

EDUCATOR GUIDE

Artist: Favianna Rodriguez
Discipline: Visual Art

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Still image from the Spark story, 2007.

SECTION I - OVERVIEW

SUBJECT

Favianna Rodriguez

GRADE RANGES

K – 12 & Post-Secondary

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts

OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the work of Favianna Rodriguez and her impact on the social justice movement and to foster and understanding of political activism.

STORY SYNOPSIS

For over a decade, Favianna Rodriguez has been creating posters and graphics supporting social justice movements and political activism. Carrying on the tradition of the Chicano Arts movement of the 1960s and 70s, Rodriguez is part of a new generation of artists devoted to public awareness and community involvement in grassroots causes.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Hands-on group projects, in which students assist and support one another

Hands-on individual projects, in which students work independently

Group oral discussion and analysis, including peer review and aesthetic valuing

Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

To foster an understanding of social change, specifically within the Chicano Arts movement

To illustrate the historical connections between Favianna Rodriguez's contemporary work and the work of printers and muralists of the early 20th century

To analyze how images supporting social justice differ from propaganda imagery

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

SPARK story on Favianna Rodriguez on DVD or VHS and related equipment or a computer with Internet access, navigation software, video projector, speakers and a sound card.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers
Pencils, pens, and paper
Construction paper, markers and crayons or image editing software

INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Logical-Mathematical – the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically
Interpersonal – awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
Intrapersonal – awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations



See more information on [Multiple Intelligences](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education) at www.kqed.org/spark/education.

MEDIA MATTERS

The following SPARK stories may be used for compare/contrast purposes:

Keith Knight, political comic artist
<http://www.kqed.org/arts/people/spark/profile.jsp?id=4530>

Teatro Visión, political theater company
<http://www.kqed.org/arts/places/spark/profile.jsp?id=4924>

Consuelo Jiménez-Underwood, fiber artist
<http://www.kqed.org/arts/people/spark/profile.jsp?id=4302>

Crown Point Press, printmaking studio
<http://www.kqed.org/arts/places/spark/profile.jsp?id=15046>

SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

For more than a decade, Favianna Rodriguez has been creating posters and graphics supporting social justice movements and political activism. Carrying on the tradition of the Chicano arts movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Rodriguez is part of a new generation of artists devoted to public awareness and community involvement in grassroots causes.

A largely self-taught artist, Rodriguez learned about silk-screening in her teens by taking free art classes offered in the Fruitvale district of Oakland, where she grew up. For Rodriguez, silk-screening is an art of the people, as evidenced by its use in social and political movements throughout the last 100 years to educate and organize the masses. Along with her longtime collaborator, Jesus Barraza, Rodriguez designs posters to raise awareness on issues ranging from genetically modified foods to immigration rights to globalization.

As an activist, Rodriguez goes far beyond creating posters and other graphic work. She helped found the EastSide Arts Alliance, an organization that supports Oakland neighborhoods through arts programs and by making available performance and studio space and even a number of affordable housing units. In addition to her work with EastSide, Rodriguez is a co-owner of TUMIS, an East Oakland-based design firm that provides design, technology and communication strategy services for social justice organizations and nonprofits.

One of Rodriguez's latest projects is the compilation of images for a book entitled "Reproduce and Revolt: Radical Images for the 21st Century." The images, which will also be made available online, are offered for free to be used for noncommercial activist purposes. For Rodriguez, it's a way to put powerful graphics in the hands of anyone interested in supporting progressive struggles globally.

While working as an artist-in-residence at Berkeley's Kala Art Institute, Favianna Rodriguez put together a poster for the California Day Laborer's conference held at San Francisco State University. Based on a series of snapshots Rodriguez took of day laborers, the image suggests the workers' experience while conveying a sense of both struggle and dignity. Spark follows Rodriguez as she presents the poster at the conference and solicits feedback that will help her to refine the image and make it more effective.

THE BIG PICTURE

Favianna Rodriguez's work participates in a long tradition of Mexican and Mexican-American political and social activist art that reaches as far back as the period preceding the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

Working around the turn of the century, the popular printmaker Jose Guadalupe Posada published his many satirical drawings and caricatures in the penny presses of the day. Though he was not considered a revolutionary, Posada is credited with developing a style capable of expressing the concerns and viewpoints of the Mexican peasants who were the chief participants in the uprisings that began the revolution.

Though at the time of Posada's death in 1913 he was considered little more than a simple illustrator, his work was rediscovered and sometimes appropriated by the artists associated with the Mexican Renaissance, which began in the 1920s and carried on into the 1940s. These artists recognized in Posada a style that was both sophisticated and readily legible, capable of widely disseminating strong political and social messages to a wide audience. Posada's work became an important touchstone for the highly politicized Muralistas--Diego Rivera, Jose Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros--who were the most noted outcome of Mexican Renaissance. Like Posada,

whose prints, published in popular papers, constituted a kind of public art, the Muralistas were intent on telling the history of the Mexican people in a manner that would be available to the masses. The politically uncompromising murals that these artists made in both Mexico and the United States were often centers of controversy and targets of censorship.

The Muralistas formed a crucial bridge from Mexican politically directed art to Mexican-American activist art. The murals that Rivera, Siqueiros and others made in the United States had a profound influence on a new generation of Mexican-American artists coming of age in the midst of the political and social upheavals of the 1960s. In an effort to gain political recognition and to make social advances, the Chicano Movement, commonly referred to as 'El Movimiento' came into being. Based primarily in California and the American Southwest, the Chicano Movement associated itself with the causes of many progressive and radical youth groups of the 1960s, including Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Black Panthers, and the Women's Liberation Front. Chicano artists and activists turned to historical precedents as well as contemporary radical artistic movements to create a new, politico-aesthetic sensibility. From its inception, El Movimiento aligned itself with the central social causes of the era, including labor leader César Chávez's movement to unionize itinerant farm workers. Chicano artists produced posters and eventually designed the eagle logo of what was to become Chávez's United Farm Workers.

As with earlier examples of Mexican and Mexican-American activist art, Chicano art generally uses public and easily circulated forms, including prints, posters, and murals, but expanded to include performance, music, film, conceptual art, and installation art as a means of pushing the boundaries of Chicano cultural production and reaching a wider audience. Among the first works ascribed to the El Movimiento were the productions of Luis Valdez's Teatro Campesino, mostly political plays organized and produced by and for farm workers. Throughout its history El Movimiento has remained closely linked to the cause of Latino farm workers. Chicano art saw its most radical urban expression in the work of several artists clustered in and around East Los Angeles. These artists used all the media

available to them to draw attention to and protest the repression and systemic subjugation of Mexican-Americans in barrio neighborhoods. In the early 1970s, Harry Gamboa Jr., Patssi Valdez, Willie Herron, and an artist called Gronk formed the artistic collective *Asco*, meaning "nausea" in Spanish. Spurred on by a reign of police brutality which culminated in August of 1970 with the murder of Rubén Salazar, the sole Chicano journalist working for the Los Angeles Times, Asco saw its work as an appropriate response to the oppression that its members faced on a daily basis as young Chicanos. In a gesture of protest against the total lack of Chicano artists represented in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Asco produced its first work as a collective in 1972 by spray painting the names of the group's members on the museum's walls. Asco later produced surrealist performances such as The First Supper (After a Riot) on a median in the middle of Whittier Boulevard during rush hour traffic. The piece reframed an often painted religious subject, the Last Supper of Christ and the Apostles, in terms of contemporary political realities.

The Chicano Movement also made inroads into popular American culture in the late 1960s and 1970s, primarily through new musical forms. In the Bay Area and Los Angeles, many rock bands, such as Santana, Malo, Azteca, and El Chicano crafted a sound that fused 60s psychedelic rock n' roll with Latin rhythms and instruments. Many of these bands enjoyed popular and critical acclaim and helped to create an awareness of Chicano culture across the country and around the world.

RESOURCES – TEXTS

- Gaspar de Alba, Alicia. *Chicano Art Inside/Outside the Master's House: Cultural Politics and the CARA Exhibition*. University of Texas Press, 1998.
- Griswold Del Castillo, Richard, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano. *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*. University of Arizona Press, 1991.
- Haney-Lopez, Ian F. *Racism on Trial: The Chicano Fight for Justice*. Belknap Press, 2003.

RESOURCES – TEXTS (continued)

Meier, Matt and Feliciano Ribera. *Mexican Americans, American Mexicans: From Conquistadors to Chicanos*. Hill and Wang, 1994.

Oropeza, Lorena. *ÁRaza Sí! ÁGuerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism during the Viet Nam War Era*. University of California Press, 2005.

Rhoads, Robert A. *Freedom's Web: Student Activism in an Age of Cultural Diversity*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Ryan, Charlotte. *Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing*. South End Press, 1990.

RESOURCES – WEB SITES

Favianna Rodriguez's official site:
<http://favianna.com/>

EastSide Arts Alliance:
<http://www.eastsideartsalliance.com/>

Reproduce and Revolt: A Graphic Toolbox for the 21st Century Activist (launch date: December 2007)
<http://reproduceandrevolt.org/>

Website of Berkeley's Kala Art Institute:
<http://www.kala.org/>

Wikipedia article on the Chicano Movement:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicano_Movement

San Francisco's Galería de la Raza, a gallery space dedicated to Chicano art:
<http://www.galeriadelaraza.org/>

VIDEO/AUDIO RESOURCES

Gamboa, Harry Jr. *1990's Chicano Video Art*. Videorecording. 114 minutes. 2004.

Lerner, Jesse. *Frontierland / Fronterilandia*. Videorecording. 77 minutes, 2005.

BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS

EastSide Arts Alliance and Cultural Center
2277 International Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94606
Email: elenas@mindspring.com

Galería de la Raza
2857 24th Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
Phone: 415-826-8009
Email: info@galeriadelaraza.org

San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art Print Center
Students may enjoy the Print Center's open access day to view the center and printing process.
560 South First Street
San Jose, CA 95113
<http://www.sjica.org/printcenter/printcenter.htm>

KALA Art Institute
Print Studio/ Media Center/ Gallery
1060 Heinz Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94710
<http://www.kala.org/mission.html>

SomArts Cultural Center
934 Brannan St
San Francisco, CA 94103
<http://www.somarts.org/>

SECTION III – VOCABULARY

DISCIPLINE-BASED VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS IN THE SPARK STORY

Black Panther Party

Originally called the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. An African American organization founded to promote civil rights and self-defense. It was active within the United States in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Chicano

Mexican Americans or Americans of Mexican descent

Collaborator

Partner, co-worker, colleague

Contemporary

Modern, current, up-to-date

Corporate

Of the business or commercial world

Day laborers

Term used for daily, low wage workers who are often undocumented immigrants and, as such, work without benefits or insurance coverage.

Globalization

Increasing interdependence of the world's economic markets and businesses, accelerated by technological progress which has made it easier for people to travel, communicate, and do business internationally.

Graffiti

Words or pictures *scribbled* (*graffiti* means *scribble* in Italian) on walls or other surfaces, usually in public places, and created without permission. The term, *graffiti* is gaining an additional meaning as a genre of art based on stylized lettering and cartoon-like figures and objects. This art form originates in illegal public art, primarily created using spray paint.

Graphics

Visual designs on a wall, canvas, computer screen, paper etc. to brand, inform, illustrate, or entertain. Graphics may employ a variety of visual forms combining text, illustration, and color - for example photographs, drawings, Line Art, graphs, diagrams, typography, numbers, symbols, geometric designs, or other images - to produce a brochure, flier, poster, web site and so on.

Instability

Insecure, volatile, in flux, unsteady

Moratorium

Freeze, halt, suspension, standstill

Mural

Wall painting, fresco, frieze

Narrative

Story, plot, tale

Sanctuary

Refuge, place of safety, shelter

Silkscreen

A printmaking process in which an image is burned onto a screen of silk or fine mesh, while areas are blocked out by an impermeable substance to produce the stencil on the screen. The ink is forced through the mesh and prints onto a surface.

SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

Introducing Favianna Rodriguez



New Art Piece, May 2007

http://favianna.typepad.com/faviannacom_art_activism/2007/05/index.html

Project this print by Favianna Rodriguez onto a wall in the class room and ask students to discuss what they see. Ask them to;

- Describe what they see in as much detail as possible. What shapes can they see? How are they juxtaposed?
- Do they find this print compelling?
- What ideas or associations does it inspire?
- Does it impact them emotionally or intellectually? In what ways?

Share students' thoughts in the larger group.

Play the SPARK episode on Favianna Rodriguez, asking students to note down what strikes them about her ideas and her work as they view the

video. Freeze the frame on a selection of the posters, and invite students to discuss Favianna's use of graphics to promote social and community issues. Looking closely at the artwork, ask students: How does Favianna appeal to the viewer in these posters? How does she invite people to care about the issue or cause?

Favianna Rodriguez is a cultural activist. She uses her art to promote social justice and social change.

- Does art have a role to play in community activism?
- Can it contribute to social change? How?

Propaganda vs. Political Art

Begin by asking students to reflect on the term *propaganda* and collectively brainstorm a definition that they can all agree to. Write their definition on the board.

The following points should be included:

- The intention/purpose of propaganda is to manipulate opinion, and to produce a certain kind of response in terms of behavior
- It is never impartial or seeking a truth
- It is always an invested set of beliefs intended to sway opinion and thought

Ask students to consider how this differs from education, or from defending or arguing in favor of a strong political conviction. Is it justified to attempt to sway opinion – if you believe strongly in a cause or principle? At what point does an attempt to persuade become propaganda?

Working in small groups, ask students to choose an issue of concern to them. This can be a concern about the environment, the educational system, a

political view or a lifestyle issue e.g. nutrition, healthy living, gender politics.

Suggest they design a poster to express their viewpoint, using graphics in as compelling a way as possible. For information, they can use Internet sites, magazines and books as well as electronic encyclopedias. Design materials can vary. They can use construction paper, markers, crayons, or choose to create their poster in Microsoft Word and use Clip Art or use Hyperstudio or another image editing program, such as Photoshop.

Ask students to produce one poster per group or to work individually if they prefer, but they should discuss/critique all the work in their small groups. Call upon each group in turn to introduce their poster(s), the cause they are espousing, and their design idea and process.

Hang the poster(s) in the classroom or in a corridor in school, and invite comments by publicizing an email contact address or a blog site where students can share thoughts about the issue.

Field Trip Activities

Play the opening segment of the SPARK story on Favianna Rodriguez where she carefully explains and demonstrates how she creates a silkscreen print. Discuss the process with students to ensure they understand the technique.

For students who are interested to view the printing process, suggest they contact one of the arts centers listed on the resources section (page 5 of this Educator Guide) and arrange to visit the studio. They may be permitted to view the process and watch a professional printer at work. They may also decide to attend a workshop.

It may be interesting to suggest that students visit different studios and report back.

SPARKLER:

* For students who would like a screen printing tutorial, suggest the following Web site *How to Silkscreen Posters and Shirts* at http://nomediakings.org/doityourself/howto_silkscreen_posters_and_shirts.html

Political Posters

Set up a projector in the class room and project selected images of political posters from the following Web link onto the wall in the classroom. <http://images.google.com/images?q=political+posters+1960s&svnum=10&um=1&hl=en>

Ask students to search for political imagery of the 1960s and 1970s and deliberate over the different issues and causes represented. They should consider the power of each poster or image in terms of the graphics - slogan/text and image. Assign them to look for posters or images related to:

- The Black Panthers
- Chinese revolutionary politics
- Feminism
- Vietnam War
- Cuba
- The Mexican Revolution



Revolution, Woodcut by José Guadalupe Posada
www.nevadaobserver.com



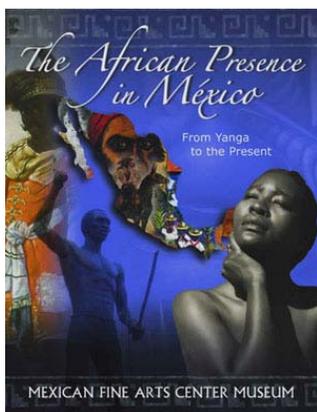
I Am A Black Woman (Angela Davis)
www.leadpipeposters.com

Discuss with the class the ways in which contemporary graphics have changed. They should consider Favianna 's comments about activist politics today, in contrast to the social and political issues and movements in the 1960s and 1970s. She lists the contemporary issues that have involved her: immigration rights, border issues, globalization,

genetically modified food etc. Favianna also explains how 21st century graphics are predominantly accessed online. Does this change campaign processes? How?

Move on to look at the poster below from Favianna's Web site about the African presence in Mexico. The poster promoted "a touring exhibition which tells the "lost" history of the African contributions to Mexican culture over the past nearly 500 years, and attempts to generate a dialogue between Mexicans and African Americans in the U.S"

http://www.favianna.com/exhibitions/index_mfacm.php



*Who We Are Now:
Roots, Resistance &
Recognition*

Mexican Fine Art Center

Museum Gallery
The African Presence in Mexico:
From Yanga to the Present

Ask students to write a response to the following questions in relation to this poster.

- Are the images in this poster powerful?
- How do they speak to us? What is the appeal – in terms of text, image, symbol etc?
- How does the use of color work to enrich the effect?
- Does the poster invite debate? Or raise controversy?

RELATED STANDARDS -VISUAL ARTS

Grade 4 – Artistic Perception

Analyze Art Elements and Principles of Design
1.5 Describe and analyze the elements of art (color, shape/form, line, texture, space and value), emphasizing form, as they are used in works of art and found in the environment.

Grade 7 – Artistic Perception

1.1 Describe the environment and selected works of art, using the elements of art and the principles of design.

Grade 8 – Aesthetic Valuing

4.2 Develop a theory about the artist's intent in a series of works of art, using reasoned statements to support personal opinions.

4.3 Construct an interpretation of a work of art based on the form and content of the work

Consider Favianna's poster in terms of her Artist Statement on her Web site:

"There has never been a movement for social change without the arts posters in particular being central to that movement. All art is political, but not all art is overtly political. Protest posters flaunt their politics and court discussion. They can deepen compassion and commitment, ignite outrage, elicit laughter, and provoke action. The power of the poster is that it is produced in multiples, and therefore can be easily distributed for all to see."

Do students agree that posters have this kind of power? Discuss this issue.

SPARKLER:

* Consider inviting Favianna Rodriguez to a class to discuss her approach to graphic design, both in terms of her artistic process and her sense of the political power of her work.

RELATED STANDARDS VISUAL ARTS

Grades 9-12, Proficient

1.5 Analyze the material used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

1.0 Artistic Perception

Analyze Art Elements and Principles of Design
1.3 Research and analyze the work of an artist and write about the artist's distinctive style and its contribution to the meaning of the work.

3.0 Historical & Cultural Context

3 Identify and describe trends in the visual arts and discuss how the issues of time, place, and cultural influence are reflected in selected works of art.

Grades 9-12, Advanced

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

4.2 Identify the intentions of artists creating contemporary works of art and explore the implications of those intentions.

5.0 Connection, Relations & Applications

5.2 Compare and contrast works of art, probing beyond the obvious and identifying psychological content found in the symbols and images.

For more information about SPARK and its educational content,, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.



For more information about the California Content Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>.