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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1999 Volume II: Art and Identity in Mexico, from the Olmec to Modern Times

Art Images of Tenochtitlan ? Past and Present: the Case of the Virgin of Guadalupe

Guide for Curriculum Unit 99.02.10

by Luis A. Recalde

In the past I have worked on some curriculum units about the history of Tenochtitlan as a city and as a center of power in the Mexico of the sixteenth century, before and during the conquest. In these units my interest rested on the opportunities to create an atmosphere of learning and exploration with my students. The wealth of the cultures involved and the theme itself presented for students of the fifth grade level ample resources to apply a complex array of skills in any particular task. Building a model of a city was one of those tasks. At present it is my intention to create a curriculum unit in which students will apply their previous knowledge to expand the possibilities for further learning in a multidisciplinary context. Icons and objects of power created by artists of Tenochtitlan were and are created and recreated in the past and in the present. The Spanish cleverly realized the power of the Aztec icons and devised methods to incorporate them into the new culture emerging from the original encounter. Such seems to be the case of the Virgin of Guadalupe. I would like to give emphasis to the transitional period when the colony was established to throw some light on the mechanisms of communication, control and power. This would make us understand Mexico at the present time better.

(Recommended for Art, Math, Social Studies, and History, grades 6-12.)

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