Diego Rivera (Mexican, 1886–1957)

Los Frutos del Trabajo (The Fruits of Labor), 1932

Lithograph on cream wove paper
Image: 16 7/16 x 11 13/16 inches
Sheet: 22 1/2 x 15 13/16 inches
Gift of Lucienne Bloch and Stephen Dimitroff
© 2016 Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
85.53.8

Tate Glossary of Art Terms—tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary
Find longer definitions online.

Cubism was a revolutionary new approach to representing reality invented in around 1907/08 by artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque who aimed to bring different views of subjects (usually objects or figures) together in the same picture, resulting in paintings that appear fragmented and abstracted.

Fresco is a mural painting technique that involves painting with water-based paint directly onto wet plaster so that the paint becomes an integral part of the plaster. Developed in Italy from about the thirteenth century, fresco was perfected during the Renaissance.

Lithography is a printing process that works on the principle that oil and water repel each other. The artist draws on a flat stone or metal plate using a greasy substance so that the ink will adhere to them, while the non-image areas are made ink-repellent.

Discussion and Activities

1. Count how many figures you see in the composition. Describe their expressions and how they interact. What do you think their relationships are with one another?

2. What objects do you notice in this image? Why did Rivera include these objects? What is their symbolic value?

3. Shape is an important element of art in Rivera’s work. Take one minute to create a quick sketch of Rivera’s print, focusing on the outlines of figures and objects. What shapes do you observe?

4. The title of this print is The Fruits of Labor. What do you think Rivera meant by this title? Does the title have more than one meaning?

5. Using a viewfinder (see instructions below), try framing different parts of Rivera’s composition. Focus your viewfinder on the faces and hands of the figures, or the fabric and fruit, for example. What happens when you focus on just one area of the print? How does using a viewfinder change how you view the overall composition?

A viewfinder can be an old 35mm slide frame or a frame you create with your hands. To make a viewfinder: Use a sturdy piece of card stock that won’t curl when it is picked up. Cut a rectangular hole (the viewfinder window) in the center of the card stock. The hole should measure 3 x 4” if you are using 9 x 12” paper. If you are using 12 x 18” paper, cut the viewfinder window to measure 5 x 4 1/2”.

This project was made possible by a grant from...