



1932

Lithograph

Image: 16 1/4 × 13 1/8 inches  
(41.3 × 33.4 cm)

Sheet: 17 1/16 × 14 inches  
(43.4 × 35.5 cm)

**JOSÉ DIEGO MARÍA RIVERA**

Mexican

Purchased with the Lola Downin Peck  
Fund from the Carl and Laura Zigrosser  
Collection, 1976, 1976-97-114

## LET'S LOOK

What do you think is happening in this picture?

What happened before this moment?

What will happen next?

How is the main figure, Zapata, dressed?

What is he holding?

How are the people behind him dressed?

What are they holding?

How is the figure on the ground different from Zapata and his followers?

How does the artist use light and darkness in different areas?

What meaning might that suggest?

## ZAPATA

Diego Rivera created this print of revolutionary leader and land-reform champion Emiliano Zapata in 1932, twelve years after the end of the Mexican Revolution. Dressed in simple white peasant clothing, Zapata and his horse stand over the lifeless figure of a soldier. The farm workers for whose cause he fought gather behind him. In contrast to the soldier's sword, Zapata and his followers carry farming tools as weapons, showing their close ties to the land.

## ABOUT THIS ARTIST

Diego Rivera (1886–1957) was born in Mexico to parents of European and Mexican ancestry. Because of his amazing drawing ability, he was accepted to the *Academia de San Carlos*, a prestigious art school in Mexico City, at the age of twelve. When Rivera was twenty-one, he received a government scholarship to travel in Spain and France. There he met leading modern artists, including Pablo Picasso, and learned to paint in the Cubist style that was popular in Europe.

In 1921 Rivera returned home. He and other Mexican artists began to look to pre-Columbian artifacts (made before the arrival of Columbus to the Americas) and native folk art for inspiration, hoping to create works that were uniquely Mexican. Rivera also became a leading figure of the Mexican mural projects, a government initiative that sought to teach Mexicans about their history and culture through large-scale public murals.

## ABOUT EMILIANO ZAPATA

Though not born into a poor family, the Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata (1879–1919) identified with the injustices suffered by Mexican farmers and field-workers and spent his life trying to better their situation. Zapata and his army, the Zapatistas, fought to

redistribute lands held by a few wealthy owners to needy farmers and farm workers.

## **MEXICO AND MODERN PRINTMAKING: A REVOLUTION IN THE GRAPHIC ARTS, 1920–1950**

Diego Rivera's print of Zapata is part of *Mexico and Modern Printmaking: A Revolution in the Graphic Arts, 1920–1950*, a traveling exhibition of over one hundred prints and posters made in Mexico following the Mexican Revolution (1910–20). During this period, prints and posters became the ideal



*Posada in His Workshop*  
(Homage to Posada)

1953

Linocut

Block 14 x 25 1/2 inches

**LEOPOLDO MÉNDEZ**  
Mexican, 1902–1969

McNay Art Museum, San Antonio: Gift of John Palmer Leeper, by exchange, 1998.2

way to promote political, social, and artistic ideas as they were inexpensive to produce and easy to distribute. Over the next thirty years, artists in Mexico brought printmaking to new heights, both as a modern art form and as a tool for social change.

At the heart of the printmaking movement in Mexico was the *Taller de Gráfica Popular* (Graphic Workshop of the People), or TGP, an artists' cooperative founded with the goal of creating images for Mexican people. In addition to making limited-edition prints for sale to collectors, the TGP published thousands of larger-scale posters to promote political ideals and social initiatives. Though Rivera was not a member of the TGP, many of the artists represented in the *Mexico and Modern Printmaking* exhibition, such as Leopoldo Méndez and Elizabeth Catlett, belonged to the cooperative.



*Reading (Literacy)*

1948

Lithograph

Image: 11 7/8 x 16 1/2 inches  
(30.2 x 41.9 cm)

Sheet: 17 5/8 x 22 7/8 inches  
(44.8 x 58.1 cm)

**ELIZABETH CATLETT**  
American

Purchased with the Lola Downin Peck Fund, the Carl and Laura Zigrosser Collection, and with the gift of Jay Richardson Massey in honor of Sarah d'Harnoncourt (by exchange), 1998, 1998-55-1

Many TGP members took inspiration from the works of José Guadalupe Posada (Mexican, 1852–1913), whose inexpensive prints commenting on Mexican life and politics were widely sold in the streets and barrios of Mexico City. This print by Leopoldo Méndez depicts Posada in his workshop.

This image by Elizabeth Catlett is typical of the work produced by the TGP. The print promoted public education and literacy at a time when children in many parts of Mexico were being sent to school for the first time.