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## Masterpiece: *The Fair in Reynosa* by Carmen Lomas Garza

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Keywords: Pattern, Color, Folk Art



Activity: "CELEBRATION" Paper Plate Decorating

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### Meet the Artist:

- Born in 1948 in Kingsville, TX.
- Garza emigrated to the U.S. with her family. She is the second of five children.
- At an early age she wanted to pursue her dream of becoming an artist. Her family supported her. Her mother was also an artist.
- Carmen went to college and received her masters from San Francisco State University.
- Most of her work focuses on the traditions and daily activities in Mexican-American culture. Family was extremely important to her and she painted many pieces depicting her family's life experiences from

- her childhood memories. Her recounting of these activities established value and assurance of their continued importance and impact.
- Garza has exhibited across the U.S. and in other countries in both art galleries and museums. Including the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C.
  - **Artist Quote:** "I was thirteen years old when I decided to become an artist. I taught myself to draw by practicing every day. I drew whatever was in front of me—books, cats, my left hand, my sisters and brothers, chairs, chilies, paper bags, flowers—anything or anybody that would stay still for a few minutes...I have three college degrees. When I was in high school I could hardly wait to graduate so I could go to college and study art..."
  - **Folk Art:** Subjects are taken from everyday life and surroundings. Usually subjects appear flat, or two dimensional.

**Print: "The Fair In Reynosa"**

The artist reflects her memory of taking a trip the fair with her friends across the border in Reynosa, Mexico. She recalls the artisans and entertainers that came from all over Mexico. Rich with detail she added to the painting the many booths that were selling food and crafts. The man and his daughter are buying tacos for his family that is waiting for them at a picnic table. Children running, playing and music being played while everyone celebrated.

**Possible Questions:**

- What do you see? What do you hear? How does this painting make you feel?
- Who has been to a fair like this one in the painting? What did you see, eat, hear while you were there? Did you enjoy yourself? Are the people in this piece of art enjoying themselves?
- Garza pays special attention to the minute details in her paintings. What details do you see? ( Leaves of the tree, the banderitas-little banners lined up across the booths, pattern in clothing, desert plants etc. )
- How do the colors affect the mood or feeling of the painting?

- This artist liked using pattern. How many different patterns can you find?
- Can you find the booth where the woman is selling her pottery?  
Mexican pottery is an art form passed down from one generation to another. What are these pieces of pottery used for? ( Everyday and Decoration, but also .....Celebrating!)

### **Activity:** Decorating a CELEBRATION Plate.

**Materials needed:** Heavy paper plates one/child, tempura paints in bright colors & black and white, paintbrushes, water cups. White glue. Newspaper for desks.

#### **Process:**

Discuss that they will be designing their own "Celebration plate".

1. Hand out materials
2. Begin with asking the student to think of a special family event in their home. They will design their plate for this event.
3. Remind students to choose colors that best represent their celebration.
4. Have students start by painting the background of the plate. They may divide it into sections of bright colors or they may do one color over the whole.
5. While the paint is drying. Talk with the students again about how the artist, Garza, used many different patterns to add interest and life to her painting. Draw an assortment of patterns on the whiteboard to give them some ideas of different patterns.
6. Have students add a decorative design on top of their painted background. Design can be an all-over design or a border.
7. Use black and white paint to add details that will stand out against the bright colors they have used. This may be stripes, polka dots, swirls, dots, flowers, hearts, and triangles. etc.
8. \*\*If desired and the paint is dry enough, coat each plate with a layer of white glue to give them a glossy look.
9. \*\*\*\*If time permits have the students take turns presenting their "Celebration" plate to the class. Be sure to ask them what special family event this plate represents.



Garza Celebration Plate Project  
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