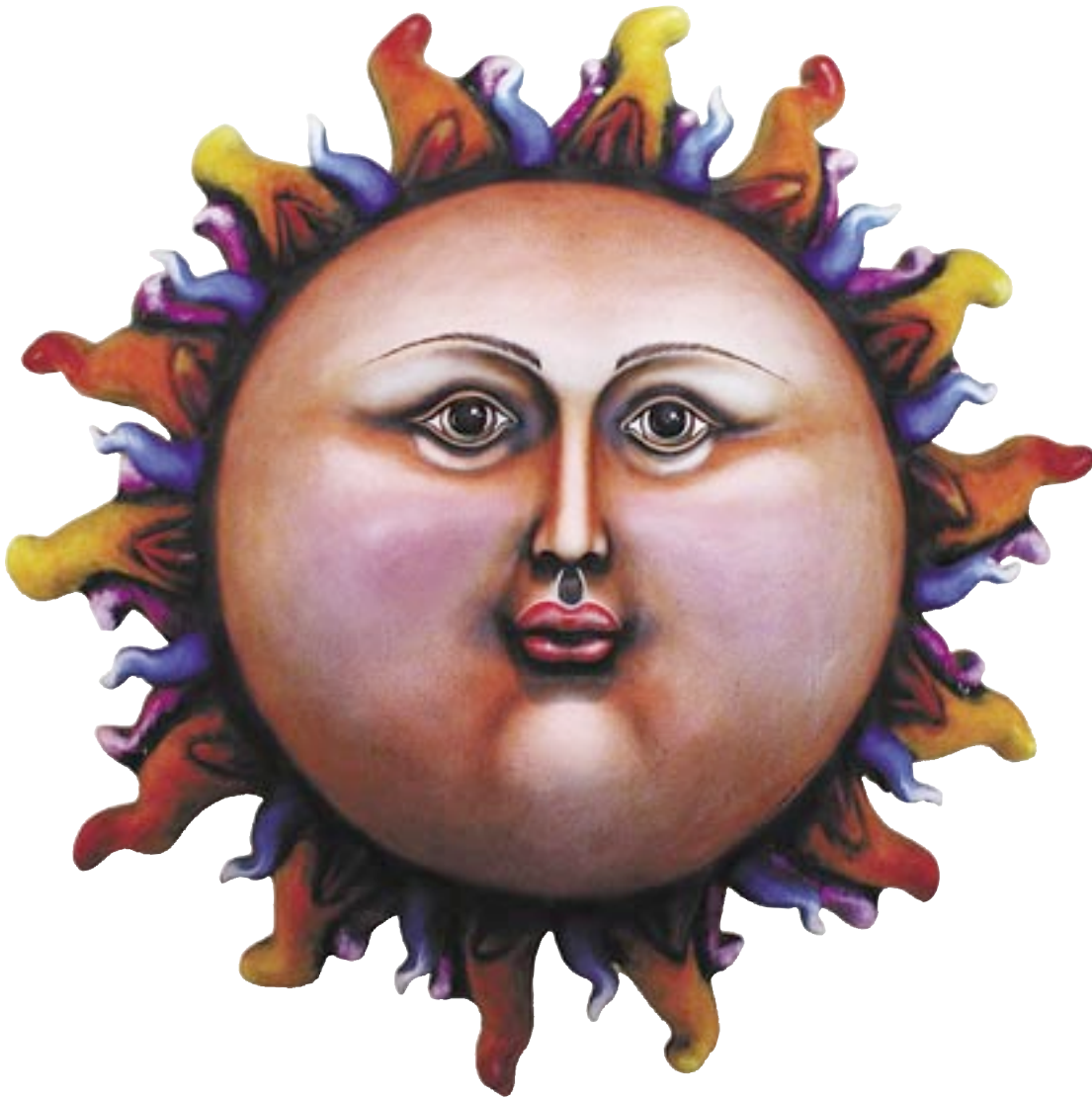


# CarlosAlbert

Contemporary Craft from Tlaquepaque, Mexico

## Study Guide



Welcome to a world of fantasy, imagination, humor and color...all combined in these delightfully whimsical figures by Carlos Muñoz and Albert Ickenroth. Albert is a native Dutchman, where he studied art and culture as a youth, became enamored of the great masters, and ultimately discovered his talent for working in papier mâché, bronze and copper. In the mid-1970's he vacationed in Mexico and was fascinated by the people, culture, colors and wildlife. He returned on a more permanent basis and met Carlos Muñoz, a native Mexican who also studied art. The two began working together as the Carlos-Albert team in 1990, creating life-size and larger animals in ceramics as well as papier mâché.



Twelve years later, many of the apprentice artisans who went to work with Carlos and Albert at the inception of their business are still with them today. When you tour the studio there is an atmosphere of positive energy and joy in the work environment that is reflected in the creation of their art. Each original figurine is one of a limited edition of 150, meticulously hand painted and signed by the artists. They add warmth and expression to homes throughout the world, and inspire the hearts of children and adults alike.



Carlo Muñoz with oversized papier mâché parrot in the Tlaquepaque workshop.



Albert Ickenroth (on right) and mayor of Tlaquepaque Antonio Alvarez H., present a moose sculpture to New Hampshire Governor Jeane Shaheen during NH Trade Mission trip to Mexico 2002.



Cesar and Erica in their studio.

Cesar Velazquez and Erica Corona have been working with CarlosAlbert for over 6 six years. This married couple comes from folk art families, in fact, Erica is the great grand-daughter of Panteleón Panduro, the famous figurine sculptor whose work has spun off many ceramic workshops. Cesar and Erica have worked in the studios of Sergio Bustamante, whom many consider the catalyst for the fusion of traditional folk art with contemporary craft in Tlaquepaque, Mexico. These 2 exceptionally talented artists will be sharing sculpture, mold making and painting techniques during their visit to the United States. They will be casting their sculptures with papier mâché and painting with acrylic paints.



Papier mâché hummingbird figure.



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## Tlaquepaque, Mexico



The name Tlaquepaque is derived from the Nahuatl\* word *Tlalipác*, which means “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-Columbian deities were replaced by 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 carriers, woodcutters, etc., became the subjects for clay artists.

Although ceramic figures along with utilitarian pottery flourished for centuries, many other craft traditions have been developed as well. Present day Tlaquepaque is the home to traditional and contemporary craftsmen. The close proximity to Guadalajara, the capital of the state Jalisco, provides the town with a continuous source of innovative art trends combined with traditional Mexican style crafts. Papier mache figures began appearing on the scene in the early seventies. Sergio Bustamante, one of the original founders



of the “Family Workshop Studio” began the renaissance of contemporary craft exhibited throughout Tlaquepaque. The familiar parrots and iguanas from life-size to gigantic figures are the trademarks from this early movement. Now wood workers, jewelers and painters exhibit their works in galleries throughout the town. What was once a sleepy village on the outskirts of Guadalajara is now a destination for art collectors and tourists.



Our artists, Cesar Velazquez and Erica Corona work creating and painting ceramic and papier mâché figures.

Erica is also able to paint finely detailed papier mâché jewelry. Both artists work under the direction of Carlos Muñoz and Albert Ikenroth. The owners of the studio known as CarlosAlbert. Along with their studios located in Tlaquepaque; they maintain retail stores in Puerto Vallarta, Cancún and Tlaquepaque. Their web site is [www.carlosalbert.com.mx](http://www.carlosalbert.com.mx)

Nahuatl- Language of the Aztec civilization



## Artist Presentation

On the day of the visit, Cesar will demonstrate how to sculpt lifelike figures using low-fire clay and/or plasticine. He will also demonstrate how to make a mold from the original figure. His wife Erica 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 the CarlosAlbert studio will be exhibited to show the variety of work produced from this craft center in Mexico. Hands on workshops with the artists are also available, (please schedule in advance).

A video portraying scenes from Jalisco, Mexico will also be shown. The images reveal the lives and activities of present day Mexican people. The purpose of this day long visit is to expose students to this unique country. They will be presented with many facets of life in Mexico. This experience will allow them 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, Cesar and Erica will present a finished sculpture to the school. This will remain as a lasting symbol of these unique artists from Mexico, whose presence in one day challenges, enlivens and stimulates those who come in contact with them.

All sessions will be led by Pat Picciano, the sponsor and translator for Cesar and Ericas visit. Pat has led numerous presentations on Latin American craft. Over the past 15 years he has visited schools, universities, museums and libraries allowing thousands of people to observe and marvel at these talented artisans as they demonstrate their unique talents.



Various animal and bird heads greet visitors in the workshop. The animal sculptures featured in the Rainforest Café are also made in the CarlosAlbert workshop.

## 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 .

## MATERIALS FOR HANDS ON WORKSHOP

Wheat paste, cardboard.

Masking tape, newspaper, brown craft paper(brown paper shopping bags).

Plastic shopping bags.

## SITE PREPARATION FOR GUEST ARTIST

- \* Provide a suitable space for artists' 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 6' and 3 chairs
- \* Schedule no more than 5 45 minute sessions(4 hours total contact time)
- \* You may videotape all activities for future references

## **SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION-**

**FOLK ART-** Art work that is created within a community or region reflecting local or generational experiences, often the techniques and traditions are passed on from one generation to the other. Many of the crafts produced by folk artists include wood carving, ceramics, basket making, weaving, embroidery, metalwork, papier mâché, 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 ritual with European tradition. The present day country reflects the combination of these 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 of many small villages throughout Mexico.

- Can you locate Mexico on a map? 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?



## VOCABULARY

artesanía- folk art, craft  
papel- paper  
tijeras- scissors  
cinta- tape  
mesa- table  
pintura- paint  
figura- figure  
herramienta- tool  
cuerpo- body  
ojo- eye  
boca- mouth  
nariz- nose  
comida- food  
frijoles- beans  
tortillas- ground corn patty  
campo- field  
campesino- field worker  
maestro- teacher, master craftsman  
alumno- student

pueblo- village, people  
hijos- children in the same family  
niño- child  
muchacho- boy  
muchacha- girl  
toro- bull  
machete- large heavy knife  
casa- house

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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