

Latino Art and Culture

Lotería Cards

Overview: After completing this lesson, students will have a better understanding of a cultural tradition that influenced one Latino artist.

Subject Area: Social Studies

Age Group/Grade Level: 9-12 years, grades 4-7

Duration: approximately 30 min.



Carmen Lomas Garza, [Lotería-Tabla Llena](#), 1972, hand-colored etching and aquatint on paper, image: 13 7/8 x 17 5/8 in. sheet, 16 3/4 x 21 in., Gift of Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, 1995.50.59. © 1972, Carmen Lomas Garza



Carmen Lomas Garza, [Lotería-Primera Tabla](#), [Detail], 1972, color etching on paper, sheet: 16 1/4 x 14 7/8 in., Museum purchase through the Smithsonian Latino Initiatives Pool and the Smithsonian Institution Collections Acquisition Program, 1995.25.1. © 1972, Carmen Lomas Garza

Background

Similar to bingo, Lotería Mexicana is a game of chance played throughout Mexico and the United States. In Lotería, each player selects a game board, or *tabla*, from a deck. Instead of numbers and letters, each traditional *tabla* features a grid with pictures, called *monitos*, or little figures, which are associated with riddles and puns.

Discussion

Share Carmen Lomas Garza's *Lotería-Tabla Llena* with students. Encourage discussion with the following questions:

- What's going on in this image? What do you think these people are doing?
- How do the people in this image know each other? Why might they be gathered together?

In college, Lomas Garza wanted to make a deck of modern lotería tablas to update the game she remembered playing as a child. Her mother, who made traditional sets of lotería tablas, insisted that her daughter create a traditional set before updating it to make it her own. Challenge your students to think further:

- Imagine updating this artwork 50 years in the future. What might change? What might stay the same?

Activity

Have students choose a *monito* from the list of traditional images on page 2 and replicate it. Afterwards, have students brainstorm ways to update this card to make it either more modern or personally relevant.

- How might this *monito* be different today? For example, how does a harpsichord player from the past look similar to or different from a rock musician today?
- What other versions of the item have I seen (e.g., an army boot vs. a rain boot)?
- How can I make this card reflect my artistic style?

Have students select one of their ideas and create an updated lotería *monito* to pair with the traditional one.

Have students reflect on the project by discussing the value of tradition.

- Why do you think Carmen Lomas Garza's mother wanted her to make a traditional deck?
- What are some of your family's traditions?
- Which ones are important to you and why? How might they change in the future?

For full-size images of these artworks by Carmen Lomas Garza, visit:

Lotería-Tabla Llena—https://ids.si.edu/ids/deliveryService?id=SAAM-1995.50.59_1 and

Lotería-Primera Tabla—https://ids.si.edu/ids/deliveryService?id=SAAM-1995.25.1_1

Selected Monitos and Descriptions

Español		English	
El Tema	La Descripción	Subject	Description
La Corona	El sombrero de los reyes.	Crown	The hat of the kings.
La Escalera	Súbeme paso apasito. No quieras pegar brinquitos.	Ladder	Climb me step by step. You don't want to hop up.
El Paraguas	Para el sol y para el agua.	Umbrella	For the sun and the rain.
El Árbol	El que a buen árbol se arrima, buena sombra le cobija.	Tree	He that seeks the shelter of a good tree, will have good shade to cover him.
La Luna	El farol de enamorados.	Moon	The lantern of lovers.
El Sol	La cobija de los pobres.	Sun	The blanket of the poor.
La Dama	La dama puliendo el paso, por toda la calle real.	Lady	The lady, taking an elegant walk along the main street.
El Gallo	El que le cantó a San Pedro no le volverá a cantar.	Rooster	He that sang to St. Peter will not return to sing again.
La Estrella	La guía de los marineros.	Star	The sailor's guide.
El Tambor	No te arruges, cuero Viejo, que te quiero pa'tambor.	Drum	Don't wrinkle, old leather, because I want you for my drum.
La Araña	Atarántamela a palos, no me la dejes llegar.	Spider	Stun it with blows, don't let it get near me.
El Pescado	El que por la boca muere.	Fish	He who dies through the mouth.
El Soldado	Uno, dos y tres, el soldado p'al cuartel.	Soldier	One, two and three, the soldier goes to the barracks.
La Calavera	Al pasar por el panteón, me encontré una calavera.	Skull	While passing by the graveyard, I found a skull.
La Cotorra	Cotorra, daca la pata y empiézame a platicar.	Parrot	Parrot, land here and chat with me.
La Sandía	La barriga que Juan tenía era empacho de sandía.	Water-melon	Juan's belly was stuffed full of watermelon.
La Bota	Una bota es igual que la otra.	Boot	One boot is the same as the other.
El Corazón	No me extrañes corazón, que regreso en el camión.	Heart	Don't miss me sweetheart, because I will return by truck.
La Bandera	Verde, blanco y colorado, la bandera del soldado.	Flag	Green, white, and red, the flag of the soldier.
La Mano	La mano de un criminal.	Hand	The hand of a criminal.
El Músico	El músico trompa de hule, ya no me quiere tocar.	Musician	The musician has oiled his horn; now he doesn't want to play for me.
La Rosa	Rosa, Rosita, Rosaura.	Rose	Rose, Rosie, Rosaura.
El Nopal	Al que todos van a ver, cuando tienen que comer.	Cactus	All go to see it when they have to eat.
El Alacrán	El que con la cola pica.	Scorpion	He that stings with his tail.
La Sirena	Con los cantos de sirena no te vayas a marear.	Mermaid	Don't get dizzy with the songs of the mermaid.