

Design a Sugar Skull

Exhibition Focus: *Dan McCleary: Prints from Oaxaca*

Background

Since 2000 the Los Angeles-based artist Dan McCleary has made regular visits to the Taller de Grabado in Oaxaca, Mexico, to work with Mexican master printer Fernando Sandoval. The exhibition focuses on the prints McCleary has made at the Taller, mostly etchings and other forms of intaglio, along with related paintings and drawings. His subject-matter has ranged from sugar skulls and floral still lifes, to portraits of friends and locals from Oaxaca.

Lesson Overview

Taking inspiration from Dan McCleary's print series depicting sugar skulls, students will design and decorate their own paper skulls using colorful acrylic paint pens and 3D puffy paint. Students will learn about the significance of sugar skulls in *Día de los Muertos* celebrations, and the symbols and traditions associated with this holiday.

Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about the history and traditions of *Día de los Muertos*
- Students will learn about the importance of cultural symbols and select or design their own symbols to incorporate into their artwork.
- Students will design and decorate a sugar skull dedicated to a loved one, pet, or historical figure

Materials

- Black cardstock
- Acrylic paint pens (assorted colors)
- Puffy paint
- Pencil
- Skull shape template for tracing

