

MATERIALS

- craft foam, or colored tag board 9" x 12" (for each student)
- scissors
- pencils
- markers
- glue
- hole punches
- staplers
- masking taped
- decorative elements: feathers, pipe cleaners, crepe paper, pom poms, beads, buttons, raffia, string or ribbon

RESOURCES

- Museum of International Folk Art, Online Collections.
<http://collection.internationalfolkart.org/search/retable>
- Smithsonian Folklife Festival - Ayacucho Crafts.
<https://festival.si.edu/2015/peru/crafts/ayacucho-crafts/smithsonian>

VOCABULARY (definitions on page 4)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Festival | • Disguise |
| • Character | • Conquistador |
| • Transformation | • Diablunas |
| • Celebration | • Negrato or Negra |

NATIONAL VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS

- **Creating:** Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.
- **Presenting:** Interpreting and sharing artistic work.
- **Responding:** Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.
- **Connecting:** Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.



Male Ch'uta Masks. La Paz, Bolivia, ca. 1960. Left, Gift of Barbara Mauldin, MOIFA. Right, Gift of the Girard Foundation Collection, MOIFA. Photograph by Blair Clark.

Folk Art of the Andes

Festival Masks

INTRODUCTION

The Andes is the great mountain range of South America that extends along the western coast of the continent. It is separated into three natural regions, with the north running through Venezuela and Colombia and the south through parts of Argentina and Chile. The central area, encompassed by Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, was the most important for the development of prehispanic cultures.

OBJECTIVES

1. To learn about how masks are an important part of celebrations in the Andean region (historical and cultural understanding).
2. To recognize the different types of masks in the Andes and the characters that they convey (perceiving, analyzing and responding).
3. To find different ways to construct a mask by using a variety of materials and by exploring line, color, shape and form (creating and performing).

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In the early nineteenth century, colonial citizens in different parts of the Andes began to organize an independence movement to free themselves of the Spanish Crown. This led to a series of battles where the Spanish military opposed troops consisting of colonists and Indians. By 1829, the liberators had succeeded and several autonomous republics were founded. Within this post-Independence environment, folk art began to flourish. Mestizo and indigenous artists were freer to create useful and beautiful things for their own benefit and for trade to a broader market.



Questions for Discussion:

- How would you describe the environment in which you live?
- Is it a mountainous region?
- What types of vegetation thrive in your area?
- What is the history of the peoples?
- Were there indigenous people who lived where you do?
- What happened when people from Europe came?

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Make a Mask

MOTIVATION

- Ask your students if they have participated in any celebrations. What different kinds of celebrations are there? What are some important elements of a celebration? When do people wear masks? What happens when someone puts on a mask?
- Introduce the information presented in this lesson regarding masks and celebrations in the Andes, using visual aids if available. Then pose the following questions: If you were going to make a mask what character would you choose to be? Would you be a devilish figure, an animal, a human or a made up character? Why?

PROCEDURE

1. Have each student hold the craft foam or tag board up to their face and point to their eyes. Mark the position of each eye with a marker. Then draw a shape around each eye. It can be any kind of shape: a circle, square, heart shape, a human or animal eye shape or an invented shape.
2. Fold the foam or tag board and clip inside each eye shape. Insert the tip of the scissors and cut out the shape of each eye.
3. Change the shape of the entire mask. Once again, it can be a conventional or invented shape. Have students draw the shape of the mask, trying to use most of the foam or tag board. Scraps can be used to create additional shapes like horns, beards, big ears, etc.
4. Use the assorted materials and glue to decorate.
5. Older students can make the masks 3 dimensional by cutting a diagonal line into the side of the mask, and then overlapping the cut edges and stapling them together, creating a small cup. (This is great for ears, cheeks, chins, etc.)
6. Add raffia or string by punching holes into the masks and threading the materials through. Tying knots and letting the extensions hang creates another effect. Glue on feathers.
7. Punch holes at eye level at the edge of the masks to attach pipe cleaners. Twist pipe cleaners behind the head to wear.



EVALUATION

- Have students create a written description of their mask. Include the most prominent features such as shape, color and character. Describe the mood or character of the mask. Create a mask display using the masks and their descriptions.

CONNECTIONS & EXTANTIONS

- Have a mask parade. Have each student wear his/her mask and lead the group in a parade in front of other classes, around the school and through the neighborhood.

VOCABULARY

1. **Celebration** - an event with festivities
2. **Character** - set of qualities that portray a personality or a being
3. **Conquistador** - a leader in the Spanish conquest of America in the 15th & 16th centuries
4. **Diablunas** - a type of devil masquerade worn by some Andean dance groups
5. **Disguise** - to change one's appearance in a manner that obscures one identity and creates another
6. **Festival** - a time for merrymaking especially with a program of cultural events
7. **Negrito or Negra** - a black man or woman, a masquerader impersonating enslaved African in Andean dance performances
8. **Transformation** - to change in appearance, shape, or identity, from one thing into another



Festival Masks

Andeans have an ancient tradition of performing dances and dramas wearing masquerades. In the sixteenth century, Spanish priests and colonists imposed new forms of masked performances for the Indians to carry out during Catholic feast days. Participants were instructed to wear costumes and masks that impersonated the Europeans. This practice continued through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but since the post-Independence era of the nineteenth century, Indian and *mestizo* communities have had greater freedom to carry out their own forms of festival masquerading. Following styles established in colonial times, most of the costumes and performances still impersonate Europeans and Spanish colonists. However, dancers are able to make fun of their former oppressors in an open manner. One of the more serious masquerades is the *negrito*, which portrays enslaved Africans who were viewed with sympathy and respect. Devil costumes and animal masquerades are also worn in some areas, along with masked characters impersonating prehispanic peoples or members of the local community.



Devil Masks, Imbabura, Ecuador, ca. 1980. Left, Gift of Lloyd E. Cotsen and the Neutrogena Corporation, MOIFA. Right, International Folk Art Foundation Collection, MOIFA. Photograph by Blair Clark.

Devil masqueraders, known regionally as *diablunas*, are seen in the Imbabura Province of northern Ecuador during the festival honoring San Juan and San Pedro on June 29. Participants wear large cloth masks with faces on both the front and back. These are made in a variety of sizes, but all have a row of cloth tubes projecting from the top of the head. Similar tubes are bent and attached to the sides and front to depict ears and noses. Embroidery is used to delineate openings for the eyes and mouth, also to decorate the front and back of the masks with stylized images of flowers, people, and animals.

Masks from Ecuador



Dog Masks. Cotopaxi, Ecuador. Left, ca. 1950, International Folk Art Foundation Collection, MOIFA. Center: ca. 1975, Gift of Peter P. Cecere, MOIFA. Right: ca. 1950, International Folk Art Foundation Collection, MOIFA. Photograph by Blair Clark.

Heavy wooden masks are worn by dancers for *festivals* that take place in different communities in the Cotopaxi Province, located in the central highlands of Ecuador. Some masks are made in small workshops, like the one operated by the Huacho family in Saquisilí, while others are carved by farmers during their spare time. Many of the masks represent animals, including monkeys, wolves, tigers, and fierce dogs. The large heads and faces are carved from one piece of wood; the ears are often made separately from wood or other materials and then attached. Each dancer within a group wears a different animal masquerade while they all rowdily proceed through the fiesta as if they were a pack of dangerous beasts. Some carvers produce masks portraying clowns or men and women with European or African features.

Wire Screen Festival Masks



Male Ch'uta Masks. La Paz, Bolivia, ca. 1960. Left, Gift of Barbara Mauldin, MOIFA. Right, Gift of the Girard Foundation Collection, MOIFA. Photograph by Blair Clark.

The use of wire screen to produce lightweight masks was introduced into South America from central Europe sometime in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century; it is a popular form found in Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and elsewhere today. The wire is shaped with facial features by using plaster or ceramic molds. Usually, the masks are then painted to represent Spanish men and women from the colonial era, with pink skin, blue eyes, and either light or dark hair.

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