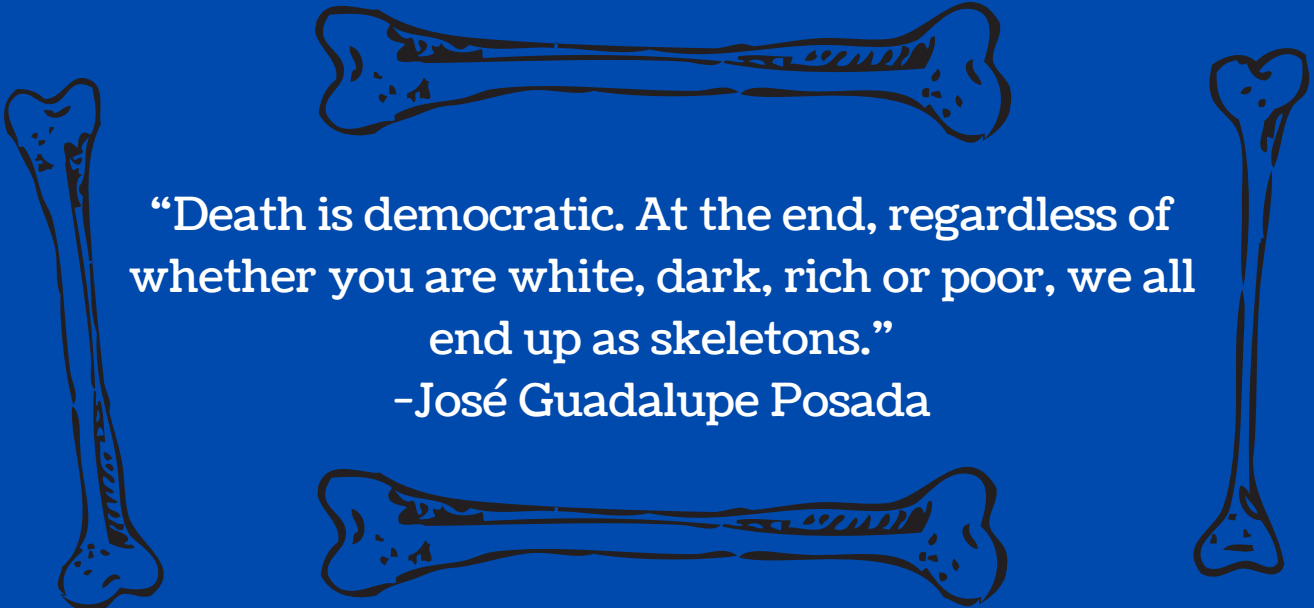
If you are interested in learning more about VTS, [here is their website](#). If you already know and love VTS, but want help finding great images to use in your classroom, here is a [fantastic gallery](#). You can also visit this website for additional resources: www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators

About the Artist: José Guadalupe Posada



José Guadalupe Posada
Image Credit: Ángel Zamarripa

José Guadalupe Posada was a Mexican artist and lithographer from Aguascalientes, Mexico. He began his artistic education as a child, learning from his older siblings. When he grew to be a teenager, he became an apprentice under José Pedroza, who taught him engraving and lithography. Posada is remembered for his political and satirical cartoons, often featuring skeletons. His most famous work is the *La Calavera Catrina*, which later became a symbol of Día de los Muertos.



“Death is democratic. At the end, regardless of whether you are white, dark, rich or poor, we all end up as skeletons.”

–José Guadalupe Posada



Skeletons as Artisans, José Guadalupe Posada
Image Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art



CALavera CATRINA

La Calavera Catrina, José Guadalupe Posada

Image Credit: Wikipedia