



# Carlos Villa (1936-2013)

**Teacher Packet**  
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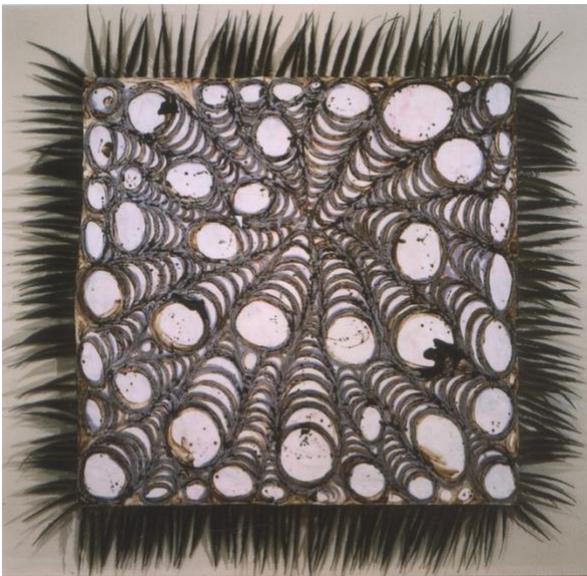
*Special thanks to Mark Dean Johnson for his generosity and support in the creation of this packet.*

## Biography: Carlos Villa

**Carlos Villa (1936-2013)** is best known for his teaching, activism, and dynamic work. From San Francisco, CA, he grew up in the Tenderloin, attended the San Francisco Art Institute, and later became a teacher there. While he began as a minimalist artist, Villa was committed to spotlighting art and artists of the post-World War II era that were forgotten or neglected. He wanted to bring back old cultures, specifically their arts before colonialism and the displacement of war.

His commitment was found through his exploration of his own Filipino American background while in school: “I [had] remembered when I was a student, I remember asking Walt Kuhlman about Filipino art history and he said there is no Filipino art history. And, lo and behold, I go up to the library and, of course, there wasn’t any” (Villa 2010). As a result, Villa independently researched Pacific tribal art traditions and incorporated their materials and formats to his art. From his studies, he included the use of bones and feathers in mixed-media installations, performances, and word-based conceptual projects.

Through his self-initiated ambitious exhibitions and information programs, Villa was influential to many young artists. His most well-known initiative was the 2010 exhibition, symposium, and website, [\*Rehistoricizing Abstract Expressionism in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1950s-1960s\*](#). It attempted to rebalance the period canon by excavating overlooked contributions by women and artists of color. Similarly, Villa also organized *Worlds in Collision*, a series of exhibitions, symposia, curricula, publications, and web projects that address multiculturalism, education, activism, and identity politics to build a more inclusive art world and art history. Today, he is still remembered for his activism and contribution to Filipino American art.



*Maturing*, 1979.



*Ritual*, 1970–71.

## Lesson 1: Worlds in Collision Proposal

“[W]e must recognize that the organized identity groups in which we and others find ourselves are in fact not monolithic but made up of members of different and perhaps competing identities. Rather than viewing this as a threat to group solidarity, we should view it as an opportunity for bridge building and coalition politics.” (Crenshaw 76)

**Objective:** Understand the importance of Carlos Villa’s work to prioritize and spotlight artists who are underrepresented.

**Introduction:** Carlos Villa organized an iconic series of exhibitions, symposia, curricula, publications, and web projects under the *Worlds in Collision* umbrella, from 1976 until his passing in 2013. These projects and conversations addressed multiculturalism, education, activism, and identity politics with the intention of shaping a more inclusive art world and art history. Specifically, *Worlds in Collision* sought to exhibit work of women artists and artists of color from varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

In this activity, you will pretend that you are part of the group organizing this year’s *Worlds in Collision* symposium, and you will need to find an artist who fulfills this event’s mission. You will also learn what inspired Villa to explore multiculturalism based on a video about curating and collecting Filipino art in the San Francisco Bay Area.

### Content Standards (California):

Historical and Social Sciences (Grade 9-12):

HSS 10.4.2: Discuss the locations of the colonial rule of such nations as England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Portugal, and the United States.

HSS 10.4.3: Explain imperialism from the perspective of the colonizers and the colonized and the varied immediate and long-term responses by the people under colonial rule.

Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View

HSS.9-12.1: Students distinguish valid arguments from fallacious arguments in historical interpretations.

HSS.9-12.2: Students identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.

HSS.9-12.3: Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors’ use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.

Historical Interpretation

HSS.9-12.1: Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.

HSS.9-12.2: Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.

**Materials:** Video, [Filipino Community Voices, Bay Area](#); *Worlds in Collision* slideshow (Appendix A).

**Vocabulary:**

*Imperialism*: state policy, practice, or advocacy of extending power and dominion, especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas.

*Western Colonialism*: a political-economic phenomenon whereby various European nations explored, conquered, settled, and exploited large areas of the world.

*Multicultural*: the inclusion of the views and contributions of diverse members of society while maintaining respect for their differences and withholding the demand for their assimilation into the dominant culture.

**Procedure:***Looking at Art*

1. Watch: Video, [Filipino Community Voices, Bay Area](#)
2. Reflect: Write some of the reasons why it is important to include and collect Filipino art.
  - a. What are the challenges that the interviewees mention?
  - b. What are some solutions to overcome these barriers?
3. Present: Show the slideshow presentation. Have students look at each artwork for 30 seconds then ask:
  - a. What's going on (happening) in the picture? Or, what do you see?
  - b. What do you see that makes you say that?
  - c. What does it make you wonder?
4. Discuss: Introduce Carlos Villa by reading his biography (or review his life if Lesson 1 was completed), and introduce the mission of *Worlds in Collision*.
  - a. How does the video, [Filipino Community Voices, Bay Area](#), connect with *Worlds in Collision*?
  - b. Are there other communities of artists that are not well known or represented?

*Worlds in Collision Proposal*

5. Research: Based on the discussion, go on the internet, or the Asian Art Museum's [Education Resource Portal](#), and find an artist (living or dead) who could be featured in a *Worlds in Collision* symposium.
6. Activity: Pretend that you are part of the group organizing this year's *Worlds in Collision* symposium. Write a proposal that argues why the artist you found in step five fulfills this event's mission and should be featured. Your proposal should include:
  - a. The artist's name and a brief biography;
  - b. The proposed artist's relevance to the *Worlds in Collision* symposium's mission and the Asian American experience and/or another underrepresented group's experience;
  - c. At least one example of their artwork and its relevance to the symposium's mission;
  - d. Details about your interest in this artist and their artwork;
  - e. (Optional) The artist's work in social justice or civic engagement;
  - f. Works Cited and Image Credit.
7. Conclusion: Share your proposal with your peers.

## Lesson 2: Identity Zine

“Zine-making remains a cornerstone for marginalized voices disseminating information and publishing creative work about things they love.” ([Creative Independent](#))

**Objective:** Create a zine to reflect and critically consider identities and the relationship between identity and context.

**Introduction:** After Carlos Villa moved back to the Bay Area from New York, he continued to explore his identity as a Filipino American. In college, he studied Pacific tribal art traditions and incorporated their materials and formats to his art. From his research, he began to understand the complexities of Filipino traditions, as much of Filipino culture is layered with Western, Asian, African, Indian, and Oceanic cultures due to colonialism, war, and imperialism. As a result, he expanded his work to explore what cultural diversity and multiculturalism mean.

In this activity, you will begin to express your identity/identities in a visual format through a zine—a homemade booklet of various images, texts, and messages.

### Content Standards (California):

Visual Arts:

- 1.2.1: Use observation and investigation in preparation for making a work of art.
- 1.2.2: Make art or design with various art materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity.
- 1.2.3: Apply knowledge of available resources, tools, and technologies to investigate personal ideas through the art-making process.
- 1.2.6: Formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art.
- 2.3.5: Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.
- 2.3.8: Select, organize, and design images and words to make visually clear and compelling presentations.

Historical and Social Sciences (Grade 9-12):

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

HSS.9-12.1. Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.

Historical Interpretation

HSS.9-12.2. Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.

**Materials:** Video, [“Carlos Villa and How I became an Artist August 2011”](#); Video, [“How to Make a Zine”](#); Blank piece of 8.5in x 11in paper; Scissors; Writing utensils; Glue or tape; Images to use for a collage.

### Vocabulary:

*Intersectionality:* the ways that race, gender, sex, sexuality, class, identity, and other factors work together to create someone’s situation in a way that is multiplicative and not additive in its

effects of access to power or oppression. A framework to understand how inequality and oppression occur on a multidimensional basis.

*Zine*: a homemade booklet of various images, texts, and messages that can be circulated among a small audience.

## **Procedure:**

### *Introduction*

1. Read introduction and brief biography on Carlos Villa.
2. Watch "[Carlos Villa and How I became an Artist August 2011.](#)"
3. Discuss what identity means, the different identity groups, and intersectionality.
  - a. What may be some reasons why Villa wanted to focus on his identity as a Filipino American in his art?
  - b. How can artists investigate and express ideas about identity in their work?
  - c. How can art connect people from different identity groups and backgrounds?
4. Explain what a zine is.

### *Prepare Your Zine Content*

1. Brainstorm: Consider how you identify yourself.
  - a. Write down words that describe your identity/identities. These will be your keywords.
  - b. Find or draw images that complement your keywords.
2. Research: Based on what you brainstorm, search on the internet your keywords.
  - a. Can you find any history that can help contextualize your identity? How do they contribute to your identity?
  - b. Are there new words you never considered before that describe you?

### *Make a Zine*

1. Watch "[How to Make a Zine](#)" by [Art Speak](#).
2. Follow the steps in the video to create your zine template.

### *Design Your Zine*

1. Using a mixture of words and images, answer the following questions based on the page number of your zine:

Page 1: What part of your identity do you think people first notice about you?

Page 2: What part of your identity are you most comfortable sharing with other people?

Page 3: What part of your identity are you least comfortable sharing with other people?

Page 4: What part of your identity is the most important to you?

Page 5: What part of your identity do you feel you receive privilege for most often?

Page 6: What do you want to learn more about your identities?
2. Decorate the cover and back of your zine.
3. Share your zine!

## Resources

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Karlstrom, Paul and Carlos Villa. "Oral History interview with Carlos Villa, 1995 June 20-July 10." *Archives of American Art, Smithsonian*. 2010. <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-carlos-villa-5561#transcript>.

"Interview with Carlos Villa." *Rehistoricizing.org*. <https://rehistoricizing.org/interview-with-carlos-villa/>.

SFAI News. "Faculty member Carlos Villa receives prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship." *San Francisco Art Institute*. April 12, 2012. <https://web.archive.org/web/20140407092536/http://www.sfai.edu/faculty-member-carlos-villa-receives-prestigious-guggenheim-fellowship>.

Villa, Carlos. *Carlos Villa*. 2012. <http://carlos-villa.com/home.html>.

## Cover Page and Biography

*Carlos Villa*, 1980, by Mimi Jacobs (1911-1999). Photographic print. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 5034.

*Maturing*, 1979. Feathers, mirror fragments, Rhoplex, blood, and acrylic on unstretched canvas; 109 x 115 in. Collection of the Crocker Art Museum.

*Ritual*, 1970–71. Mixed media on unstretched canvas; 97 x 94 x 4 in. Courtesy of the Estate of Carlos Villa. Photographed by Jay Jones.

## Lesson 1: Worlds in Collision Proposal

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Intersectionality and Identity Politics: Learning from Violence against

Women of Color.” *Feminist Theory*. 3rd ed., NY: McGrawHill, 2010. 482-91.

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<https://bampfa.org/event/panel-discussion-carlos-villa-worlds-collision>.

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Wofford, Jenifer K. “Carlos Villa: Worlds in Collision at BAMPFA.” *Wofflehouse*. 2018.  
<http://wofflehouse.com/uncategorized/carlos-villa-worlds-in-collision-at-bampfa/>.

#### *Image Credit:*

1801,1975. By Benedicto Reyes Cabrera (Filipino, b. 1942). Philippines. Ink on paper. *Asian Art Museum, Gift of Nancy G. Freeman*, F2010.34.1.

*Ceremonial deity (bulul)*, approx. 1930. Luzon, Philippines. Wood and shell. *Asian Art Museum, Filipino Fund for Acquisitions and Museum Purchase*, 2013.2.

*Mask-Unmask*, by Carlos Villa. Feathers, acrylic on unstretched canvas. *Rehistoricizing The Time Around Abstract Expressionism*. <http://rehistoricizing.org/carlos-villa/>.

*Popcorn Sellers in the Luneta*, 1961, by Anita Magsaysay-Ho (Filipino, 1914-2012). Oil on canvas. *Asian Art Museum, Gift of Mildred Angeles in honor of her husband Nolasco Angeles*, 2016.303.

## **Lesson 2: Identity Zine**

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTWSQK47JOA>.

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<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/2017/08/16/1213/>.

# Appendix A (Lesson 1)



# *Worlds in Collision* Proposal

Selected Artworks by Carlos Villa and from Asian Art Museum's Collection





# Ceremonial Deity (bulul)

Year: approx. 1930

Material: Wood and shell.



Phila Muzumbyi Ho  
1961



# Popcorn Sellers in the Luneta

Year: approx. 1930

Material: Wood and shell.





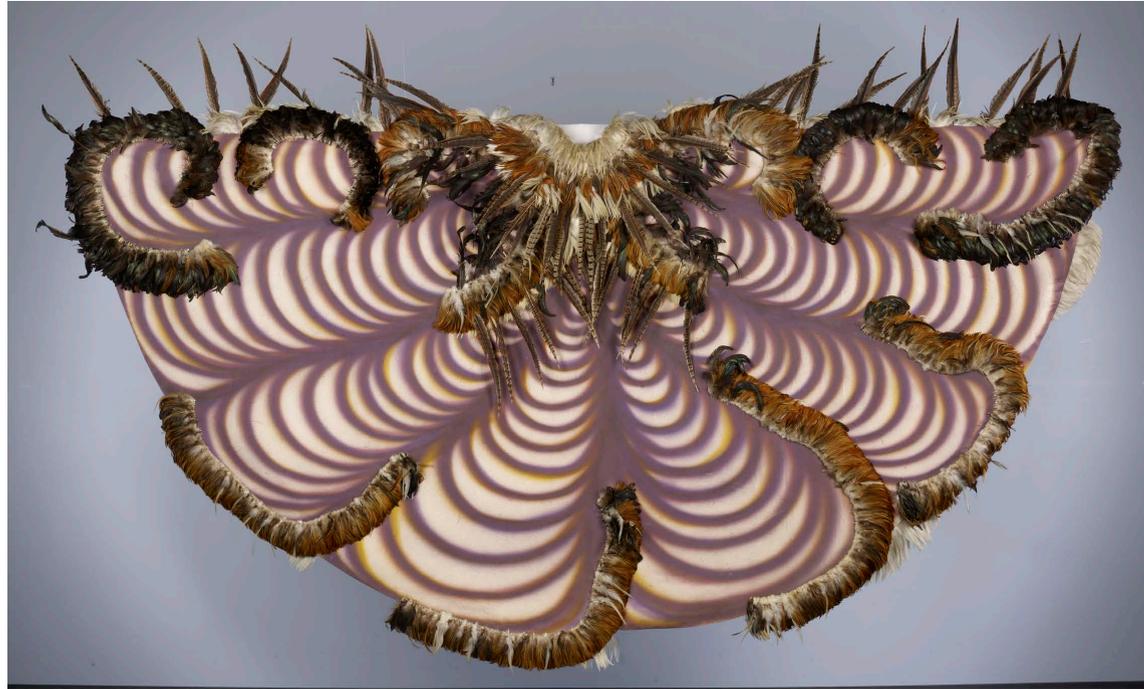
# 1081

Year: 1975

Material: Ink on paper.

Label: “The title of this piece, 1081, refers to Proclamation 1081, by which President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines in September of 1972. With the law, Marcos consolidated his power and strictly curbed voices of dissent to his rule. The images in this etching allude to Marcos's rule through military might and to the civil unrest of the times.”





# Painted Cloak (front)

Year: 1971

Material: Airbrushed acrylic on unstretched canvas with feathers and taffeta lining

# Image Credits

*1801, 1975*. By Benedicto Reyes Cabrera (Filipino, b. 1942). Philippines. Ink on paper. *Asian Art Museum, Gift of Nancy G. Freeman, F2010.34.1*.

*Ceremonial deity (bulul)*, approx. 1930. Luzon, Philippines. Wood and shell. *Asian Art Museum, Filipino Fund for Acquisitions and Museum Purchase, 2013.2*.

*Painted Cloak (front)*, 1971. Airbrushed acrylic on unstretched canvas with feathers and taffeta lining; 62 x 130 x 8 in. Collection of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Photographed by Joe McDonald.

*Popcorn Sellers in the Luneta*, 1961, by Anita Magsaysay-Ho (Filipino, 1914-2012). Oil on canvas. *Asian Art Museum, Gift of Mildred Angeles in honor of her husband Nolasco Angeles, 2016.303*.