

FOLK ART & INFLUENCES FROM ABROAD

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- A brief introduction to Folk Art
 - Videos created by Philadelphia's Magic Gardens
 - Mexican Folk Art brochure created by Philadelphia's Magic Gardens
 - Lesson plan created by Philadelphia's Magic Gardens
 - Our favorite process videos about folk art techniques
 - Comprehensive website about Folk Artists from Oaxaca, Mexico
 - Books and articles about Folk Art
 - Children's books inspired by Folk Art and Folk Artists
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INTRODUCTION

Cultural and artistic influences from all over the world can be found in Philadelphia's Magic Gardens (PMG). In some cases it is a reference to a country, such as Mexico, Israel, or Ecuador, painted on a tile by PMG creator Isaiah Zagar. Sometimes it is a phrase or entire story written in another language, such as Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew, French, or Farsi. Most commonly, and abundantly, it is the pieces of Folk Art that are embedded in the mosaics that make up Philadelphia's Magic Gardens.



FOLK ART

Folk Art is handmade work that reflects the stories, people, cultures and traditions of a particular region. The artistic skills are passed down through generations, often within families. Folk Art can include pottery, wood carving, weaving, and more. Many types of Folk Art were first created to be functional but later were made only for aesthetic value.



PMG CREATOR ISAIAH ZAGAR WITH LOCAL PERUVIAN ARTISTS DURING HIS PEACE CORPS SERVICE IN 1966, PHOTO BY CARL DOERNER

THE ZAGARS AND FOLK ART

Julia Zagar, Isaiah's wife, went to university in Mexico City, where she began a lifelong love of Latin American Folk Art. The Zagars connected with Folk Artists, as a couple, in the 1960s when they worked in Peru as Peace Corps volunteers. Their love for Folk Art continued to grow as they purchased works from around the world for the Eye's Gallery, Julia's store at 4th and South Streets.

Folk Art objects have become an integral element of Isaiah's installations, as he includes broken objects and commissions special works based on his drawings. The majority of the work is Mexican but works can be found from India, Peru, Ecuador, Morocco, Indonesia, and Guatemala. The Zagars and the non-profit PMG still travel to Mexico regularly to purchase work from artists.

VIDEOS ABOUT FOLK ART IN PMG

Spotlight on specific Folk Artists important to PMG:



The Aguilar Family
[English](#) and [Spanish](#)



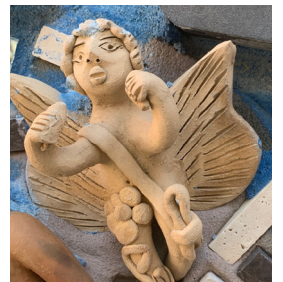
The García Family
[English](#) and [Spanish](#)



The Jiménez Family
[English](#) only



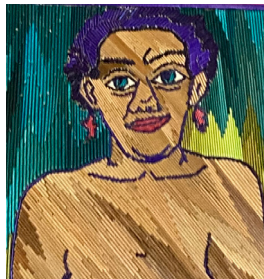
The Lorenzo Family
[English](#) and [Spanish](#)



Irma Blanco
[English](#) and [Spanish](#)



Joel García
[English](#) and [Spanish](#)



Luz María Salinas
[English](#) only



Luis Valencia
[English](#) and [Spanish](#)



Jorge Wilmot
[English](#) and [Spanish](#)

VIDEO SPOTLIGHT INSIDE PMG

- [Día de Muertos](#). Discover calaveras (skulls) and calacas (skeletons) in the gardens and learn how they are used during the Day of the Dead.
- [Alebrijes](#). A look at a fantastical Folk Art tradition begun by Pedro Linares.
- [The Huppa](#). How a collaboration between Isaiah Zagar and Balinese woodcarvers became a feature at Philadelphia's Magic Gardens.



HUPPA, INSTALLED IN PMG'S SCULPTURE GARDEN



A PMG FOLK ART EXHIBITION ON VIDEO

- Hecho en México/Made in Mexico, an [exhibition walkthrough](#).
- Hecho en México/Made in Mexico, a bit of [background on the exhibition](#).

CRAFTING VIDEOS

- [Tin Art](#) (Hojalata), crafting with materials you probably have at home.
- [Sugar Skulls](#), crafting with Ivonne Pinto García (in Spanish with English subtitles).

PMG LESSON PLAN

[Alebrije sculptures](#), a lesson plan for grades 6-8 that can be adapted for younger or older students.

QUICK READ

[“Mexican Folk Art at Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens.”](#) a brochure in English and [Spanish](#) that explores artists whose work can be found in PMG.

FOLK ART PROCESS VIDEOS

- Patterned [cement tiles](#), like those associated with Morocco and Spain, are made using a surprising [method](#) that hasn't changed since the mid-19th century. You can find these tiles on the floor in PMG's back gallery.
 - Chinese [brush painting](#) existing for over 6000 years. Isaiah Zagar had a residency in Tianjin, China, at the College of Fine Arts in 1987, where he learned the traditional [technique](#).
 - [Woodblock printing](#) is an ancient art form still [taught](#) and used to decorate textiles in Rajasthan, India. Isaiah Zagar did a residency in Bhagvan, Rajasthan and collaborated with a family of artisans in 2003.
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FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

[Friends of Oaxacan Folk Art](#). A website created by Friends of Oaxacan Folk Art (FOFA) seeks to preserve and promote the rich Folk Art traditions of Oaxaca, Mexico, which have been passed on from generation to generation, often over hundreds of years.



ALEBRIJE ARTIST, JOEL GARCÍA, VISITS THE ZAGARS AT THEIR HOME IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, USA



ISAIAH ZAGAR VISITING CERAMIC ARTIST, JOSÉ GARCÍA ANTONIO, IN OCOTLÁN DE MORELOS, OAXACA, MEXICO



ISAIAH ZAGAR COLLABORATING WITH ARTIST, IRMA BLANCO, AT HER STUDIO IN OCOTLÁN DE MORELOS, OAXACA, MEXICO

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

- [*Folk Treasures from Mexico: The Nelson A. Rockefeller Collection*](#) by Marion Oettinger Jr., particularly "The Mexican Folk Artist," pages 193-199. A look at the finest collection of Mexican Folk Art assembled in the United States
 - [*The Spirit of Folk Art: The Girard Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art*](#) by Henry Glassie, Michel Monteaux (Illustrator and Photographer). A selection from 100,000 pieces representing 100 cultures, amassed over 50 years of world travel
 - [*Mexican Tiles*](#) by Masako Takahashi. An exploration of classic and contemporary tile work, from colonial-era church facades ornately covered with Talavera tiles to vivid modern tilescapes
 - [*Talavera Poblana: Four Centuries of a Mexican Ceramic Tradition*](#) by Margaret Connors McQuade, Jaime C. Castro. An illustrated bilingual exploration into the development of Talavera Poblana glazed earthenware, from the seventeenth century when it was introduced to the New World in Puebla, Mexico, to the present day
 - "[The History of Talavera Tile](#)," a blog which offers a concise history of Talavera tiles in Mexico
 - "[Woodcarving](#)," on Bali Extranet, a blog run by Indonesian residents that offers an overview of Balinese woodworking traditions by Amy Dempsey (2021)
 - [*Cement Tile: Evolution of an art form / El Mosaico Hidráulico: Arte en evolución*](#) by Carmen Ortega and Ana Mitila Lora. An illustrated book that explores the evolution of cement tile from its invention during the end of the 19th Century in Europe to its popularization in Northern Africa, the Americas and Asia
 - "[Artful Sculptors of Whimsy](#)," Organization of American States, Susan N. Masuoka, January 1, 1995. An article by the author of *En Calavera: The Papier-Mâché Art of the Linares Family*, an intensive look at the Linares Family which has been creating large-scale papier-mâché effigies since the 19th century, and is known for the invention of the intricately painted alebrijes popularized by Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo
 - "[The Papier-Mâché Wizards of Mexico](#)," Roads and Kingdoms, Jorge Pedro Uribe Llamas, March 29, 2018. An online article about the present-day work of the Linares Family, and what they say Coco got wrong
 - "[Uncovering Tonalá's history at the National Ceramic Museum](#)," MexConnect, Erin Cassin, February 1, 2006. A blog post exploring authentic mestizo ceramic traditions at the museum established by [Jorge Wilmot](#)
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BOOKS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

- [*ABeCedarios: Mexican Folk Art ABCs in English and Spanish*](#) by Cynthia Weill, featuring hand-carved and hand-painted animals by the Jiménez Family from Oaxaca, Mexico
- [*Animal Talk: Mexican Folk Art Animal Sounds in English and Spanish*](#) by Cynthia Weill, featuring hand-carved, hand-painted animals by Rubí Fuentes and Efraín Broa of Oaxaca, Mexico
- [*Art from Her Heart: Folk Artist Clementine Hunter*](#) by Kathy Whitehead and Shane W. Evans (Illustrator), a picture-book biography that introduces kids to a self-taught painter who depicted backbreaking work on a southern farm and was barred from her own gallery show for the color of her skin

- [Calavera Abecedario: A Day of the Dead Alphabet Book](#) by Jeanette Winter, a picture book that follows a fictional family of Folk Artists as they prepare papier-mâché skulls and skeletons for one of Mexico's largest annual celebrations
- [Colores de la Vida: Mexican Folk Art Colors in English and Spanish](#) by Cynthia Weill, featuring hand-carved and hand-painted animals by artisans from Oaxaca, Mexico
- [Count Me In!: A Parade of Mexican Folk Art Numbers in English and Spanish](#) by Cynthia Weill, featuring clay sculptures by the Aguilar Sisters from the village of Ocotlán de Morelos in Oaxaca, Mexico
- [Josefina](#) by Jeanette Winter, a picture book inspired by master ceramicist Josefina Aguilar from the village of Ocotlán de Morelos in Oaxaca, Mexico
- [Let's Work: Mexican Folk Art Trabajos in English and Spanish](#) by Cynthia Weill, featuring miniature palm weavings by master artisans from the Mexican village of Chigmecatitlán
- [Mi Familia Calaca / My Skeleton Family](#) by Cynthia Weill, featuring papier-mâché calacas (skeletons) by Jesus Canseco Zárate from Oaxaca, Mexico
- [Opuestos: Mexican Folk Art Opposites in English and Spanish](#) by Cynthia Weill, featuring hand-carved, hand-painted animals by the Santiago Family from Oaxaca, Mexico



DIABLO ALEBRIJE BY JOEL GARCÍA,
PAPIER-MÂCHÉ AND PAINT