

This project is due in class next week.

Cultural Connection

Mexican Nichos

The old tradition of nichos in Mexico dates back to the Spanish colonial period. Traditionally, nichos were used as shrines for patron saints or pictures of loved ones. Many Day of the Dead altars include wooden nichos, which are almost like a diorama of a loved one. A traditional nicho is a 3-dimensional small shadow box, surrounded by appendages of wood or tin and often painted with bright colors. The tin is often stamped or punched to create shapes and embossed patterns in the tin. They provide a stage-like setting for an object or a person of great significance, where it is also common to find images of Jesus, the Virgin of Guadalupe, or a patron Saint. The nicho can also be a personal statement incorporating things that are important to the person who created it.



Consider: Who is important to you or who would you like to honor or build a special place for? Look at examples of nichos on the Internet (with permission from a parent).

Create:

1. Draw out a plan for the inside of your nicho.
2. Find a small box, or build a box with cardboard and tape. **No side of the box may be larger than 4 inches.**
3. Create some outside appendages out of cardboard to surround your box. Traditional Mexican shapes come in the form of a cross, Sacred Heart, or flames. Cut the cardboard the exact size of the box so your nicho can fit into it like a window or attach the appendages separately.
4. Color and decorate the nicho according to your theme using scrap material, small figures, photos, images, or other objects.