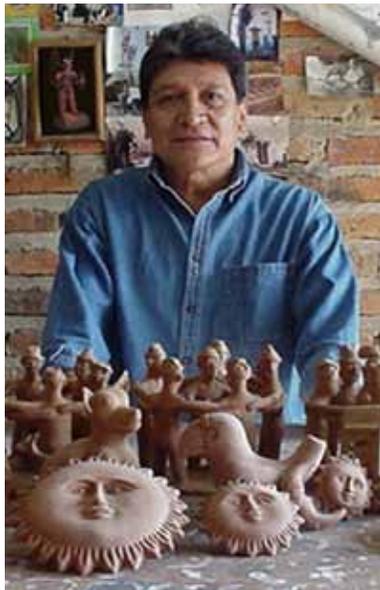


# Bringing Mexico to Your Community!

Margaritas Restaurants concept is based on bringing Mexico to New England. Upon entering our restaurants you are surrounded with the art and atmosphere of Mexico. We make frequent trips to local artist communities in Mexico in search of authentic hand-carved furniture, folk art and décor for each Margaritas restaurant. During those trips we come in contact with many talented artisans. We have a wonderful way to share that experience with our community. We invite Mexican artists into our restaurants and local schools! This provides a unique opportunity for us to share our knowledge of Mexico, and for the community to meet outstanding Mexican folk artists. The artists share their techniques, lecture on life in present day Mexico and provide an interactive experience for students and teachers.



## Visiting Artist-Pablo Paredes Tlaquepaque, Jalisco



Pablo Paredes is a ceramic artist from Tlaquepaque, Mexico. He comes from a family of artisans famous for their traditional figures depicting Mexican rural village life. The region where he lives, in the state of Jalisco, is known for a variety of ceramic styles that are produced using the techniques passed down from generations within craft families.

Pablo will be traveling with his wife Enriqueta, and together they will be demonstrating techniques used to create the ancient art of the Olmec and Aztec civilizations. The program follows the progress of ceramic sculpture from ancient times to present day folk art traditions which feature

their famous figurines. Pablo is a multiple winner of national craft competitions sponsored by FONART, Mexico's national folk art foundation. His nacimientos (Nativity figures) are part of the permanent collection at the Basilica de la Virgen de Guadalupe in Mexico City. Pablo has toured throughout Mexico, Spain and the United States in exhibitions that feature contemporary and traditional crafts from Jalisco, Mexico. In addition to his skill as an artist, Pablo is also the Craft Fair Coordinator for the Folk Art Institute of Jalisco, Mexico.



# Ceramic Sculpture in Central Mexico



Olmec Colossal Head



Pre Classic Figure



Mask (Teotihuacan)

Since the appearance of the Olmec culture, considered to be the “mother of the Mesoamerican cultures”, ceramics took a prevailing place in the lives of the Mexican people. The earthenware vessels, anthropomorphic figures, and various types of utensils found in the archaeological ruins of the ancient Olmec cities suggest the techniques used in their ceramics: the use of clay, the knowledge of some primitive firing techniques, their means of coloring and painting designs. The Olmecs transcended their era (1500 B.C. –800 A.D) and bequeathed their knowledge to the cultures that flourished after them.



Aztec Figure



Group Scene from Colima

The Teotihuacans (100 B.C. – 800 A.D.) prepared the majority of their vessels with clay and decorated them with a variety of techniques: mainly stucco, painting, and smoothing. The pottery of the Aztecs (1325 A.D. – 1521 A.D.) was extremely varied. They made all types of earthenware, plates, jugs, cups, pots, mostly with red and orange clay. The ancient techniques employed to make ceramics are still used today – mostly in the rural parts of Mexico.

When the Spaniards arrived, the blending of societies allowed the indigenous people to learn new techniques, and the combination of styles gave life to some of the more famous ceramic styles of Mexican earthenware. Mexican ceramics bring together the influences of pre-Hispanic, European, Arabic and Oriental cultures. Whatever technique is used, Mexican ceramics have an individuality and charm that is appreciated for its art and quality worldwide.



Modern Replica “Circle of Friends”



Modern Figurative Sculpture from Tlaquepaque

# Ceramic Sculpture in Tlaquepaque

The name Tlaquepaque is derived from the Nahuatl\* word *Tlalipác*, which means *lugar sobre lomas de barro*, “place on hills of clay”. The inhabitants of present day Tlaquepaque can be traced back to pre-Hispanic times. The crafts produced can be attributed to the tribes that existed at that time, controlled by the Aztec empire. The abundance of very good quality clay in the soil has allowed the ceramic arts to flourish in the region. The arrival of the European culture changed the format of ceramic sculpture. The pre-Hispanic deities were replaced the Christian symbols. Ingenious artisans began depicting figures of people carrying out their everyday activities. In a sense they were documenting and celebrating their lives and preserving a tradition that to this day flourishes. Musicians, potters, water carriers, fruit vendors, woodcutters, etc., became the subjects for clay artists.

During the Spanish Conquest, the Christian religion was brought to the New World and played a part in influencing ceramic figures and designs. The first evangelists taught with Pastoral Plays, representing the birth of the Christ child, with characters representing villagers as integral parts of the play. These *Pastorelas* are still played out using masks and costumes throughout Mexico and the Hispanic southwest in the United States.

Nativity scenes, or *nacimientos* as they are known in Spanish, are sculpted from clay. The figures are portrayed as dark skinned villagers adopting the native dress of the region. The wise men and shepherds are all *compesinos*, or farmers. *Viejitos*, or old people, are displayed with these scenes as well, in order to pay homage to ones ancestry and heritage.

Figures of the devil in the human form are also made to represent the coexistence of evil in the world of everyday activities. This iconography representing the duality and coexistence of good and evil is also carried over from pre-Hispanic beliefs.



The clay figures are made entirely by hand. The clay material must first be prepared and kneaded to the right consistency and plasticity. The figures are sculpted by joining different pieces to form the character. The finished sculpture is dried in the sun and then fired in a kiln to a temperature of 1500°F. Finally acrylic paints are mixed to reveal tones and colors and are applied with home-made brushes made from cat, dog or squirrel hair. (Store bought brushes are used nowadays.)

This tradition is maintained to this day. The techniques are inherited from family members and the characters represented are passed down from past generations. In Tlaquepaque the ceramic sculptors that make these realistic figures are known as *moneros*. A *mono* is a Spanish expression used in Mexico to describe a figure representing a person or animal.

\*Nahuatl- Language of the Aztec civilization

Translated from Pablo Paredes

# Artist Presentation

On the day of the visit, Pablo will demonstrate how to sculpt lifelike figures using low-fire clay. He will also demonstrate how molds are used to form the figures. He will be working with the same kind of clay available to school art teachers. His wife Enriqueta will demonstrate how to paint the delicate and detailed features using brightly colored acrylic paints. Throughout the day as students watch the artists work, all phases of the processes will be shown. A display of crafts from their family workshop will be exhibited to show the variety of work.

A video portraying scenes from Jalisco, Mexico will also be shown. The images reveal the activities in the daily lives of Mexican people. The purpose of this day long visit is to expose students to Mexican culture. They will be presented with many facets of life in present day Mexico. This experience will allow students to meet and talk with Mexican artisans. The program is designed to integrate with various school curricula to impact the widest student population. Students studying Spanish, art, world cultures and social studies will be enthralled with this unique opportunity to visit with these “cultural ambassadors”.

At the end of the day, Pablo and Enriqueta will present a finished sculpture to the school. This will remain as a lasting symbol of the special experience with the artists from Mexico. The artists’ presence in one day, illuminates and stimulates both students and staff alike.

All sessions will be led by Pat Picciano, the translator for Pablo and Enriqueta’s visit. Pat has led numerous presentations on Latin American craft. Over the past 25 years he has visited schools, universities, museums and libraries allowing thousands of people to observe and marvel at skilled artisans as they demonstrate their unique talents. Pat is the Education Outreach Coordinator for Margaritas Mexican Restaurants.



Pablo and Enriqueta at their workshop in Tlaquepaque.



Hands-on workshop with students.

# Student Activities

- \* Consult school librarian for books about Mexico and folk art.
- \* Spend class time studying Mexico.
- \* Have students identify Spanish words they may know.
- \* Learn some Spanish words or greetings.
- \* Discuss some of the differences between the United States and Mexico
- \* Discuss activities involved when traveling to other countries.
- \* On the day of the artist's visit, observe the display of crafts.
- \* Prepare questions for the artist(s).

## SITE PREPARATION FOR GUEST ARTIST

\* Provide a suitable space for artist(s) and exhibit, such as a multi-purpose room, large classroom or open area to accommodate 50-75 students(or more). This is for all Lecture/Demonstrations

- \* Provide a table 2' x 8' and 3 chairs
- \* Schedule no more than (5) 45 minute sessions (4 hours total contact time)
- \* You may videotape all activities for future references



# Topics for Discussion

**FOLK ART**- Folk art refers to art that is created within a community or region reflecting local or generational experiences. Often the techniques and traditions are passed on from one member of the family to the other. Many of the crafts produced by folk artists include wood carving, ceramics, basket-making, weaving, embroidery, metalwork, etc.

- Can you give some examples of crafts or folk art you've seen?
- What are some of the ways of learning a craft?
- Have you seen hand made crafts from Mexico before? Where?

**MEXICO**- Mexico is a colorful country inhabited for centuries by ancient civilizations. Since the arrival of the Spanish, the country has blended ancient rituals with European traditions. The present day country reflects the combination of those two influences.

- What are some examples of Mexican culture that you can identify?
- Even though we share a common border with Mexico, why do you think our countries are so different?
- In what ways has Mexican culture influenced our own?

**MEXICAN VILLAGE LIFE**- As you might know, much of Mexico is still rural with many cultural ties to its ancient past. The more isolated the village, the more traditional customs prevail. Agriculture, family and religion dominant activities in many small villages throughout Mexico.

- Can you locate Mexico on a map? The state of Jalisco?
- How does climate and terrain affect life in Mexico?
- How is village life in the United States different from Mexico?

**MEXICAN PEOPLE**- Up until the arrival of Europeans, the western hemisphere was inhabited by indigenous, cultures. Many great civilizations flourished in what is present day Mexico. The Aztec and Mayan people are the most well known. Our artists' ancestors lived in a region dominated by the Aztec culture.

- How far back can you trace your family?
- What are some Native American tribes in the United States? What Native American tribe lived in your area?
- Can you identify Native American contributions to our culture?

**MULTICULTURALISM**- This program is based on the exploration into the life and traditions of another culture. American society is made up of people from various cultural origins. The guest artists will also reveal that their cultural origins are equally diverse.

- Why is it important to learn about other cultures?
- Can you trace the cultural origins in your family?
- What might be some reasons for cultures to mix and influence each other?

# Circle of Friends



Visiting Artist-Pablo Paredes, recreates the ancient sculpture with clay depicting *danzantes* in a circle during his Artist in Residence at Margaritas.

The Circle of Friends sculpture can be traced back over a thousand years, and are still made not far from Guadalajara in the west coast state of Jalisco. The early tribes that lived in the area produced clay sculptures depicting ceremonial dances and rituals. Archeologists have uncovered rare cylindrical pyramids, Guachimontones near the town of Teuchitlán where these dances took place. Based on artifacts and codices uncovered at the ruins, scholars believe that large groups of people danced around the circular structures arm in arm at special times of the year. Why the circle? In Mexico the sun has long been the focus for ancient religions and cultures, most famous is the Aztec calendar carved in a circular stone. Hence the sun and circular structures were built to honor the life source for Meso-American cultures.

The language of the Aztecs, *Nahuatl*, is still prominent in many words and towns in central Mexico. Much of Margaritas décor comes from two craft centered towns in Jalisco; Tlaquepaque and Tonalá. The name Tlaquepaque is derived from the *Nahuatl* word *Tlalipác*-which means place of clay hills. Traditional and contemporary craft families still flourish in Tlaquepaque only 20 minutes from downtown Guadalajara. Not far away is the town of Tonalá-another name derived from the *Nahuatl* language, and means “land where the sun rises”. It is in this region where the Circle of Friends are still made from locally mined clay. In Mexico the sculptures are called *Danzantes*, or dancers.

Guachimontones is an unusual site. Its pyramids are round, a feature unique compared to other pyramids in Mexico. Archaeologists label this culture the Teuchitlan tradition for the town of the same name near Guachimontones. Its cultural and economic high points were probably reached 200-400 AD, though people lived here as early as 1000 BC, and people continued to live here afterward.



## VOCABULARY

artesanía- folk art, craft  
alfarero- ceramic artist  
horno- kiln  
barro- clay  
leña- firewood  
pintura- paint  
figura- figure  
herramienta- tool  
cuerpo- body  
ojo- eye  
boca- mouth  
nariz- nose  
mano- hand  
pierna- leg  
pie- foot  
brazo- arm  
dedo- finger, toe  
comida- food  
frijoles- beans  
tortillas- ground corn patty  
campo- field  
campesino- field worker, farmer

maestro- teacher, master craftsman  
alumno- student  
pueblo- village, people  
hijos- children in the same family  
niño- child  
muchacho- boy  
muchacha- girl  
toro- bull  
casa- house  
mesa- table  
taller- workshop

Buenos días- Good morning  
Buenas tardes- Good afternoon  
Como está Usted?- How are you?  
Que pasa?- What's happening?  
De donde viene Usted?- Where are you from?  
Hasta luego- Until then; later  
Hasta la vista- See you later



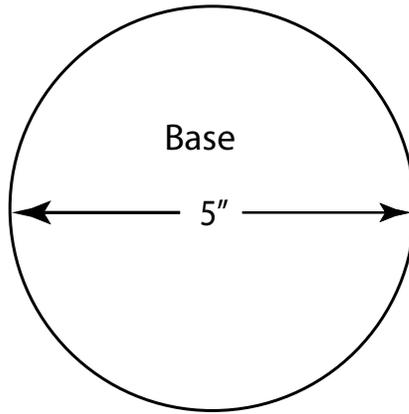
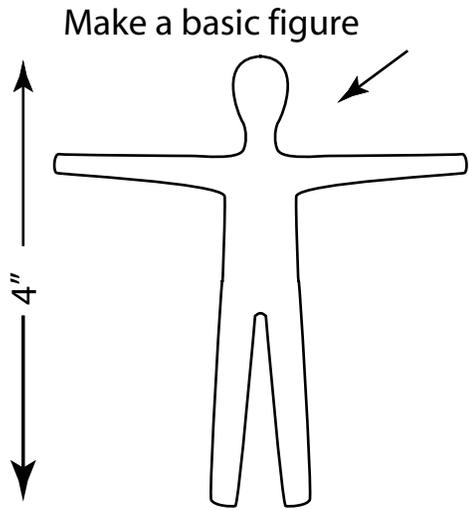
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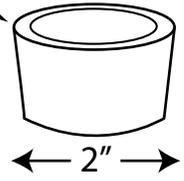
Sayer, Cloe. The Arts and Crafts of Mexico. San Francisco. Chronicle Books. 1990



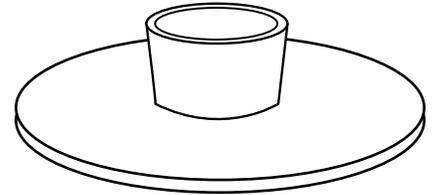
# Circle of Friends Workshop



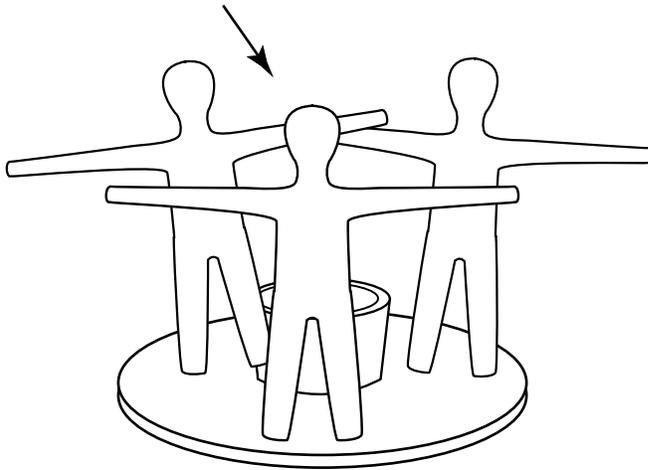
Holder for candle



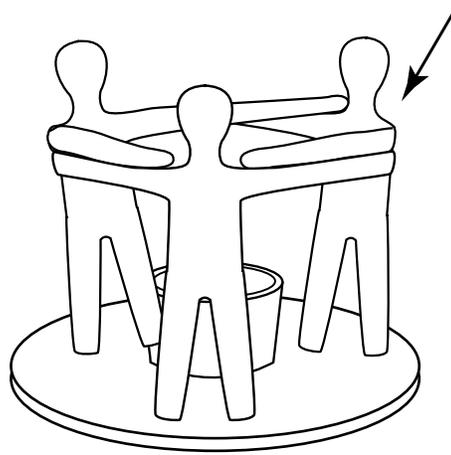
Holder attached to base



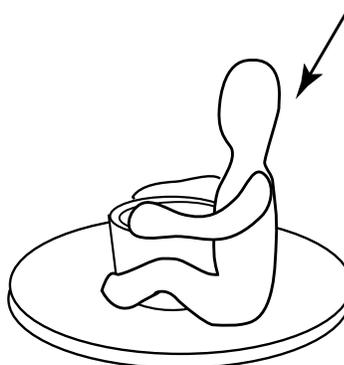
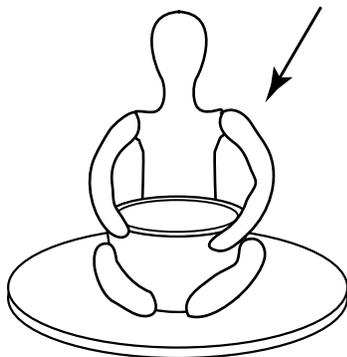
Figures attached to base



Arms are attached to each other



Seated figure sitting around the candle holder



# Taller de Rondas de Danzantes

