

## **ART 101: Studio Art Appreciation - Arts Activity – Whitney Museum Virtual Visit**

If you are completing a virtual museum/gallery visit, each of the three arts activity assignments will feature different types of virtual experiences to choose from. Use this set of questions if you are visiting one of the Whitney Museum of American Art exhibits.

### **Opening Question:**

- Which exhibit did you choose to explore? Why?

*I chose to view Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art. This headline stood out to me. I am a History major, and so anything that combines cross cultural references is fascinating to me. I was hoping for some political references and I was not let down by the combination of history, politics, and art.*

**Use of space:** Going to see an exhibition, the experience is not just about the individual works of art (or objects) – but the larger experience – how all of the elements of the exhibition (art, objects, informational text, etc.) work together. The same is true of viewing online documentation of exhibitions. You might even have access to more “extras” in a virtual visit.

- What are your impressions of the physical exhibition space documented in photos? *It looks very minimalist and simple. The art is clearly the centerpiece. The ceiling is high, and I love the whites. The pop of pink was unexpected yet lively. I could not discern whether the pink was there for a specific symbolic reason, or if it was simply a splash of color among the minimalism. The basic background, for many pictures, was needed. A lot of the art had a lot going on and was full of energy and “busyness”. A more detailed exhibition space would have confused that.*
- How would you describe the virtual experience, including the various resources paired with this exhibit? *It is incredibly comprehensive and interesting. My personal favorite part of the exhibit was the first video, called “Muralism Today: Contemporary Artists Respond to Vida Americana”. This video was interesting because throughout it, the viewer heard many different stories, voices, and perspectives. It was refreshing to hear the art explained by the artist themselves. There were many more resources that complemented the exhibit, such as the articles and gallery pictures.*
- What is effective? Is there anything you would change? *The space is easy to navigate and fluid. I love the white backdrop and the simplicity of the online exhibition. Everything is easy to find. I would change the gallery pictures. Many of the pictures were small and the image was of many pieces of art, making them appear small on my screen and therefore I was not able to fully view them the way I would have liked to. I suppose it added a more complete picture, but more emphasis on the individual art pieces would be*

*appreciated. When I walk through a gallery in person, I like to focus on individual pieces rather than the exhibition as a whole. Perhaps that is just me.*

**Key messages:** Every exhibit has main topics/themes that tie the work together. Sometimes this is made obvious in an exhibition statement or artist statement. Sometimes we have less information and are left to make our own assumptions. Even when we are given a lot of information, sometimes we might notice other themes/topics that are not addressed.

- What is this exhibition about? *This exhibit focuses on the story and impact of three Mexican men (José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros) who spent a brief time in the United States. Their art and their stories impacted American artwork. Their artwork was deeply rooted in pursuing social and political justice. They shared revolutionary art and revolutionary ideas. This exhibition shows art from a collection of people who found inspiration within that impact. It appeared to me to combine art, history, politics, and emotion. It was incredibly thought provoking.*
- If this is a solo show, what purpose do you think the artist had in creating the work? *N/A*
- If this is a group show, what ties it all together? *The three initial artists, Los Tres Grandes, tied the entire show together. The politically charged artwork connected the succeeding artists' work, as well as the energetic and busy art style that they seemed to share. Many of the artists seemed to share a passion for social justice and artwork. They used their platform to spread messages and promote social or political change.*

If you chose a retail gallery venue:

- What is the purpose of this space? *N/A*
- What types of work are included?
- What types of artists are represented?

### **The Artwork:**

- What is your favorite piece in this exhibition? List the artist and title. Why is this your favorite? *My favorite piece of artwork is by Diego Rivera, Reproduction of Man, Controller of the Universe, 1934. This painting is beautiful and it had so much going on. I would have loved to see it in person; the canvas itself appears to be huge. The painting, to me, shows the progression of time and history in an interesting way; there appears to be spectators in the formation of the universe. I love this unique perspective.*
- What is your least favorite piece in this exhibition? List the artist and title. Why is it your least favorite?

*My least favorite piece was difficult to choose. I eventually chose the piece that struck me the least. It is Aspiration by Aaron Douglas. This piece has no apparent meaning to me.*

*The description of the art tells an interesting story of Black American's retelling their story, but the meaning eludes me from the painting. I dislike the colors and the shadows. Overall it is bland and not eye catching.*