

# MUSEUM web quest VIRTUAL visit + more



## FRIDA KAHLO DIEGO RIVERA & MEXICAN MODERNISM

THE JACQUES AND NATASHA GELMAN COLLECTION

DENVER  
**art**  
MUSEUM

HIGH  
SCHOOL

WORK  
SHEET

### DIRECTIONS:

Mexican Modernists helped define the national identity post-revolution in the 1920s. What roles do artists play in social change today? Research some contemporary artists who participate in social change and write your notes below. In addition to the role Diego Rivera played in the 1920s, here are a few examples from the Denver Art Museum to get you started!

### ARTWORK

Make a doodle or cut and paste a copy of the artwork here.

### ARTIST AND CONTEXT

Who made the artwork? Is there an issue, conflict, and/or place it relates to?

### ROLE OF THE ARTWORK

What do we know about this artwork? Why did the artist make it? How might this artwork be understood by those who see it? In your own words what is the call to action?



Diego Rivera, postrevolutionary Mexico



Mao Decorated, Yu Youhan, late 1980s after the Chinese Cultural Revolution



Fitz Scholder, 1970s protests to change the federal Indian policy



We the People, Shepard Fairey, present-day American government. Questioning what do these three famous words in the preamble to the Constitution mean in the 21st century?

These murals were meant to inspire people to embrace a new Mexican identity of a unified people that combined celebrations of both Indigenous roots and modern concepts. What was the impact? Not only did the muralism movement affect Mexico, but many of the artists became internationally known and made murals all around the globe.

Youhan adapted a pop art-style portrait of Mao Tse-tung overlaid with cynicism to convey feelings about the social and political environment in China. Mao Decorated is one of the earliest in his Mao portrait series. Here the artist has strewn abstracted flower and cloud shapes over Mao's face, an allusion to the remote countryside where intellectuals were banished during the Cultural Revolution. It is also an ironic reference to Mao's principle that art be both for the pleasure of the masses and for political instruction. This artwork is in the genre of Political Pop, art that questioned the political and social climate of a rapidly changing China.

Although Scholder claimed he was not a protest painter, some of his images became symbols of Native empowerment at a time when Native protestors were occupying government sites and calling for changes in federal Indian policy. Posters of this painting were being used at protests across America in the 1970s.

Fairey often addresses issues of social and political significance. Taking its name from the first line of the U.S. Constitution, the series We the People features portraits of women of different racial and cultural backgrounds in Fairey's trademark style and a limited color palette. The color palette is restrained to a red, white, and blue because it is connected to the U.S. Constitution. With slogans such as "We the People . . . Are Greater Than Fear," Fairey's posters reinforce the need to engage in the political conversation.

# graphic organizer

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