

Celebrating with Collage

Exploring Traditions and the Work of Marcelina Gonzales

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What traditions do you have in your life and how do you choose to celebrate them?

What can we learn from our own traditions and the traditions of others?

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- **Identify** a tradition celebrated by their family, friends, and/or culture
- **Understand** the significance of celebrating traditions
- **Connect** artwork to their own knowledge and experiences
- **Create** an artwork depicting a tradition that is personal to them

AGES

Elementary School
Grades 4–5

DURATION

1–2 Hours



Before you Begin

MATERIALS

Scissors, pencil and eraser, pen, construction paper, cardstock, glue stick or quick-drying liquid glue, markers, colored pencils, crayons, miscellaneous collage items (yarn, foil, magazine pages, crepe paper, etc.)

PROCEDURES

1. Explore the concept of traditions and discuss Gonzales' artwork 15–30 minutes
2. Create artworks 45–60 minutes
3. Close with group discussion 15–30 minutes

ADAPTATION FOR OLDER/YOUNGER ARTISTS

Variations in materials can be made to accommodate a wide range of age groups and accessibility levels. Paper can be torn rather than cut to remove the need for scissors; or, for more advanced learners, materials such as Mod Podge or X-Acto knives can be incorporated to allow for greater precision in cutting and layering.

This activity could also facilitate an arts-based research project. Task students with learning about a new tradition that interests them. Students will use their collaged images as a method to creatively synthesize what they have learned to share with their classmates. Guiding questions may include an emphasis on finding art historical references to traditions and celebrations, or may be used as an opportunity to incorporate contemporary artists into the curriculum.

EXAMPLES

This blog post highlighting the celebration of Fat Tuesday

metmuseum.org/blogs/in-circulation/2016/fat-tuesday

This exhibition highlighting traditions of oral history, indigenous crafts and ceremony

seattleartmuseum.org/pacific-currents-billabong-dreams

Before you Begin

TEKS STANDARDS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills)

§117.114.b1A — Explore and communicate ideas drawn from life experiences about self, peers, family, school, or community and from the imagination as sources for original works of art

§117.114.b2 — Creative expression. The student communicates ideas through original artworks using a variety of media with appropriate skills. The student expresses thoughts and ideas creatively while challenging the imagination, fostering reflective thinking, and developing disciplined effort and progressive problem-solving skills

§117.114.b3A — Compare content in artworks for various purposes such as the role art plays in reflecting life, expressing emotions, telling stories, or documenting history and traditions

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Tiempo del vals at Sunrise Mall by Marcelina Gonzales was featured in the exhibition *Between Two Worlds* at the Visual Arts Center in Fall 2020. This exhibition brought together twelve contemporary artists whose identities and practices have been shaped by their unique lived experiences on the Texas–Mexico border.

Learn more about *Between Two Worlds*:

utvac.org/event/between-two-worlds

View a conversation between the artist and the curator:

utvac.org/event/virtual-studio-visit-marcelina-gonzales

More artwork by Marcelina Gonzales can be found on her website:

marcelinagonzalesart.com

Exploring Traditions

ENGAGING QUESTIONS

What do you think a tradition is? How do you think something becomes a tradition? Can you think of an example of a tradition?

What traditions have you experienced? What traditions have you seen others celebrate? What made them feel special?

DESCRIPTION OF TRADITION

Traditions can be many different things, big or small. It could be something that takes place in your culture, in your family, with a friend, or even something you do on your own. Either way, a tradition is something that you celebrate the same way every time. Maybe you go to the same family member's house each year for a special holiday. Maybe you and a friend have the same thing for lunch every time you see each other. Maybe you and your pet have a tradition of going for the same walk every night. Think about what a tradition might look like in your life. The more you think about it, the more ideas might come to mind.

Introducing the Artwork

Share image on page 6

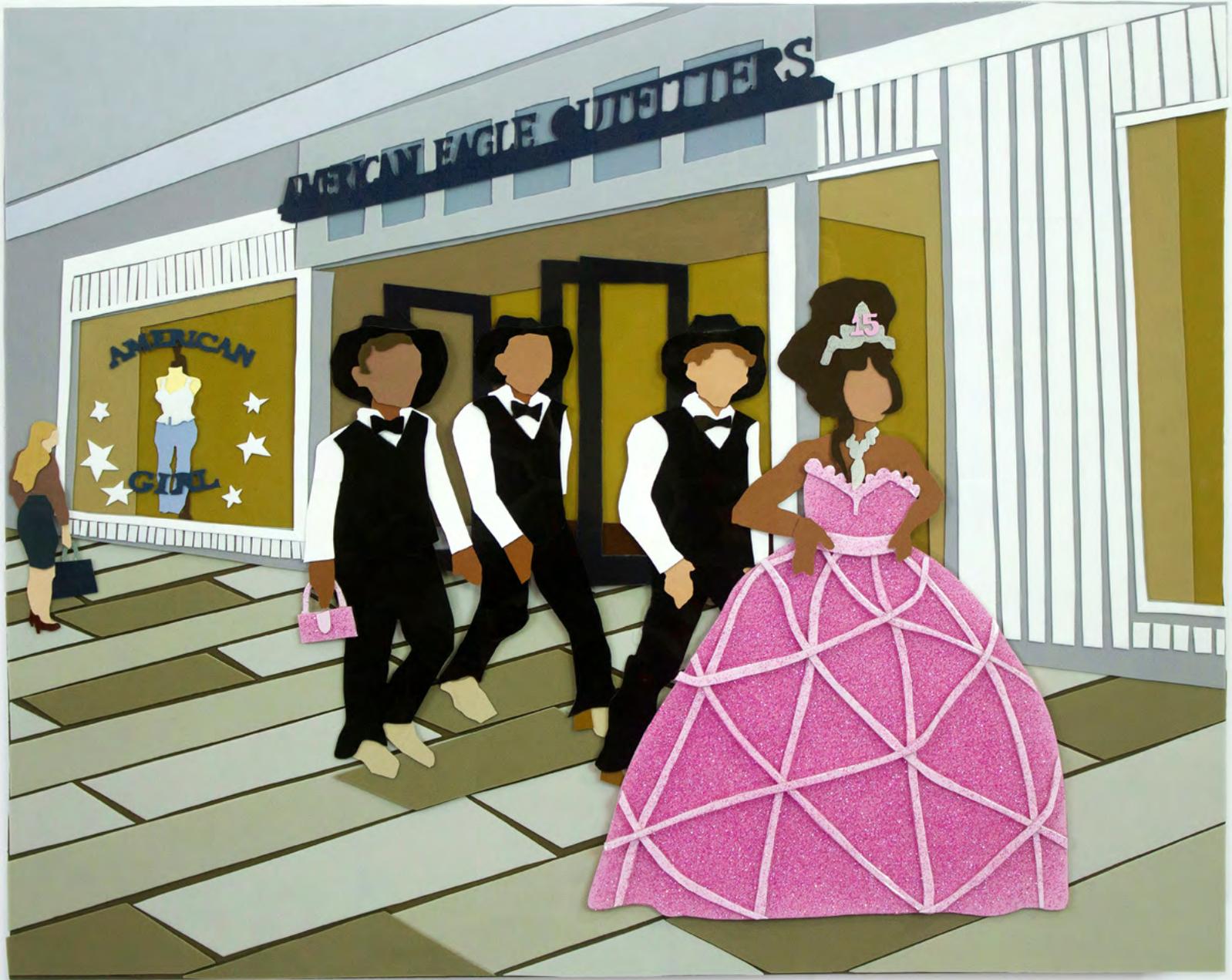
GUIDING LOOKING QUESTIONS

What do you notice about the artwork?

What do you think is happening in this image?

What clues do you see that could help us understand the idea or message the artist is trying to communicate?

Why do you think the artist chose this subject matter? What makes you think this?



Describing the Artwork

Share images on pages 8/9

Tiempo del vals at Sunrise Mall is a work of art by Marcelina Gonzales. This piece depicts a young woman in a sparkling pink dress, jewelry, and tiara. She is accompanied by three figures who walk behind her in formal clothes as she leads the way through a shopping mall. This image shows us the Latin American tradition of the quinceañera, the celebration of a young woman's fifteenth birthday. As part of the tradition, the birthday girl will walk in a public space with her friends and family in her colorful quinceañera dress.

GUIDING CONTENT QUESTIONS

Have you ever seen or experienced a quinceañera?

If so, what was it like?

If not, have you experienced a similar tradition?



Villasana, D. (n.d.). [online image of Lorena, her nephew, and chambelanes]. Mashable.
mashable.com/2017/09/01/zues-de-la-vega-quinceanera-dresses



Gonzalez, M. (2016). [online image of Lucero performing a traditional quinceañera dance]. New York Times. [nytimes.com/2016/06/05/nyregion/the-quinceanera-a-rite-of-passage-in-transition.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/05/nyregion/the-quinceanera-a-rite-of-passage-in-transition.html)

Describing the Method

[Share image on page 11](#)

The artist Marcelina Gonzales used a technique called *collage* to create this image. A close-up image lets us see the details and materials used more clearly. A collage can be made from many different kinds of materials, layered together to create an entirely new image.

GUIDING METHOD QUESTIONS

Have you ever made a collage?

If yes, what did you make? What materials did you use? What was most challenging about this method?

If no, what is most exciting to you about making art with collage? How does it seem different from other methods you've used?



Creating Artworks

For this activity, have students think about a few traditions that are special to them and choose one to depict in their collage.

Using gathered art materials and the step-by-step instructions on the following pages, have the students create their own personal collage in the style of Marcelina Gonzales.

Art-Making Instructions

The example we are using today shows a special family tradition. In the image, two sisters sit in a field of tulips with purple hills in the landscape behind them. The sisters visit the tulip fields in their hometown every spring, and it has become a tradition that they enjoy celebrating together!



Art-Making Instructions

STEP 1

Brainstorm

What traditions have you celebrated in the past?

What traditions have you seen others celebrate?

Create a list of all the traditions you can think of. Then choose your favorite. This will be the tradition you use for your collage!



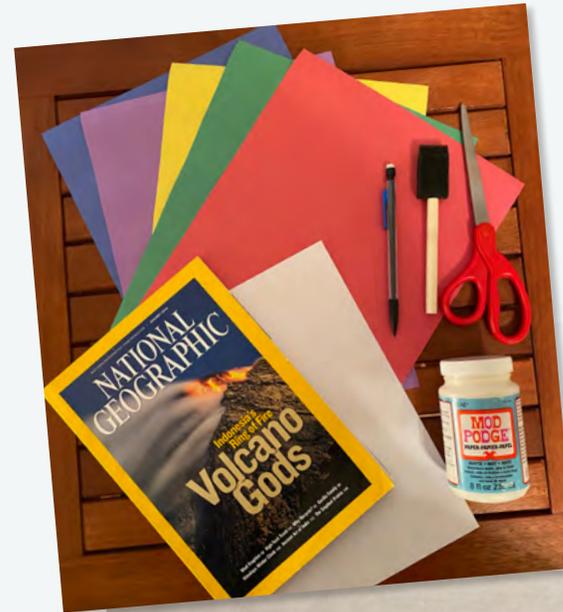
Art-Making Instructions

STEP 2

Gather your supplies

Once you have your idea, it's time to start gathering your supplies. You can have lots of different options, but for now you can get started with a piece of paper and a pencil.

On your piece of paper, draw a sketch of what you would like your collage to look like. This is where you get to plan how your final collage will look—so take your time and make as many sketches as you like until you are happy with it.



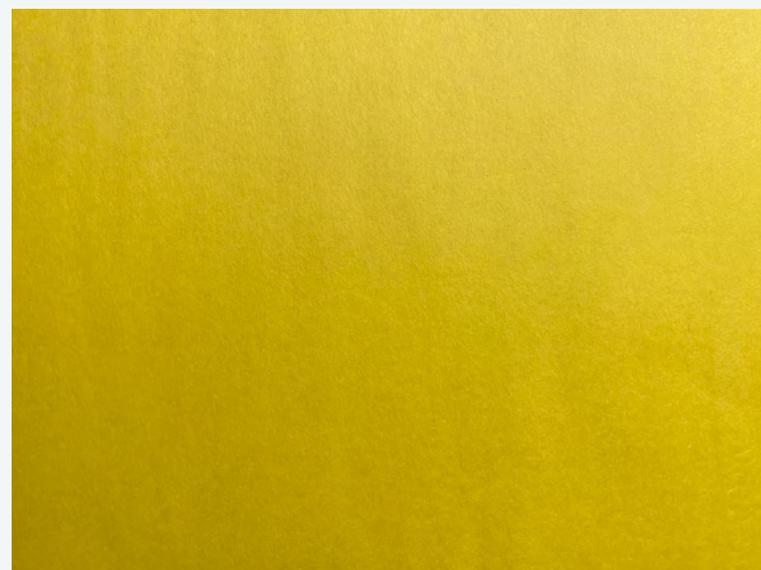
Art-Making Instructions

STEP 3

Background

An important part of collage is layering. To start layering, we will begin with the background. The background is what all of the other pieces of your collage are going to be arranged on top of. For this step, find your construction paper and choose whatever color you would like. Maybe you choose blue for a sky, black for a night sky, or yellow like the background of the example image. Think of how you can use different colors to show where your tradition takes place.

You can choose to draw on the paper with your colored pencils or crayons before going on to the next step. You can also leave the background blank.



Art-Making Instructions

STEP 4

Middle-ground

Now that you have your background finished, it's time to move to the middle-ground. The middle-ground is where you will start to show your tradition. Do you want to have people in your image? Animals? Some grass, trees or flowers? A car? What is it about this tradition that you want to show us?

In the example image, the middle-ground is where shapes for the landscape, faces and hair of the characters are placed.

This is where you get to be your most creative. Head back to your materials and grab anything that looks exciting. Do you want to use magazine cut-outs? Textured paper? Googly-eyes? More colored paper? As the artist, you get to choose which materials you use in your collage.



You will need scissors and glue to create your shapes. This step is where you start layering your materials onto your background to create your collage image. Cut your shapes carefully, and give your glue plenty of time to dry!

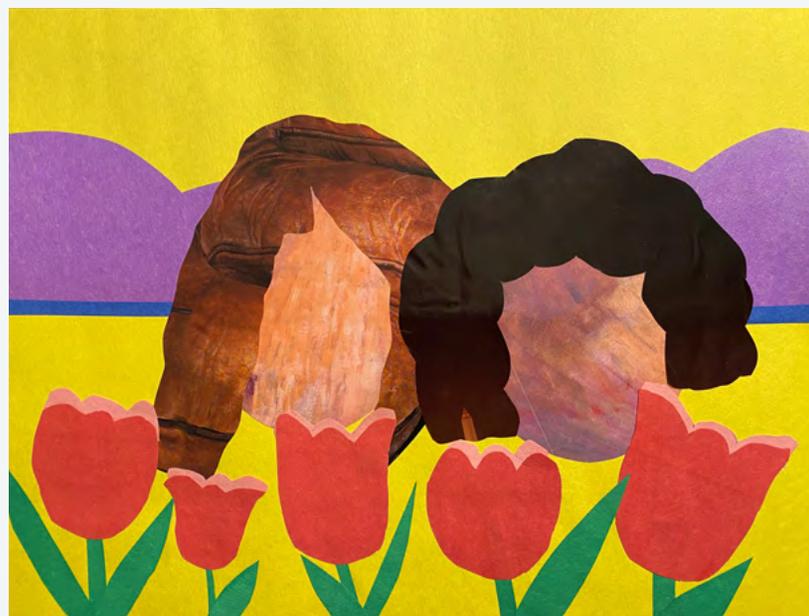
Art-Making Instructions

STEP 5

Foreground

The foreground is the third and final layer to your collage. The foreground will show whatever is closest to the person looking at your collage. In the example, this is where you see the brightly colored tulips.

Even if your collage has everything you drew in your plan, you can still add more to it until you are happy with your art piece!



Art-Making Instructions

STEP 6

Show it off!

Great work! You have created a collage showing us a tradition that is important to you, just like Marcelina Gonzales did with her artwork, *Tiempo del vals at Sunrise Mall*.

Time to celebrate!



Closing with Group Discussion

SHOW & SHARE

As a class or in small groups, have students share their artwork, describe the tradition they chose, and explain what it means to them.

Before students share, consider inviting their peers to guess what traditions are depicted in their collages.

Closing with Group Discussion

EXPLORE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS & REFLECT

As a class or in small groups, ask students to reflect on what they have learned about traditions and art-making with collage.

GUIDING REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What is the thing you like most about your collage?

What is one thing you would do differently next time?

What other traditions have you learned about from your classmates and friends?

What is one interesting fact you learned about another student's tradition?

What have you learned about traditions and their importance?

What have you learned about the art-making process of collage?