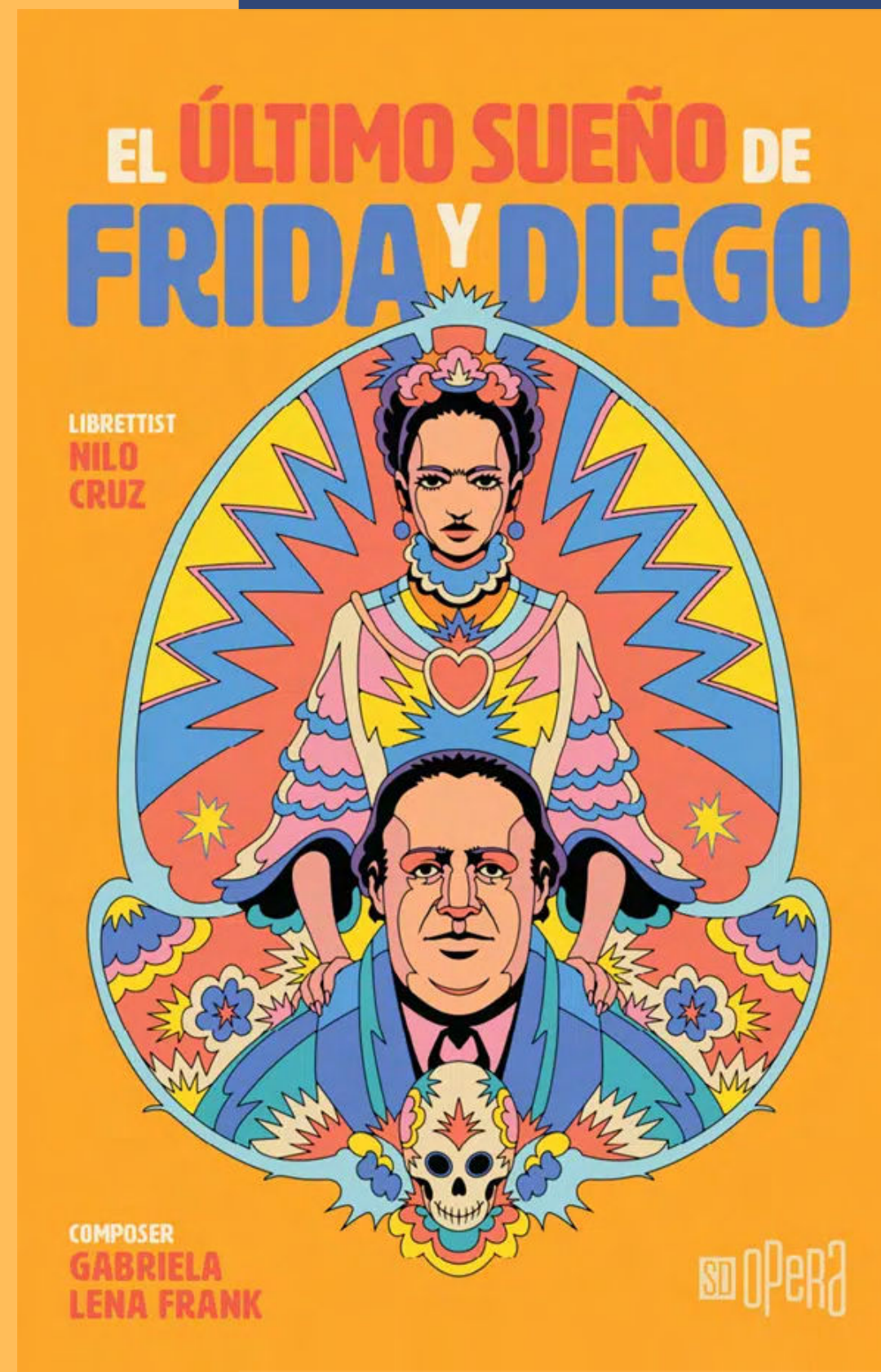


SAN DIEGO OPERA

# Study Guide

Educational activities celebrating the world premiere of El Último Sueño de Frida y Diego





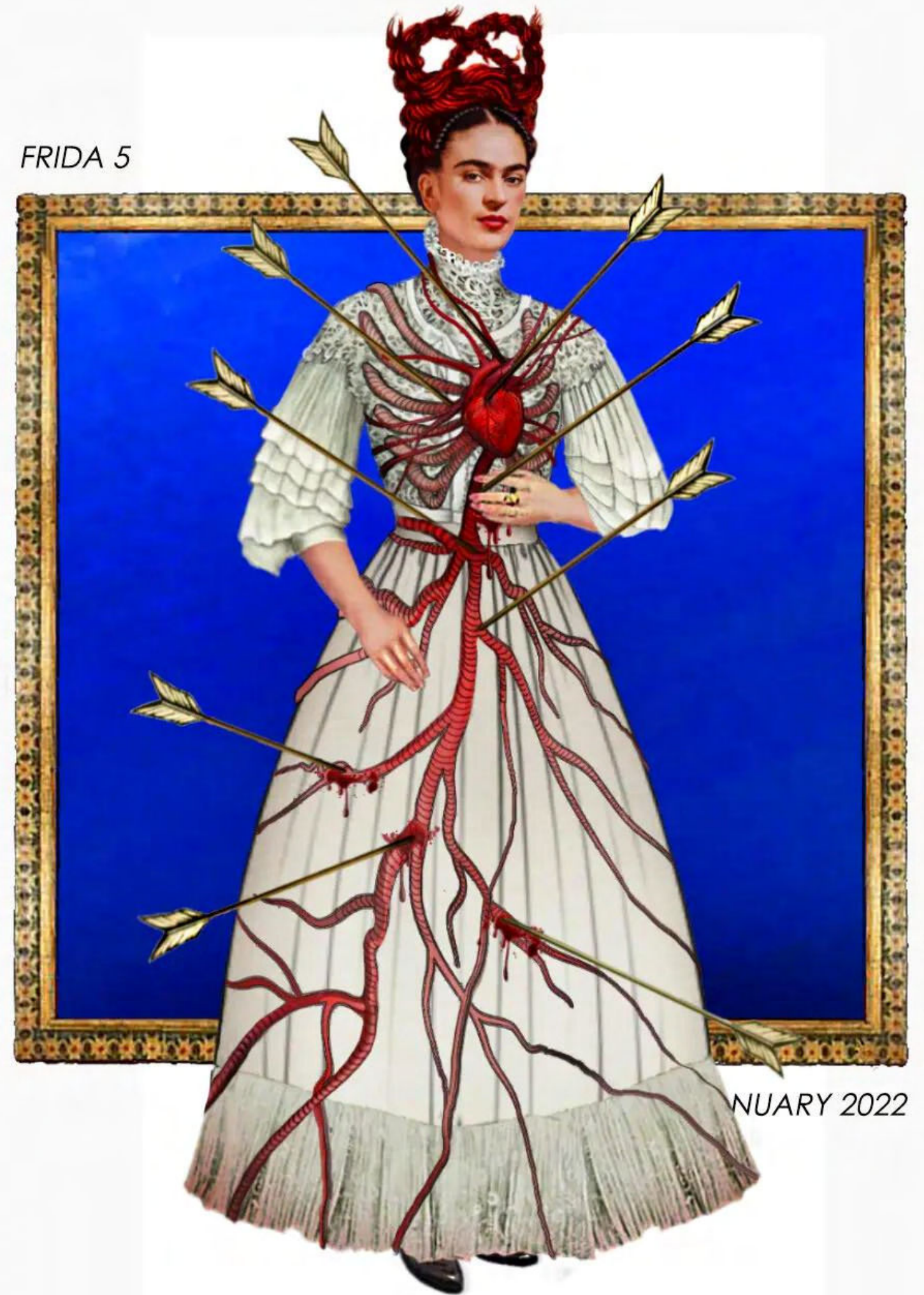
# Activities

- Exploring the Nahuatl language
- Anahuacalli
- Activities in Spanish
- Playwriting and Self Portraits

A SKETCH BY THE COSTUME DESIGNER  
ELOISE KAZAN OF FRIDA KAHLO

THE LAST DREAM OF FRIDA AND DIEGO

FRIDA 5



DIR. LORENA MAZA

COSTUME by ELOISE KAZAN

JANUARY 2022



# Nahuatl in the Opera

Throughout the opera, “El Último Sueño de Frida y Diego,” there are two languages that are primarily used. The first is Spanish, which is spoken all over the world. The second is a little less familiar but is spoken by over 1.5 million native speakers. This language is called Nahuatl. Nahuatl is a language that belongs to what is called the Uto-Aztecan language family. This language family spans all the way from Central America to the northern region of the United States.

A RENDERING OF A “SUEÑO” SET, BY THE SCENIC DESIGNER JORGE BALLINA





**Native speakers of Nahuatl, represented by the green on the map, are found mostly in Mexico and Central America. Since the opera *El Último Sueño de Frida y Diego* takes place in various parts of Mexico, it is no surprise that there were several Nahuatl words used. The following pages include Nahuatl words that can be found throughout the opera.**

Figure 1. Uto-Aztecan language family map.





# Nahuatl words

## Mictlán

In the opera, this was the name of the underworld. This word is derived from two Nahuatl words: miqui (to die) and tlán (an ending that means place).

## Mictlántecuhtli

This word refers to the god of the underworld. We have mictlán (the underworld) combined with a new word tecuhtli (a lord, an important nobleman heading a lordly house).

## Tzompantli

In the opera, there is a scene where an ancient skull rack is displayed. This item is referred to as a tzompantli. Although the word itself is not found in the libretto or mentioned on stage, it is an important item in the story.





## Cempohualxochitl

In Nahuatl, marigold is translated to cempohualxochitl. This is derived from the word cempohualli (twenty) and xochitl (flower). The number 20 was important to the Aztecs because it was a reference to ten fingers and ten toes, which symbolically indicated a “whole human.” Cemphualxochitl are important to Dia de Muertos because it is believed that the strong scent and vibrant color of the flower can guide spirits back to their families.



## Tenochtitlán

This word was used in the scene where Frida and Diego are reminiscing about ancient Mexico. Tenochtitlán is made from two words: tenochtli (prickly pear) and tlán (an ending that means place). When combined it means “the place of the prickly pear.” Tenochtitlán is a sacred place in Mexico where several ancient pyramids can be found.



## Tzapotl (zapote)

This word is presented in the scene where the fruit vendor is selling different fruits. The word that is used in the opera (zapote) was derived from the Nahuatl word tzapotl. This word can also be found in English: sapote. The tzapotl is a small fuzzy berry that typically grows between Central America and the southeast region of the United States.



**Nahuatl words are currently in common usage  
in many parts of the world.**

Match the following words with their corresponding image

**Ahuacatl**

**Ahuacamolli**

**Cacahuatl**

**Xocolatl**

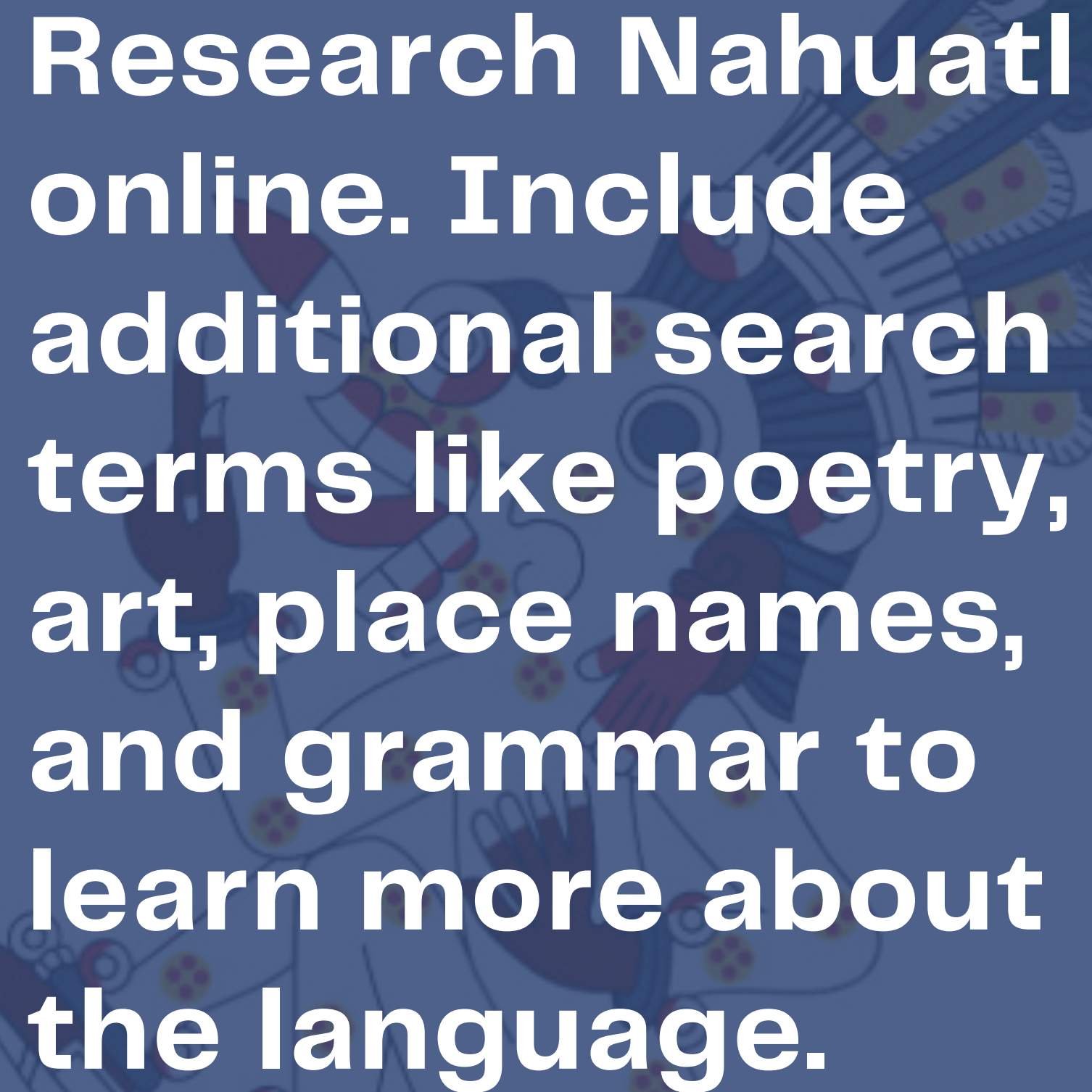
**Chilpochtli**

**Tamalli**

**Tomatl**







**Research Nahuatl  
online. Include  
additional search  
terms like poetry,  
art, place names,  
and grammar to  
learn more about  
the language.**

## **Word Bank**

Create a word bank so you can document new words that you find during your research.

- 
- 
- 
- 
-



# Anahualli

Welcome

1 Artist world map

2 Activities





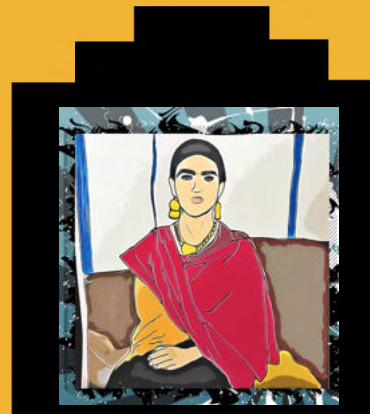
Fun Facts!

# Anahuacalli

The Diego Rivera Anahuacalli Museum is a museum and arts center that he designed to showcase his most loved treasures.

The name is a Nahuatl word that means Edifice of Anahuac.

Anahuac is the Nahuatl word for Ancient Mexico. It means the land between the waters.



ARTIST WORLD MAP



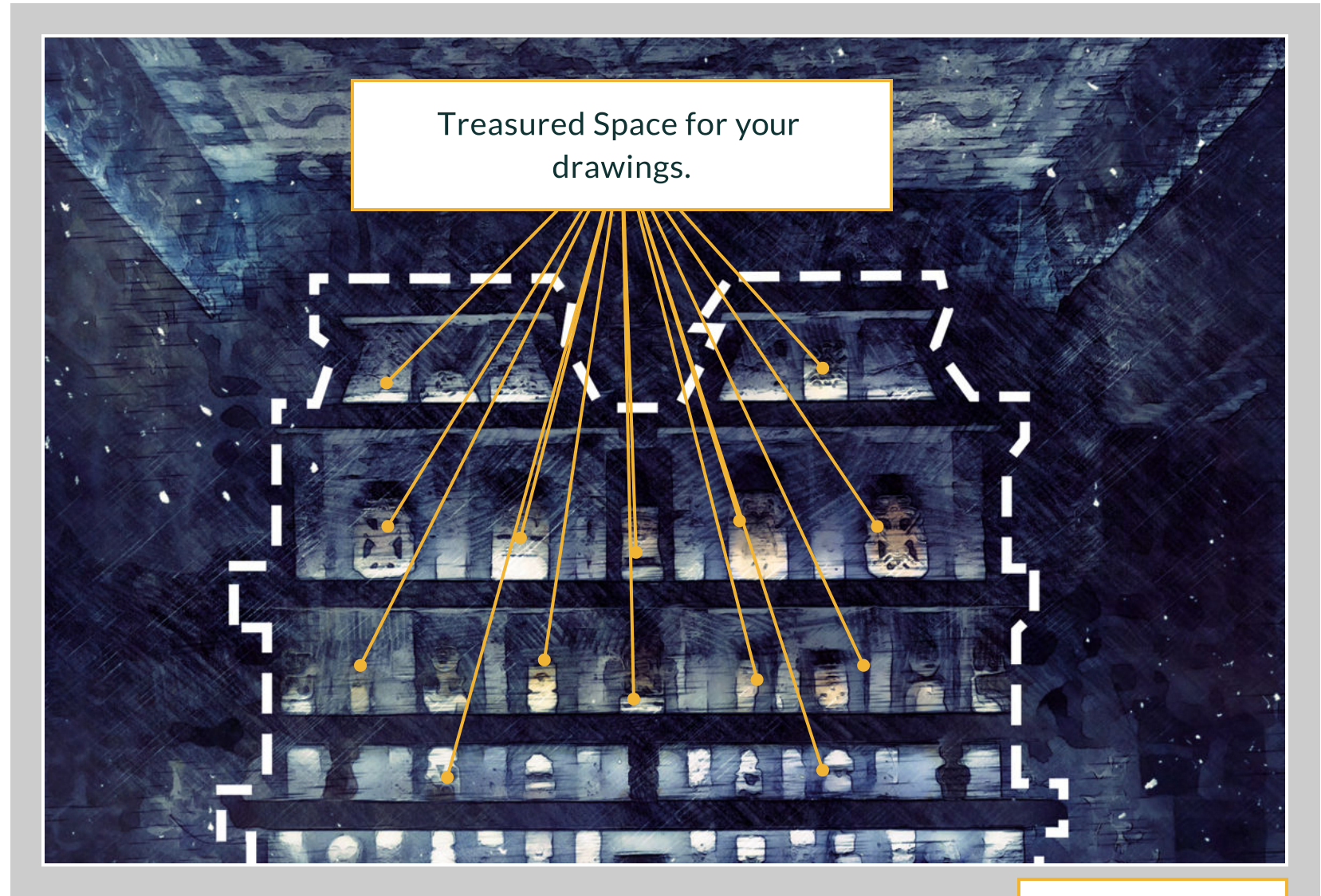


## Activity 1

# Treasured Moments

List your own treasured moments and dreams. Then make drawings for each on small squares of paper.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5



See next page



# Treasured Memories

Stars

Birds  
Mountains

Trees

Land

**Step 1** Print  
and cut around  
the dashed  
line.

**Step 2** Place your  
artwork  
accordingly in any  
of the spaces.

**Step 3** Share the story  
of your own  
Anahuacalli.

Ocean



## Activity 2

# Artist Fan

**Step 2** Create your masterpiece using one of the themes below.

Frida Kahlo

Diego Rivera

Dreams

Dia de los  
Ancestros

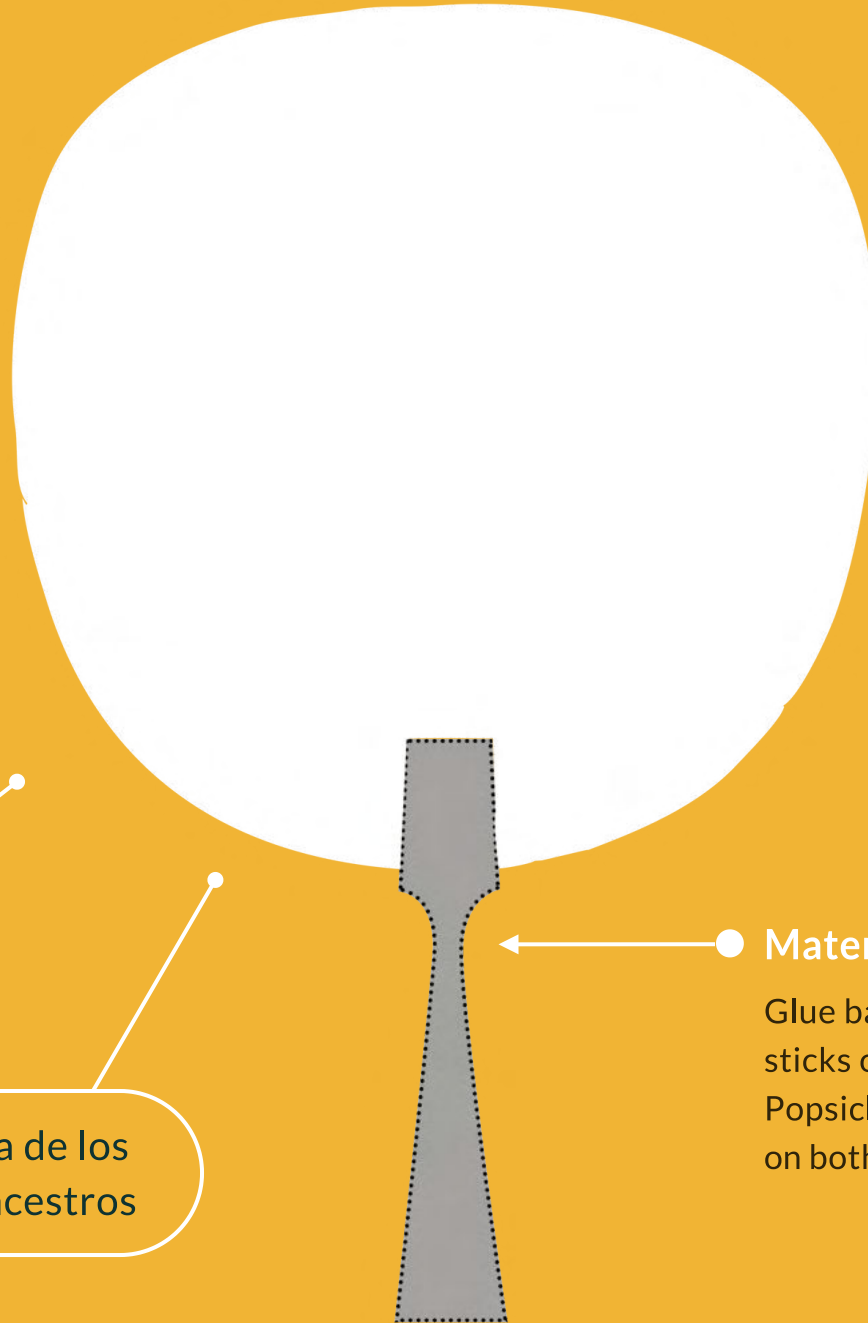
**Step 1** Print and cut around the dashed line of the template on the next page.

**Step 3** Share your art story.

### Materials

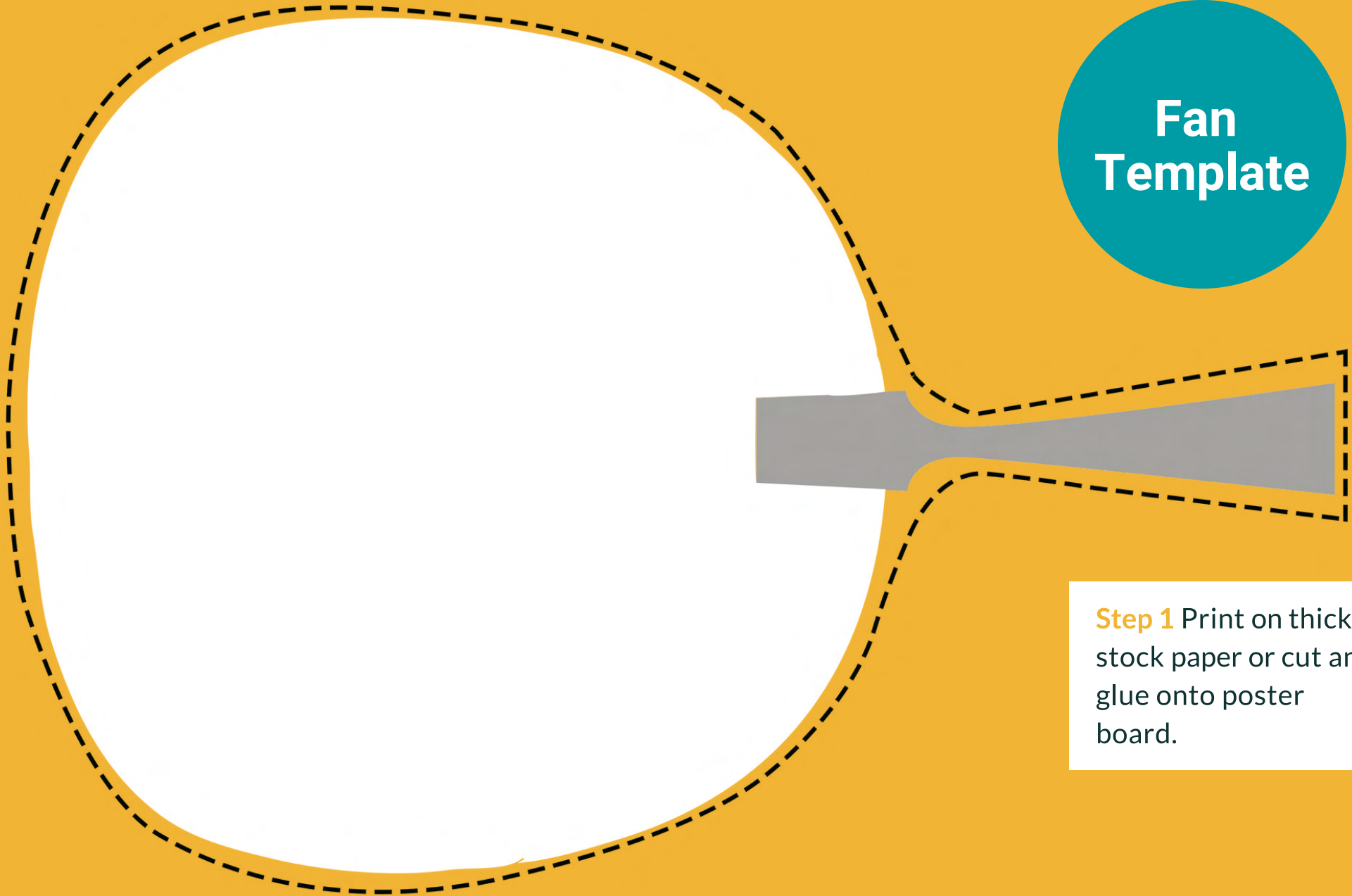
Glue bamboo sticks or Popsicle sticks on both sides.

Suggestion:  
Play recorded opera arias while you create!





# Fan Template



**Step 1** Print on thick stock paper or cut and glue onto poster board.



**Take your  
time. Be  
thoughtful  
in your  
choices as  
you create.**



Examples above provided by artists Nashley and Aisha.



## ACTIVITY 3

# Loved Ones

Flowers



Colors



Happiness



Lands



**Step 1** Print and cut around the outer dotted line.

**Step 2** Choose a loved one to think about.

**Step 3** Using the examples on the left, draw pictures that represent your loved one.

**Step 4 Dedication**  
**Share the Story.**

Oceans





# Expresar Deseos

Al inicio del opera, el coro de aldeanos expresa su deseo que regresen sus seres queridos por el día de los muertos:

“¡Qué se abran las puertas! ¡Qué se abran los caminos! ¡Qué se despierten los muertos de sus sueños, del silencio de las piedras! ¡Qué regresen todos sus seres queridos!”

Expresar deseos según el modelo:  
¡Ojalá se abra la caja de dulces! ¡Ojalá aprendamos a contar nuestras historias!

Pueden usar estos verbos y otros:  
despertar, venir, ser, estar, escribir, tener, dormir, poder, estudiar, viajar...

**1.**

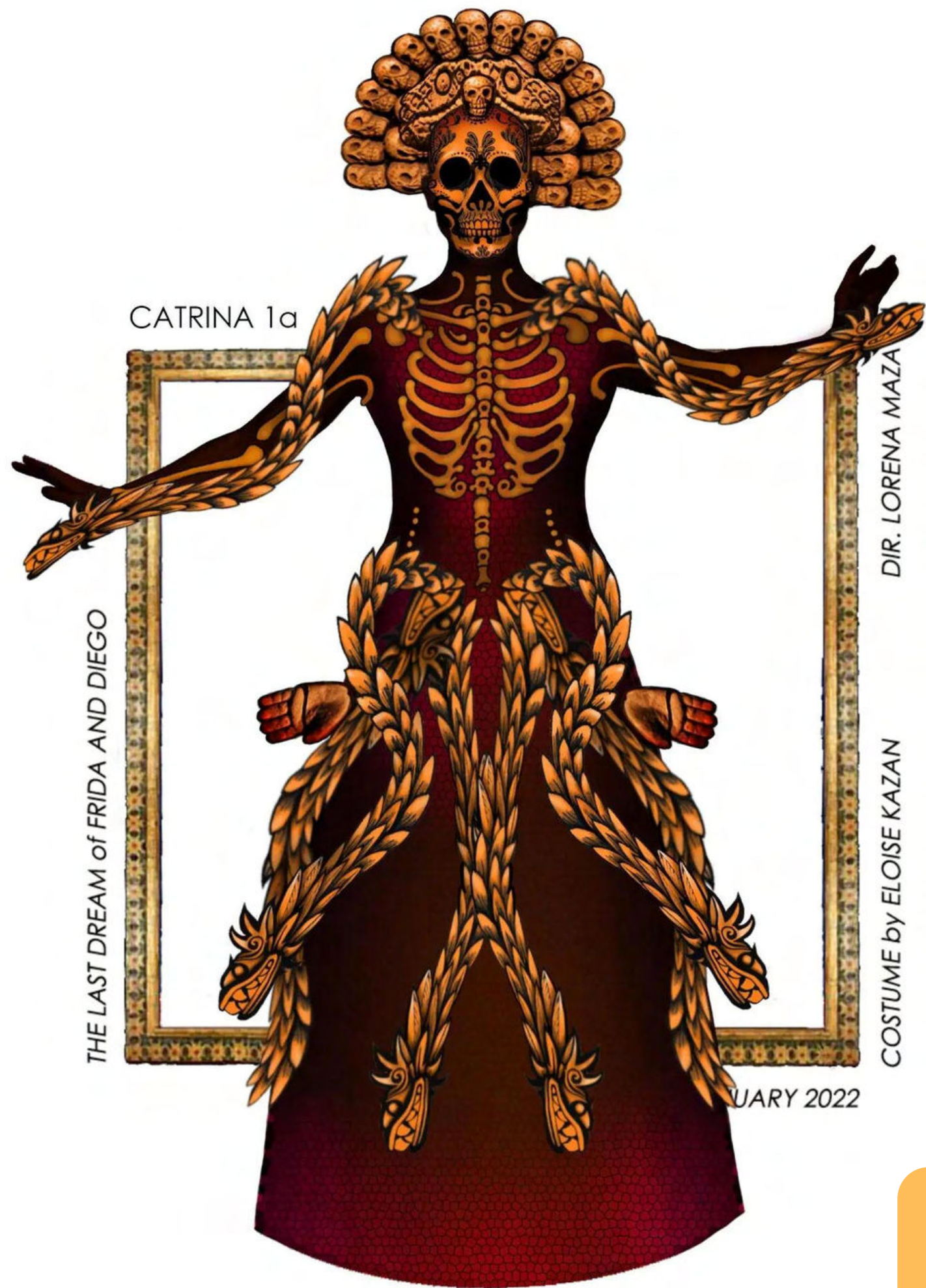
**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

**5.**





# Expresar Preferencias

El coro saluda a Catrina diciendo: “queremos besarle los pies.” Catrina contesta: “Prefiero que me rasquen la espalda.”

Crear un breve dialogo en que un estudiante quiere hacer algo bonito para otro estudiante, si no el/ella prefiere otro “regalo”. Por ejemplo:

A: Quiero invitarte a comer.

B: Prefiero que me invites al cine.

A: ¿Llevo el perro al parque? ...

B: Prefiero que vayas al super.

A SKETCH BY THE COSTUME DESIGNER  
ELOISE KAZAN OF CATRINA



# Formar unas hipótesis

“¿Será él? ¿Será el pintor?” –

Los aldeanos se emocionan porque piensan de reconocer a Diego Rivera, pero no están seguros. Expresando, con el futuro, la posibilidad que es, de hecho, el famoso pintor.

Crear un breve diálogo en que un estudiante expresa algo y otro estudiante contesta con una hipótesis, usando el futuro.



**Tengo hambre y acaban de tocar a la puerta**

Estará llegando una pizza.



**Me imagino ya adulto con ganas de viajar**

Ya sabrás hablar muchos idiomas.

E J E M P L O S





# Esperanzas y Sueños Para el Futuro

Crear diálogos en que comparten sus esperanzas y sueños para el futuro, usando el tiempo futuro y los verbos que se encuentran en el opera (y otros).

Ejemplo: Mi sueño es que beberé siempre en azul (como Frida). ¿Y tú? Poder, volver, vivir, hacer, escribir, estudiar, trabajar, viajar, quedarse, llevar, ver, seguir

Después de haber compartido sus esperanzas y sueños para el futuro, escribe el futuro de tu compañero/a.



# ¡Simón dice!

Jugar en grupos de 4 o 5. Un estudiante hace el papel de Simón, mandando a los demás estudiantes. Los estudiantes tienen que obedecer la orden cuando escucha: Simón dice... Por ejemplo – Simón dice: Vuelve a mí. Simón dice: Siéntate. Simón dice: Levántate. Si Simón no dice “Simón dice” antes de la orden, entonces el estudiante no debe obedecer. Si obedece por error, toma la parte de Simón.

**Aquí hay una lista de verbos que se usan en el opera en la forma del imperativo:**

<div>volver</div> <div>tocar</div> <div>hablar</div> <div>traer</div> <div>levantarse</div> <div>venir</div> <div>cruzar</div>	<div>alentar</div> <div>recordar</div> <div>esconder</div> <div>cerrar</div> <div>acercarse</div> <div>entrar</div> <div>mirar</div>	<div>despertarse</div> <div>levantarse</div> <div>irse</div> <div>prepararse</div> <div>voltearse</div> <div>convertirse</div> <div>quedarse</div>
<div>decir</div> <div>abrir</div> <div>dejar</div> <div>ir (y irse)</div> <div>volver</div> <div>pintar</div> <div>caminar</div>	<div>lanzar</div> <div>formar</div> <div>ser</div> <div>salir</div> <div>ayudar</div> <div>apurar</div> <div>acostarse</div> <div>dormirse</div>	<div>sentarse</div> <div>esconderse</div> <div>ponerse</div> <div>dirigirse</div> <div>reírse</div> <div>girarse</div> <div>alejarse</div>



# Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Park

Diego Rivera

EL ÚLTIMO SUEÑO DE FRIDA Y DIEGO | SAN DIEGO OPERA





# About the painting

Diego Rivera painted *Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Central Park* in 1947. The painting includes hundreds of characters from Mexican history gathered in Mexico City's largest park.

According to Dr. Doris Maria-Reina Bravo, “*Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Central Park* guarantees that histories normally edited out (the stories of the indigenous and the masses) have a place in this narrative. The artist reminds the viewer that the struggles and glory of four centuries of Mexican history are due to the participation of Mexicans from all strata of society.”







# Playwriting Activity

Pick any character from Diego Rivera's Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Central Park and create a short piece of theater from their perspective. Feel free to write or improvise aloud and voice record it! Your scene can be a monologue from one character's perspective or it can be a dialogue between two of the characters in the painting.

**What is this character thinking?**

**What are their hopes and dreams?**

**What do they want?**

**Who might they be speaking to?**

**Why are they at the park this afternoon?**





# Self-Portrait Activity

A self-portrait is a representation of an artist that can be drawn, painted, photographed, or sculpted. A self-portrait captures how an artist views themselves or wants to portray themselves. It can be literal or more imaginative. Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera painted many self portraits in their lifetime. Each self-portrait changed depending on the moment in time and how the artist was feeling.

**SELF-PORTRAIT AS TEHUANA (1943)  
CREDIT: BANCO DE MÉXICO DIEGO RIVERA FRIDA  
KAHLO MUSEUMS TRUST, MEXICO, DF/DACS 2017**



# The Ravages of Time

DIEGO RIVERA, 1949





# Analyzing this self-portrait

## Contextualize

How can the title of the painting help us understand Diego's state of being?

## Reflect

How does Diego look?  
How might he feel?  
What about the painting makes you think that?

## Background

1949 was a tough year for Diego. His friend and companion, muralist Jose Clemente Orozco, died and Diego's request to be readmitted to the Mexican Communist party was rejected, although Frida was re-accepted. Look at this portrait of 63-year-old Diego and think about what it seems to be saying.

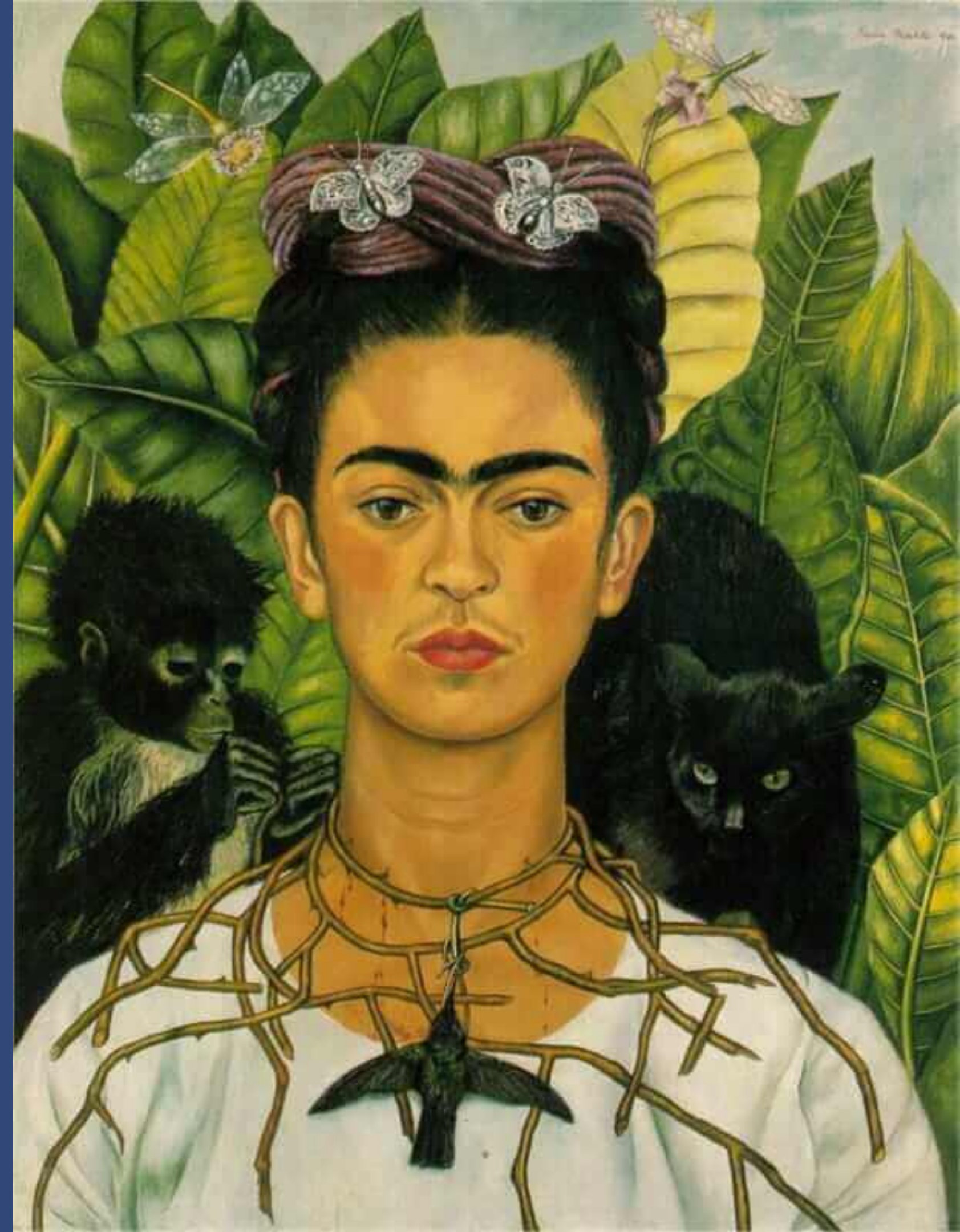
## Research

Go online and search for more of Diego Rivera's self portraits. Notice how they have changed over time.



# Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird

FRIDA KAHLO, 1940.





# Analyzing this self-portrait

## Observe

In this portrait, Frida Kahlo faces the viewer with a background of leaves right behind her. The thorns around her neck form a necklace that pierces her skin.

## Background

Frida spent most of her life in physical pain after a severe bus accident when she was eighteen. She endured numerous operations and spent many years bedridden.

## Symbolism

Frida Kahlo put many symbolic creatures in this painting. She was not painting a realistic scene but using these symbolic elements to express her feelings. What symbols do you notice and what meaning can you gather from how they are used?

## Reflect

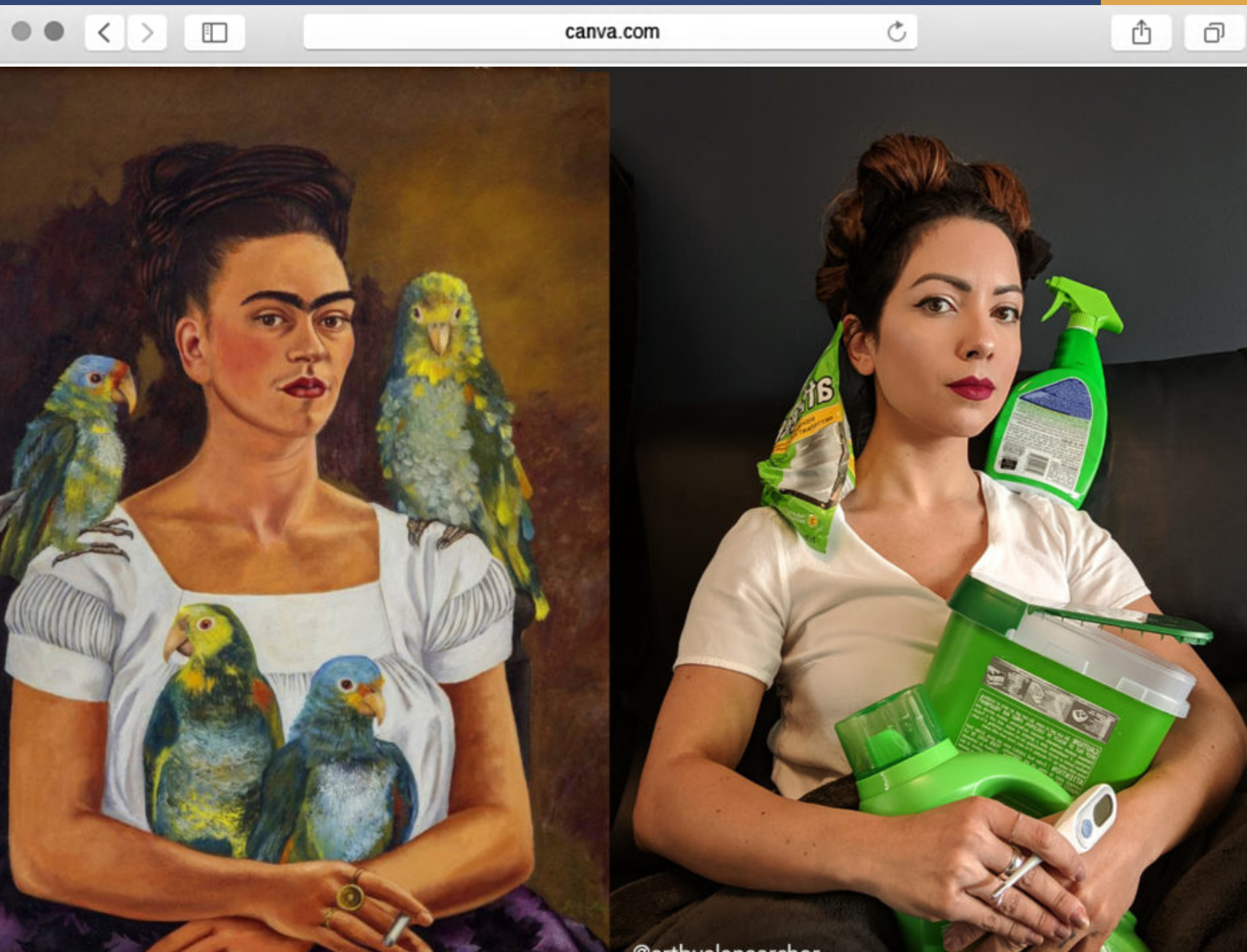
What color are the leaves around her?  
What creatures do you see?  
What might the creatures represent?  
Is this a painting about her suffering?



# Object Self-Portraits

Interior Designer Alana Archer recreated Frida Kahlo's 1941 self-portrait "Yo y Mis Pericos" during COVID-19 quarantine in 2020 using cleaning products as a stand in for the parrots.

Drawing from Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo's practice of self portraiture, create your own self-portrait using a medium of your choice (photography, drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, mixed media). Think about how your creative choices of colors, objects, and facial expressions represent you.







LIBRETTIST  
NILO  
CRUZ

SAN DIEGO OPERA

# El Último Sueño de Frida y Diego Study Guide

Created by

**John Gabriel**

**Cuezpallin Rodriguez**

**Stephanie Jed**

**Samira Hassan**

**Jessica Cortez**

**Christopher Mena**



The Study Guide for the world premiere of *El último sueño de Frida y Diego* on October 29, 2022 was created by the artists and educators listed below.

#### JESSICA CORTEZ

Jessica Cortez is a theatre artist from San Diego, CA. She recently graduated from the MA in Applied Theatre program at the City University of New York School of Professional Studies and currently works as a teaching artist in Brooklyn, New York. Jessica received her BA in both Ethnic Studies and Theatre Arts with a minor and certification in Leadership/Nonprofit Management from the University of San Diego. She is passionate about utilizing arts education as a tool for social justice. Over the course of five years, Jessica has worked as a teaching artist with multiple arts organizations including San Diego Opera, Teatro Izcalli, Ping Chong + Co, Girls Leadership, and the Creative Arts Team. Jessica has performed as an actor, dancer, stilt walker, and fire spinner. She also has experience as a stage manager, assistant director, and experiential producer.

#### JOHN GABRIEL

John Gabriel is the Education Director at San Diego Opera, where he oversees education programming design, including restorative artist residencies implemented in partnership with community-based organizations focused on building deep community connections over many years with arts learning and arts experiences at the center. He holds a BA in Music from the University of California Santa Cruz, and a MA degree in Musicology from SDSU, where he also served as Lecturer in Music. He has conducted ethnomusicological fieldwork in Mexico, Ghana, and Indonesia, and is an active advocate for the arts and creative youth development.

#### SAMIRA HASSAN

Samira Hassan is a recent graduate of Patrick Henry High School. She is a young Muslim Hijabi woman and the daughter of two immigrants who fled their home country of Somalia due to civil war. She was born in San Diego and raised in a very diverse neighborhood called City Heights and is a social activist who spends most of her time reading, writing, or sewing. She strongly advocates for City Heights and will continue to do so because, as a young person, she feels it is important to actively amplify her voice for the sake of her community. Since she values the work done by nonprofit organizations like MIDCITYCAN and Pana to better her community, she joined both of them. She intends to keep taking part in community service projects in City Heights. Samira's goal is to produce informative documentaries about political or social issues as she pursues a career in journalism.

#### STEPHANIE JED

Stephanie Jed received her BA in Classics from Lawrence University and a PhD in Italian Literature from Yale University. She is Professor Emerita of Italian and Comparative Literature in the Department of Literature at the University of California, San Diego. Her research interests include medieval and early modern Italian literature, Italian humanism, early modern constructions of knowledge, literary theory, transnational feminism, and feminist theory. She has published two books, *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism* and *Wings for our Courage: Gender, Erudition, and Republican Thought*, and many articles.



#### CHRISTOPHER MENA

Christopher Mena is currently a PhD candidate with research interest in the racial, ethnic, cultural identity development of Mexican American students participating in school music ensembles. Additionally, he has published articles about Ethnic Studies, Native American Education, and World Music Pedagogy. He has extensive international work experience with a current focus on helping to develop music education programs. He is a co-author of the 2018 book "World Music Pedagogy Vol. IV: Instrumental Music Education." He was a music teacher in City Heights for the San Diego Unified School District for 10 years and is now employed by Washington Ethnic Studies Now.

#### KUESPALLIN RODRIGUEZ

Cuez is an Educator, experienced in developing culturally relevant curriculum and projects that celebrate diversity and engage students in meaningful learning. He has vast experience in restorative practice and is certified by the national compadres network in Transformational Health and Youth Rites of Passage. Cuez has a BA in Computer Arts and Science and holds a California teaching credential. He also has diplomas in Animation and has studied Cultural Anthropology in Mexico and Applied Transdisciplinarity. He has also guest lectured at several Universities. Cuez is a Nahua cultural practitioner with a focus on language revitalization and indigenous ways of healing. At the National Conflict Resolution Center, Cuez facilitates The Art of Inclusive Communication training, Restorative Practice circles, and circle training with inmates. He also facilitates community self-care circles and is trilingual. Cuez has served as a San Diego Opera teaching artist for six years and is a passionate nature photographer and filmmaker.