MAKE-IT ACTIVITY: Mexican Masks

Introduction

The Museum’s collection of Mexican masks includes carved and painted wood masks as well as hammered copper and silver face masks and wall decorations which are embossed, painted and ornamented with pendants. These masks would have been worn in ceremonies and dances that taught community values, history and religion and allowed people to participate in the community and identify with it.

Design your own mask inspired by colorful Mexican masks in Boise Art Museum’s Permanent Collection.

- What do you notice about the colors in these masks?
- Why do you think the people who made these masks might have wanted to use such bright colors?
- Which mask would you rather wear?
- Why do people wear masks?

Masks are found in cultures throughout the world and are represented across disciplines. They have been used by ancient societies and are still present in popular culture today.

- How can you incorporate mask making, identity, disguise and masquerade into your field or institution?

Materials

- Paper mask
- Thread
- Yarn
- Sharpie markers
- Chenille stems
- Paper scraps
- Scissors
- Glue Sticks
- Hole punches
- Needles

Instructions

1. To begin, choose a colorful background pattern.
2. Cut or change the shape of the mask with scissors.
3. Use markers to add designs and patterns.
4. Attach cut paper with glue sticks to add detail.
5. Chenille stems and yarn can be tied areas that are hole punched.
6. To finish, stitch the top and bottom of the mask to make it rounded using needles and colored thread.