

By Mary Erickson, Ph.D., with Arizona art teacher Marissa Vidrio

Mixing It Up: Building an Identity is a three-unit lesson plan designed in conjunction with the exhibition of the same title at the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts.

Present the [Mixing It Up: Building an Identity exhibition PowerPoint](#).

Themes

- *Theme in Life:* Every culture builds its identity from shared activities, beliefs and values.
- *Theme in Art:* Artworks can help us understand the activities, beliefs and values of our own and others' cultures.

Key Questions

Lessons approach the themes through three key questions.



1. Why do artists choose to use bright and muted colors in their work?
2. Why do artists sometimes choose printmaking when they want to expose their ideas to more people?



3. What activities, beliefs and values from their own cultures do artists sometimes show in their art?

Community Connections

Many people who live in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area are newcomers and were born elsewhere. Others have ancestors who have lived here for many decades or even centuries. Yet many people have developed overlapping cultural identities based on shared activities, beliefs and values. Throughout its 100-year history, the state of Arizona has become famous for what is called *The Four C's*: climate, copper, cattle and citrus. Recently, some people have suggested adding a fifth "C" for computers because of the high amount of technology industry and research in the area.

People often build cultural identities from broad concerns, like Arizona's *Four C's*, and also from activities, beliefs and values that are closer to home. Many people relate strongly to the special aspects of a community such as local sports teams, celebrities, special foods, schools or landscape. For example, if you were to tell someone from New York City that you were from Arizona, you might have a conversation about the Arizona Diamondbacks baseball team or the beauty of Saguaro cacti, and he or she might talk about the New York Yankees and where to get the best slice of pizza.

Each of us is unique, but we are also a member of several larger groups that help give us a sense of who we are and where we came from.

Key Term

The unit developers and the Tempe Center for the Arts recognize that there are a number of terms such as Hispanic, Chicana/o and Latina/o that people prefer to use to describe themselves. For the purposes of this unit, the term Mexican American will be used to describe the artists represented in the Mixing It Up exhibition.

Lessons

[One: Who Am I? \(pdf\)](#)

[Two: Exploring Themes and Styles at the Tempe Center for the Arts \(pdf\)](#)

[Three: Parts of Me \(pdf\)](#)

Resources

[Mixing It Up: Building an Identity Exhibition Preview PowerPoint](#)

[Who Am I? PowerPoint](#)

[Loteria Description \(pdf\)](#)

[Loteria Games Cards \(pdf\)](#)

[Introduction to Printmaking PowerPoint](#)

[Bright and Muted Colors PowerPoint](#)

[Step-by-Step Printmaking PowerPoint](#)

[Questor Questions featuring work by Frank Ybarra \(pdf\)](#)

Websites

[Latino Art Community \(HRC\)](#)

[What is a Print? From The Museum of Modern Art in New York](#)

[ASU Art Museum Jules Heller Print Study Room](#)

Supplies

pencils

scrap paper

scissors

craft foam

styrofoam food trays

non-water-based glue (such as “Tacky Glue”)

sticks for spreading glue

assorted colors of tempera paint or water-based printing ink

brayers

9-inch x 10-inch acrylic sheets for palettes

assorted colors of construction paper, including both bright and pastel, neutral, or earth-tone colors

old t-shirts to protect students’ clothing

old newspapers to protect tables

Estimated Time

Previsit Lesson = 30-60 minutes

TCA Visit Lesson = Field Trip

Postvisit Lesson = 270-400 minutes (Times are estimates and may vary based on age groups and prior art experiences.)