

WORD ART

Ten Poetry Broadsides
from the Press at the Palace of the Governors

THE PALACE PRESS is housed in the 400-year-old Palace of the Governors Museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The thick adobe walls of the Palace keep the rooms cool and quiet. It is a lovely environment for fine printing. Silence fills the print shop just before the press spins to life, its clap and clatter of metal settling into a rhythmic hum. With a choreographed dance step a sheet of sturdy paper is cranked through the press, then plucked loose and eyed for anything out of place. The moment holds the smell of ink, a hint of warmth coming off the press, and a delight in the creation of something that just an instant ago did not exist. It can make you laugh out loud.

In December of 2002, Tom Leech, the Press' director, and I agreed on a project that would edition ten different poems using the Palace's vintage Vandercook press, printed on papers handmade for each poem. What ensued has been a true partnership.

Our process began with choosing poets whose work I admire and a selection of poems that showcased what I love about their work. We discussed the graphic possibilities each poem offered. Although not the ultimate criteria for selection, we considered a poem's relevance to the Southwest, to history, or to contemporary issues. Sometimes, as with DJ Renegade's *Three Haiku*, I had a strong feeling that a particular poem would resonate with Tom. With the work of other poets, we looked at a number of poems before finding the "right one." We wanted poems that could be grasped in the first reading, even if further readings led to a deeper understanding of the poem. Many of the poems share a sense of discovery, what the Japanese call "satori," a moment when something is seen in a new light.

Tom often talked about how the poem would lead him to a design idea. The bombastic typography of *Three Haiku* plays on the “un-haiku” quality of the words, and the musical funkiness of the poem inspired paper made from blue jean denim. With more allusions to music and to an Asian sensibility, John Brandi’s poem *Late Afternoon Over a Bottle of Sake* combines Bodhidharma with Buddy Holly, Memphis Minnie and Chet Baker, all overprinted on a woodcut of cottonwood leaves.

Renée Gregorio’s *Transforming the Strange* floats on a juicy wash of saturated indigo, mirroring the monsoon clouds and Vietnamese landscape in the poem. Marbled paper for Jane Hirschfield’s *The Fish* gives the poem a flowing elegance, with stitches of metallic foil swimming in the pulp.

In Kim Addonizio’s *Santuario at Chimayo*, the design behind the poem is taken from a detail on the altar at the church. A hidden touch in the broadside is that the paper is made from hospital bed linens, tying the poem to the legend that the dirt from the Chimayo church has healing properties. The paper also contains a pinch of that magic sand.

Threads in all the colors of human flesh texture the paper in Rita Dove’s poem, *Rosa*, which honors Rosa Parks, a seamstress. A newspaper report about Parks’ arrest is blind-stamped on the print. Lucile Adler’s *History Lesson* is printed on paper that is flecked, white on white, to provide a stark contrast to a “bar of narrow black walking slow through snow.”

His Life, by Naomi Shihab Nye, was written as a prose poem. We asked her permission to experiment with re-shaping the poem, and this allowed us to imply the dropping shaft of the Bisbee mine by breaking the poem into short, descending lines. The linoleum cut at the bottom of the sheet echoes the feeling that the poem ends in a dark cavern.

For Sherman Alexie’s poem, *Grandmother*, a linoleum cut of a one-handed clock chimes with Alexie’s image of his grandmother’s clock and points to a significant line in the poem. The paper is of recycled paper scraps — of both fine cotton and heavy kraft — gleaned from the trash on their way to the dump.

Contained in my poem, *Maps and Wings*, are fragments of a road map from the 1930s that my family might have used in crossing New Mexico during the Depression. The paper is rusty red, reflecting the line, “they held the miles in rusted fingers.”

As a poet, I think of broadsides in two ways. The first is that it makes one really put the poem “under a microscope,” breaking it down to its smallest components to study the way the shape of a letter impacts the viewer; how the down sweep of a *y* brings out the sadness in a line, or how a bulging *B* can make a line sing.

The second is in relation to broadsides is that it gives the poem a great place to live. Poems also live in books and at readings, but there is something sweet about the poem as a visual work of art finding its way into a frame and onto a wall, and then becoming part of one’s daily routine.

Gary Mex Glazner, Editor

All Works on handmade paper by Tom Leech

Woodcut for *Late Afternoon Over a Bottle of Sake* by Jean Gumper

Linocut for *Santuario at Chimayo* by Lee Marchalonis

Circulation of this exhibition is part of a statewide outreach programming partnership with the New Mexico State Library, Museum of Indian Arts & Culture, the Palace of the Governors and others, in conjunction with the exhibition *Lasting Impressions: The Private Presses of New Mexico*. Funding has been provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities.

Biographical information on the poets

Naomi Shihab Nye

Naomi Shihab Nye was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1952, to a Palestinian father and an American mother. She received her B.A. from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, where she still resides with her family. She is the author of numerous books of poems, including *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East* (Greenwillow Books, 2002), *Fuel* (1998), *Red Suitcase* (1994), and *Hugging the Jukebox* (1982). She has twice traveled to the Middle East and Asia for the United States Information Agency promoting international goodwill through the arts. Nye has received awards from the Texas Institute of Letters, the Carity Randall prize, and the International Poetry Forum. Her poems and short stories have appeared in various journals and reviews throughout North America, Europe, and the Middle and Far East. Nye has also written books for children, and has edited several anthologies of prose. (www.poets.org)

DJ Renegade

Joel Dias Porter (aka DJ Renegade) was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After high school, he enlisted in the US Air Force and then, after leaving the service, he became a professional disc jockey in the Washington, D.C. area. Then in 1991, he quit his job and began living in homeless shelters, while undergoing an Afro centric self-study program. From 1994 through 1999 he competed in the National Poetry Slam, finishing as high as second place in the individual competition, and becoming the 1998 and 1999 Haiku Slam Champion. His poems have been published in *Time Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *Callaloo*, *Antioch Review*, and in the anthologies *Meow: Spoken Word from the Black Cat*, *Role Call*, *Def Poetry Jam*, *360 Degrees of Black Poetry*, *Slam (The Book)*, *Revival: Spoken Word from Lollapalooza*, *Poetry Nation*, *Beyond the Frontier*, *Catch a Fire*, and *The Black Rooster Social Inn*, which he also edited. In 1995, he received the Furious Flower "Emerging Poet Award" from James Madison University. He has performed on the *Today Show*, in a commercial for Legal Jeans, in the documentaries *Voices Against Violence* and *SlamNation*, on BET's *Teen Summit and By the Book*, and in the feature film *Slam*. Currently at work on a CD of jazz and poetry entitled "A Desperate Wrestling of Tongues," he is the father of a small son and teaches part-time at Duke Ellington School of the Performing Arts. (www.washingtonart.com)

John Brandi

John Brandi was born in Los Angeles in 1943 and graduated from the University of California at Northridge in 1965. After college, he joined the Peace Corps, moved to highland Ecuador, and helped organize Quechua families in their struggle for civil liberties and land rights. In South America, he began publishing his poetry via the freshly blooming "mimeo revolution," predecessor to the small press movement. Upon return from the Peace Corps, Brandi lived in Alaska, Mexico, and finally New Mexico, his home for more than thirty years. Since 1973, he has worked as an itinerant poet in schools, prisons, homes for elderly, and centers for at-risk youth—via numerous residency awards from state arts councils in Alaska, California, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, New York, the Navajo Nation, and sub-arctic Yupik communities.

John Brandi's dozens of publications include poetry, travel vignettes, essays, modern American haiku, translations of contemporary Mexican poetry, hand-colored broadsides, and limited-edition letterpress books. He has given innumerable readings in the U.S., and has been invited to read in Paris, Mexico, and Indonesia. Painter and collage master as well as poet, his solo exhibits include galleries in Houston, San Francisco, Rochester, Milwaukee, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe. His books include: *Heartbeat Geography: Selected and Uncollected Poems, 1966-1994*; *A Question of Journey*; *Visits to the City of Light*; *Weeding the Cosmos*; and *Reflections in the Lizard's Eye*. He teaches poetry as a member of the summer faculty at Idyllwild Arts, California (www.tetramatrix.com)

Sherman Alexie

Sherman Alexie, a Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian, was born in 1966 on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Wellpinit, Washington. He received his B.A. in American studies from Washington State University in Pullman. His books of poetry include *One Stick Song* (2000), *The Man Who Loves Salmon* (1998), *The Summer of Black Widows* (1996), *Water Flowing Home* (1995), *Old Shirts & New Skins* (1993), *First Indian on the Moon* (1993), *I Would Steal Horses* (1992), and *The Business of Fancydancing* (1992). He is also the author of several novels and collections of short fiction including *Ten Little Indians* (Grove Press, 2003); *The Toughest Indian in the World* (2000); *Indian Killer* (1996); *Reservation Blues* (1994), which won the Before Columbus Foundation's American Book Award; and *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993), which received a Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award. Among his other honors and awards are poetry fellowships from the Washington State Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts and a Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writers' Award.

Alexie and Chris Eyre wrote the screenplay for the movie *Smoke Signals*, which was based on Alexie's short story "This Is What It Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona." The movie won two awards at the Sundance Film Festival in 1998 and was released internationally by Miramax Films. He is also a three-time world heavyweight poetry slam champion. Alexie lives with his wife and son in Seattle. www.poets.org)

Renée Gregorio

Originally from Massachusetts, Renée Gregorio has lived in New Mexico since 1985. She has made her living in various ways—poet, bookstore manager, writing teacher, freelance book editor, and as proofreader, editor, and drafter for the state legislature. She was one of the founding editors of *The Taos Review* and one of the featured writers in the video *Honoring the Muse*. Her work has appeared in literary journals in both the United States and England as well as in several anthologies of poetry, including *The New Mexico Poetry Renaissance*, *Saludos!*, *Written With A Spoon*, and *The Practice of Peace*. Gregorio is a former member of the jazz/poetry group, Luminous Animal, and has read her work throughout the Southwest and performed in "Dead Poets' Bouts" for the Taos Poetry Circus. She earned her master's degree from Antioch University, London. Over the past fifteen years, her work has appeared in many journals in the United States, including *Iris*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *Fish Drum*, *Blue Mesa Review*, *Heaven Bone*, *Frank*, *Nexus*, *Santa Fe Poetry Broadside*, and *American Tanka*. Her first full-length collection, *The Skins of Possible Lives*, was published by Blinking Yellow Books of Taos, New

Mexico in 1996. Her second collection, *The Storm That Tames Us*, was published (Spring 1999) by La Alameda Press of Albuquerque, New Mexico. (www.jackmagazine.com)

Jane Hirshfield

Jane Hirshfield was born in New York City in 1953. After receiving her B.A. from Princeton University in their first graduating class to include women, she went on to study at the San Francisco Zen Center. Her books of poetry include *Given Sugar, Given Salt* (HarperCollins, 2001) that was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, *The Lives of the Heart* (1997), *The October Palace* (1994), *Of Gravity & Angels* (1988), and *Alaya* (1982). She is the author of *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry* (1997) and has also edited and translated *The Ink Dark Moon: Poems by Ono no Komachi and Izumi Shikibu*, *Women of the Ancient Court of Japan* (1990) with Mariko Aratani and *Women in Praise of the Sacred: Forty-Three Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women* (1994).

Her honors include The Poetry Center Book Award, fellowships from the Guggenheim and Rockefeller Foundations, Columbia University's Translation Center Award, the Commonwealth Club of California Poetry Medal, and the Bay Area Book Reviewers Award. In 2004, Hirshfield was awarded the 70th Academy Fellowship for distinguished poetic achievement by The Academy of American Poets. In addition to her work as a free-lance writer and translator, Hirshfield has taught at UC Berkeley, University of San Francisco, and been Elliston Visiting Poet at the University of Cincinnati. She is currently on the faculty of the Bennington MFA Writing Seminars. (www.poets.org)

Gary Mex Glazner

Gary Mex Glazner makes his living as a poet. Pontiac featured Glazner's poetry in April 2002 on the Beat Fest; a 17-city traveling festival organized by the New York based Knitting Factory. Gary is the Minister of Fun for Poetry Slam Incorporated. Glazner was featured along with Gary Snyder, Anne Waldman and Sherman Alexie at the 20th anniversary of Tucson Poetry Festival. In 1990, Glazner produced the first National Poetry Slam in San Francisco. His poetry has appeared in anthologies, periodicals, on CD, radio, television, and underwater on the Bay Area Rapid Transit system. His poems have been translated into Chinese, Moldavian, Nepali, and Vietnamese. In 1997, Poets and Writers Inc. awarded him a grant to work with Alzheimer patients using poetry. He is currently the poet-in-residence at the Palace of the Governors' in Santa Fe.

Rita Dove

Rita Dove was born in Akron, Ohio, in 1952. Her books of poetry include *American Smooth* (W. W. Norton, 2004); *On the Bus with Rosa Parks* (1999), which was named a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award; *Mother Love* (1995); *Selected Poems* (1993); *Grace Notes* (1989); *Thomas and Beulah* (1986), which won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry; *Museum* (1983); and *The Yellow House on the Corner* (1980). She has also published *Fifth Sunday* (1985), a book of short stories; *Through the Ivory Gate* (1992), a novel; and *The Darker Face of the Earth* (1994), a verse drama; and edited *The Best American Poetry 2000*. Her many honors include the Academy of American Poets's Lavan Younger Poets Award, a Mellon

Foundation grant, an NAACP Great American Artist award, Fulbright and Guggenheim Foundation fellowships, and grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. She served as Poet Laureate of the United States from 1993 to 1995. In 2004, she was named Poet Laureate of the Commonwealth of Virginia and is Commonwealth Professor of English at the University of Virginia. She lives in Charlottesville, Virginia. (www.poets.org)

Suggestions for Docent Training
WORD ART: Poetry Broadside Series
produced at the Press at the Palace of the Governors from 2003–2005

Exhibition Themes

We hope that visitors to this exhibition will come away with an appreciation of:

1. Poetry as a means of artistic and personal expression
2. The connection between each poem and the paper (what its made of, how its been treated) it is printed on.

Introduction to the Exhibition

This exhibition is comprised of prints from a broadside series produced at the Press at the Palace of the Governors from 2003 – 2005. A broadside is a sheet of paper that is printed on one side only and displayed as a poster. The term dates back to the 16th century, when popular ballads were circulated as broadsides. The pieces featured in the exhibition are printed on handmade paper by Tom Leech, director of the Palace Press.

Techniques to use on a tour of this exhibition

- Read one poem aloud to students on your tour and discuss any responses they have: How did this poem make you feel? Did it remind you of any thing or anyone in your own life? Did it conjure images in your mind? If so, what did they look like? What passage or phrases did you like? What did you not like? Why?
- Introduce the idea of metaphor and explore the 3 haiku by DJ renegade. He writes that “Jazz is the way brown sugar would sound if it was sprinkled in your ear.” What does he mean? How can jazz be like brown sugar in your ear? Why would he choose to make this association? Where are other examples of metaphor and similes in the other poems on display?
- Investigate the relationship between a poem and the paper it is printed on. Lead the discussion and then have students explore other pieces on their own and report back to the group about what they’ve discovered. Is the design of a particular broadside connected the message, images or words in the poem? How? Is this effective? In what other sorts of ways could this connection have been made? For example, Rita Dove’s poem about Rosa Parks includes an imprint of a report in a newspaper about her civic action. Renée Gregorio’s poem mentions indigo cloth drying and the broadside its printed on has blue dye on it, much like a piece of fabric.
- Have students, if they can, chose a favorite poem. If they like, have them read this poem out loud to the group, or, if they are shy, simply talk about what they like about the poem.

Vocabulary

WORD ART: Poetry Broadside Series

Haiku

A Japanese lyric verse or poem that has three unrhymed lines of five, seven and five syllables. Traditionally these poems addressed an aspect of nature or the seasons.

Metaphor

A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making an implicit comparison, as in “*a sea of troubles*” or “All the world's a stage” (Shakespeare).

Poem

A (sometimes) metrical composition usually concerned with descriptive expression of emotion or imagination.

Rhythm

A measured flow of words and phrases in poems determined by the length of syllables in each line, producing a “regular” succession or feel to the verse.

Simile

A figure of speech where two ostensibly unlike things are compared, often using the words “like” or “as” for example “pretty as a picture” or “eats like a pig.”

Tempo

The speed at which music is or should be played. Poems, like music, can have a tempo or speed at which they are read.

Intonation

The way in which prose or poems are read aloud. Readers can emphasize certain words or syllables and in doing so change the emphasis, tone or feeling of the work.

Post-visit—Word Art: The Message Is the Medium

Estimated Time

1 to 2 hours

Materials

Collage materials
Glue
Water colors
Colored pencils
Completed poems from pre-visit activity

Vocabulary

Design
Metaphor

Standards Met

National Standards for English Language Arts (for K – 12) Standards 4, 5, 7, 10 -12

National Standards for Arts Education, Visual Arts Content Standards, 1 - 5

Extensions

Students host a poetry reading and share their artwork with friends, family and other classes.

Students create illustrations or decorations for other poems they are reading in Language Arts class.

Goal

To explore the connections between artistic expression and poetic expression.

Student Learning

Students decorate poems they have written, taking cues from images and themes explored in their writing.

Procedure

1. **Review** the visit to the exhibition *WORD ART*. What poems did the students like best? How were the poems displayed? What was the relationship between the poems and the paper they were printed on? Curator and artist Tom Leech determined the background, images and paper the poems were printed on. Explain that students will be decorating or printing their poems on papers designed to connect the text with the images and messages.
2. Students **review poems** they composed in the pre-visit lesson. What metaphors did they use? How might these translate into visuals? What sorts of colors are most appropriate or best relate to the poem? Why?
3. Individually, students **decide** what sorts of decoration they will use to best compliment or illustrate their poems. They might collage a border, incorporate photographs, use color, shapes or images. They should reference any metaphors they've used as a rationale for design decisions they make.
4. Students **illustrate** or decorate their poems. They may prepare a paper to print poems on or work with the papers they have already written their poems on.
5. As a whole class, students **share poems and decorations** and discuss their decisions, challenges and rationale.

Suggested Forms of Assessment

- Discussion of the relationship between text and visuals
- Observe students' work
- Final products

WORD ART

Pre-Visit

Activity – Poetry and Metaphor

Estimated Time

1 to 2 hours

Materials

Writing materials

Vocabulary

Metaphor

Standards Met

National Standards for English Language Arts (for K – 12) Standards 4, 5, 7, 10 -12

National Standards for Arts Education, Visual Arts Content Standards, 1 - 5

Extensions

Students host a “poetry reading” where they read their poems out-loud to other classes or family.

Goal

To explore poetic expression and the use of metaphor in creative writing.

Student Learning

Students will use metaphorical language in a poem about someone in their family.

Procedure

6. Explain that students will be seeing the exhibition *WORD ART* that features poems, some of which are about family. In preparation for their visit, students will be writing their own poems about an important person in their family or community.
7. Poets employ literary techniques to make their work more evocative. A **metaphor** is a figure of speech that makes a comparison describing one thing as another. For example, a fierce person can be referred to as a tiger or an uncommunicative person as being as “silent as stone.”
8. Individually, students decide whom they will be writing their poem about and **brainstorm a list of characteristics** about this person. Then in small groups, they share their lists and assist one another in determining some **potential metaphors** they might use in a poem about that person.
9. Incorporating feedback from the small group, students **draft a poem** (this can be a rough draft, just something to work from and rework) about their family member and use metaphors to illustrate characteristics.
10. As a whole class, students **share poems** and discuss their decisions, challenges and rationale.

Suggested Forms of Assessment

- Discussion of metaphors
- Observe students’ work
- Writing produced

Exhibition Contacts

WORD ART: Poetry Broadside Series

Staff

John Frank
TREX, Traveling Exhibitions Program
505 476-1170
david.gabel@state.nm.us

Beth Maloney
Museum Education Specialist
Education Coordinator, TREX
505 266-3307
esmaloney@yahoo.com

Programming Contacts

Tom Leech
Director, Palace Press
505 476-5096
thomas.leech@state.nm.us
Available for curatorial lecture or workshops.

Gary Mex Glazner
Poet Man, Poet-in-Residence at the Palace of the Governors
505-438-6607, 505-577-2250

PoetMan@aol.com

Available for workshops and programming.