

paper

The great masters of this popular Mexican art create a wide range of pieces, including elaborately cut banners (which are hung on streets during holidays), fantastic figures (commonly known as alebrijes,) piñatas, skulls, and other items.

papel picado

Elaborately cut paper, or *papel picado*, is one of the most important forms of paper art in Mexico today. It's widely used to decorate streets and homes during holidays and festivals such as the Day of the Dead and Viernes de Dolores, the Friday before Palm Sunday, also known as Friday of Sorrows. This craft is carried out mainly in Jalisco, Michoacán, Puebla, and Mexico City.

The first step in the manufacture of *papel picado* is creating a pattern of the selected designs, which are later drawn on colored tissue or metallic paper. Scissors and metal chisels are then used to make cuts and perforations in the paper to bring out the design. The examples of *papel picado* in this exhibition are made of paper and cardboard, costume jewelry, and glue.

sculpture

Cartonería, a specialty that uses paper and cardboard to form sculpture, is another popular form of paper art. Notable examples of *cartonería* are the "Judas" figures that, for many years, have been burned as part of the Holy Week celebrations. Other examples are popularly inspired skulls and skeletons made for Day of the Dead festivities, vignettes of Mexican life, popular characters, and representations of town festivals.

supernatural figures

The manufacture of *alebrijes*, another example of *cartonería*, deserves special attention. *Alebrijes* are supernatural figures that combine dragons' tails, wings, long tongues, and claws. They are painted in many colors to accentuate their frightening appearance.

Pedro Linares, the master of the art of *cartonería*, has given new life to the production of these diabolical creatures. He and his family recycle newspaper and other papers to make a pulp, which is mixed with other materials and glued onto wire or reed frames or cast into forms. These figures take shape as the glued paper is layered, dried, and relayered until the figure has achieved the desired volume and thickness. Cast figures are removed from the mold and decorated.

dolls

Some artists have enriched the medium of *cartonería* by making dolls. Using molds, glue, and paint, these artists make simple but compelling dolls that generate nostalgia for childhood.