

# dichos

## PROGRAMMING GUIDE

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**ExhibitsUSA**<sup>®</sup>

This exhibition is toured and organized  
by ExhibitsUSA, a national program of  
Mid-America Arts Alliance

*Dichos*  
*Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*  
 Educational Programming Guide  
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## Introduction

This programming guide has been developed to provide educational resources and activity ideas for education curators, docents, and teachers. We hope these materials will provide useful tools to make *Dichos: Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America* a success for your organization and your community. This programming guide is yours to keep. Access to the programming guide is also available through ExhibitsUSA's website at [www.eusa.org](http://www.eusa.org). Please contact Denise Smith, Assistant Curator, at 800-473-EUSA (3872), ext. 215, if you have any questions or suggestions regarding the content of this guide.

In order to help serve you and other venues, please take a few moments to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this guide with the form included with the exhibition materials. When completed, please return it to us via the provided self-addressed stamped envelope or fax a copy to 816-421-3918. A PDF version is also available at our website.

The sections of the programming guide contain the following information:

### Overview

This section provides a brief description of the exhibition, a list of educational materials traveling with the exhibition, and information about how to contact ExhibitsUSA.

### Reference Materials

This section provides copies of interpretative materials, including text panels and narrative labels that are displayed in the gallery with the exhibition. Other information includes a bibliography, videography, and suggested websites.

### Programming Resources

This section provides ideas and age-appropriate activities to assist you in meeting your museum's educational and programming needs. You can also find a speaker list and a list of resources useful in identifying speakers, programming suggestions, and on-site educational museum activities in this section.

### Teacher/Docent Resources

This section is designed for a variety of educators, including your museum staff, docents preparing to give tours, and teachers whose classes will visit the exhibition. Materials include docent information to assist them in giving tours of the exhibition, a list of images for educational proposes, and lesson plans. A family gallery guide enhances the exhibition experience for young visitors who are not part of a formal tour group.

Truck and bus drivers across Latin America delight in inscribing *dichos*—sayings or amusing expressions—on their vehicles. Hand painted in an endless variety of graphic styles and colors, *dichos* address subjects ranging from religion and love to puns and earthy humor. Unfortunately, with the emergence of corporate trucking and government push for standardized public transportation, this vibrant folk art may gradually disappear.

In *Dichos: Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*, the Museum of International Folk Art (MOIFA) offers an engaging look at this endangered tradition. The exhibition features photographs taken by Grant La Farge, M.D., of Santa Fe, New Mexico and toy vehicles in his private collection. La Farge encountered truck and bus drivers across Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Panama to document the many variations of the *dichos* tradition.

The 46 color photographs are accompanied by miniature *dicho*-laden vehicles, including one painted by well-known Latin American artist Arturo Sosa Perez, and full-size metal bumpers with text and graphics. The exhibition is organized thematically according to the content of the *dichos*. The four categories are *Love; Faith and Devotion; Wit, Commentary, and Egotism*; and *Buses of Panama*.

Several support materials are traveling with the exhibition. Should any of these materials be missing or fail to arrive, please call Ramona Davis, ExhibitsUSA's Exhibitor Relations Coordinator, at 800-473-EUSA (3872), ext. 209, and she will locate or replace the missing items as soon as possible. Please repack these items (books, DVDs/videos, and CDs) in the crates before shipping the exhibition to the next venue.

### Books – Adult

- Aranda, Charles. *Dichos: Proverbs & Sayings from the Spanish*. Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone Press, 1983.
- Burciaga, José Antonio, Carol Christensen, and Thomas Christensen. *In Few Words: A Compendium of Latino Folk Wit and Wisdom : a Bilingual Collection [En Pocas Palabras]*. San Francisco: Mercury House, 1997.
- Carbonell Basset, Delfin. *A Dictionary of Proverbs, Sayings, Maxims, Adages, English and Spanish [Diccionario de refranes, proverbios, dichos, adagios, castellano e inglés]*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 1998.
- Harris, Moira F., and Leo J. Harris. *Art on the Road: Painted Vehicles of the Americas*. Pogo Press Art and Popular Culture Series. St. Paul, NM: Pogo Press, 1988.
- La Farge, Grant. *Faith in God and Full Speed Ahead [Fe en Dios y ¡Adelante!]* Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1985. (Received with exhibition materials. DO NOT REPACK.)
- Nava, Yolanda. *It's All in the Frijoles: 100 Famous Latinos Share Real-Life Stories, Time-Tested Dichos, Favorite Folktales, and Inspiring Words of Wisdom*. New York: Fireside, 2000.
- Sellers, Jeff M., Gary Soto, and Annika Maria Nelson. *Folk Wisdom of Mexico: Proverbios y dichos Mexicanos*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle, 2004.
- Zona, Guy A. *Eyes That See Do Not Grow Old*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

### Books – Juvenile

- Franklin, Sharon, Mary Tull, and Cynthia A. Black. *Mexico & Central America. Artisans Around the Worlds*. Austin, TX: Raintree Steck-Vaughn Publishers, 2000.
- Gonzalez, Ralfka, and Ana Ruiz. *Mi primer libro de dichos [My first book of proverbs]*. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press, 1995.
- Longo, Alejandra, Daniel Chaskielberg, and Andrés Sobrino. *Refranes*. New York: Scholastic, 2005.

## Articles

Giffords, Gloria Fraser. "Soul of the Mexican Trucker." *El Palacio* 87, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 3-17. (Located in educational programming guide)

Harris, Moira F. "Art on the road: popular art and culture reflected in colourfully decorated trucks and buses." *UNESCO Courier* (October 1990).  
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1310/is\\_/ai\\_9117144](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1310/is_/ai_9117144).  
(Located in educational programming guide)

## DVD/ Video

Müller-Schwarze, Nina K. *Diablos Rojos: Los Buses de Panama*. 2005. (DVD) **Please note: Potential uneven audio quality.**

## Audio

Various Artists. *Dichos: Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*. Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, NM. (2 Discs)

If you have any questions or comments, ExhibitsUSA is just a phone call away at 800-473-EUSA (3872). We can also be reached by e-mail at the addresses listed below. For questions about specific topics, please consult the following list.

<b>Frequently asked questions regarding:</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Scheduling an exhibition, exhibition contracts, general questions, problems, or requests	Ramona Davis Exhibitor Relations Coordinator ramona@maaa.org ext. 209
Shipping, installation, or packing	Angelette Hart Registrar angelette@maaa.org ext. 216
Educational materials or program resources	Denise Smith Assistant Curator denise@maaa.org ext. 215
Mini-grant program to support education programs	Sherrie Albert Program Associate sherrie@maaa.org ext. 207
Proposing an exhibition	Leslie Przybylek Curator of Humanities Exhibitions leslie@maaa.org ext. 214 or Arlette Klaric, Ph.D. Curator of Art Exhibitions arlette@maaa.org ext. 219

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*Dichos : Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*

### **Introduction Panel**

A *dicho* is a saying, proverb, or amusing expression.

Drivers in many parts of Latin American take great delight in inscribing these phrases and proper names on the bumpers and other surfaces of their vehicles as a way of conveying their personal feelings and world-views to a broad audience. *Dichos* address a myriad of subjects such as religion, messages of love, humor, whimsy, jokes, puns, and blatant egotism. They present a glimpse into the heart, soul, and spirit of Latin Americans.

Unlike commercially produced bumper stickers used in the United States, the lettering of the *dichos* is hand painted, usually by amateurs or professionals of varying talent. From elaborate script to faulty grammar and backwards letters, the graphic diversity is endless. Words are often divided on the bumper to accommodate the license plate and single names split in half to balance the design. The lively quality of the lettering combined with the messages themselves present a wonderful form of folk art for all of us to enjoy.

### **Love Panel**

Themes of love are found in many vehicular *dichos* throughout Latin America. Usually personal statements from the drivers, the messages range from passionate, to humorous and tender, to hopeless and angry. Some *dichos* in this category have double meanings that allude to sexual offerings or accomplishments.

### **Buses from Panama Panel**

The Latin American folk art of decorating vehicles is particularly evident in Panama City where large, privately owned buses are painted on many surfaces – inside and out. Most of the work is done by professional artists who combine pictorial landscapes and portraits with lettered *dichos* and titles for the purpose of attracting riders. Preferred locations for *dichos* are inside the front of the bus where passengers can read them as they ride, but shorter inscriptions and titles are also painted on the exterior body, windows, and bumpers. Colorful landscapes and scenes also decorate panels on the interior and exterior of the bus, while portraits are generally found on the emergency door panels in the back where they can be easily seen by people following behind.

### **Faith and Devotion Panel**

Throughout Latin America Catholicism prevails with a powerful Christian God, Christ, and Saints who play an important role in all life's activities. It is no surprise then, that *dichos* painted on vehicles are often statements about God or petitions to Him, Christ, or the Saints to ensure safe travel. With improved roads, fewer bandits in isolated areas, and better



maintenance of trucks and vehicles, many drivers today are less anxious and some of the religious *dichos* decorating their vehicles have become more humorous in nature.

### **Commentary, Wit, and Egotism Panel**

Trucks become traveling homes for days or weeks at a time for men engaged in what is often a lonely, grueling, and dangerous occupation. The ornamentation of the hood, cab, windshield, bumpers, bed, and mud flaps serves as an outward form of personal communication with the public at large. Most trucks feature proper names painted prominently across the front that honor the driver, his sweetheart, members of his family, or friends. The *dichos* inscribed elsewhere on the vehicles express a broad range of themes -- humorous sayings, social commentary, and self-reflective statements or egotistical claims.

## Spanish Translations

### Introducción

**Un dicho es un proverbio** o una frase graciosa. Hombres en muchas partes de Latinoamérica que ganan la vida manejando vehículos se deleitan por poner tals palabras en el parachoques u otra superficie de su camión, taxi, o lo que sea. Es una manera de comunicar sentimientos personales o su filosofía de la vida al público. Los dichos se tratan de un gran número de temas; por ejemplo, la religión, el amor, capricho, chistes, juegos de palabras y jactancias exageradas. Nos ofrecen una mirada fugaz dentro del corazón, el alma, y el espíritu de los latinoamericanos.

Distinto a los autoadhesivos fabricados comercialmente y muy usados en los Estados Unidos, los dichos son aplicados a mano por pintores profesionales o no de variada habilidad. De escritura elegante a gramática equivocada y letras al revés, la diversidad gráfica es casi sin límite. Frecuentemente la placa parte una palabra en dos o un nombre propio se divide para balancear el diseño. La viva calidad de la inscripción combina con los mensajes mismos para producir una magnífica forma de arte popular de la cual todos podemos gozar.

### El Amor

**El tema de amor** se encuentra en muchos dichos vehiculares por toda la América Latina. Por lo usual son declaraciones personales de los choferes. Los mensajes expresan sentimientos de pasión o humor o ternura, de desesperación o ira. Algunos de estos dichos tienen un doble sentido que alude a propuestas o hazañas sexuales.

### Los autobuses de Panamá

**El arte popular** latinoamericana de decorar los vehículos es especialmente evidente en la Ciudad de Panamá. Allí se encuentran autobuses grandes de dueños privados cuyas superficies se pintan por dentro y por fuera. La mayoría de las obras son realizadas por artistas profesionales que combinan paisajes y retratos con dichos con el propósito de atraer pasajeros. El sitio preferido para los dichos es el interior delante donde es fácil para los pasajeros leerlos. Inscripciones más cortas y títulos se pintan también en los paneles del exterior del autobús y en los vidrios y parachoques. Escenas y paisajes en colores brillantes también decoran paneles del interior y exterior de los vehículos. Por lo general los retratos se encuentran en la puerta de emergencia que está colocada atrás, así que es fácil verlos para la gente que sigue detrás.

### Fe y devoción

**El catolicismo** prevalece por toda Latinoamérica. Dios, Cristo y los santos tienen un papel poderoso e importante en todas las actividades de la vida. No es sorprendente, pues, que muchos dichos pintados en los vehículos se traten de Dios o que sean peticiones a El o a Cristo o a los santos rogando un viaje seguro. Pero hoy en día los caminos son mejores, hay menos bandidos en regions aisladas, y el mantenimiento de los vehículos ha mejorado mucho. Por eso muchos choferes tienen menos preocupaciones y algunos de los dichos religiosos decorando sus vehículos emplean un tono más humorístico.

Comentario, humorismo, y egoísmo

**Para los hombres** que se ocupan de manejar camiones por días o semanas sin volver a casa, su vehículo se convierte en su hogar ambulante. Llevan a cabo un trabajo que es duro, solitario, y, a veces, peligroso. La ornamentación del capó, la cabina, el parabrisas, los parachoques, el espacio para la carga o los guardafangos sirve como un tipo de comunicación personal con la gente con quien el chofer comparte los caminos. La mayor parte de los camiones despliega un nombre propio pintado prominentemente en la frente que honra al mismo chofer o a su novia, a miembros de la familia o amigos. Las palabras encontradas en otras partes del vehículo expresan una gran variedad de temas—dichos humorísticos, comentario social, pensamientos filosóficos o alabanzas propias egoístas.

1. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1984

---

Over the top of the truck bed:

**Que Me Vez - Que Soy El Mismo**  
*Why are you looking at me, I'm still the same*

---

From windshield and hood:

Mary Cruz *and* Alicia Maria

---

Front bumper:

**Cuidame Virgencita de Juquila**  
*Take care of me (blessed) Virgin of Juquila*

Notes how the name “Virgencita” has been misspelled and the letters had to be condensed to fit on the left side of the license plate.

2. Taxco, Guerrero,  
Mexico, 1981

---

Front bumper:

**Fe en Dios y ... Adelante**  
*Faith in God and ... full speed ahead*

This is an example of a universal religious *dicho* with a humorous twist. It is a popular saying found on many trucks.

3. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1984
- 

Back bumper:

**Dios es Nuestro Amparo y Fortaleza**  
*God is our protection and our fortress*

---

Lower panel:

**Los Cielos Cuentan la Gloria de Dios**  
**La Expansion Denuncia la Obra de Sus Manos**

*The Heavens tell of the Glory of God.*  
*The Firmament shows the work of His hands*

Old Testament Psalm 91:1

4. Panama City,  
Panama, 1984
- 

Over back window:

Painted scene of the Last Supper of Jesus and  
His Disciples

---

Under back window:

Painting of Jesus with the Sacred Heart

**Sdo (Sagrado) Corazon**  
*Sacred Heart*

5. Otavalo,  
Ecuador, 1984
- 

Back bumper:

**Si Dios Quiere Volvere.**  
**¡Porque los Envidiosos Lloran por Mi!**

*God willing, I'll return. Why are the envious  
crying for me!*

6. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Back bumper:

**Siga Cristo Alto al Pecado**  
*Follow Christ Stop Sin*

The term “SIGO or SIGA” (follow) is used on truck bumpers to indicate which side to pass on, in all cases the left. The term on the right side, “ALTO” (stop), is telling drivers not to pass on that side of the truck. With a play on these words, the *dicho* means “Follow Christ and don’t go on sinning on the dangerous side.”

7. Panama City,  
Panama, 1983

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Above the window:

Decorative painted landscape

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Below the window:

**Santa Librada Ilumuna mi Camino**  
*Saint Librada Light my Way*

8. Taxco, Guerrero,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Back bumper:

**Todo te lo Debo Ati ... Señor**  
*I owe everything to Thee, oh God*

Note the way the artist combined “A” and “Ti” into one word.

9. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Front of cab:

**Martha**

---

Front bumper:

**Dios Nunca Muere**  
*God never dies*

This is the title of one of Mexico's most famous musical pieces, composed by Macedonio Alcalá, which is played in cemeteries at midnight during the Day of the Dead on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

10. Taxco, Guerrero,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Front bumper:

**Hagace Señor Tu Voluntad**  
*Thy Will be Done, Oh Lord*

11. Izúcar de Matamoros, Puebla,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Front top of cab:

**Armandin** (Affectionate spelling of Armando)

---

Front bumper:

**El Travieso**  
*The Naughty One*

---

Front mud flaps:

These are each painted with an ornate form of the Christian cross.

12. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Back bumper:

**Nomada**  
*Nomad*

---

Lower panel:

**Dueño de Nada**  
*Owner of Nothing*

13. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Back bumper:

**Caminante no Hay Camino se Hace Camino  
al ANDAR**  
*Traveler - There is no path. You make you  
own path by walking*

14. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Front bumper:

**El Jefe**  
**The Boss**

---

Front mud flaps:

Painting of a skull and cross bones.

**Peligro**  
*Danger*



15. Almolonga, Quetzaltenango,  
Guatemala, 1991

---

Rear bumper:

**Guarde Distancia**  
*Keep your Distance*

---

Lower panel:

**Invencible**  
*Invincible*

---

Rear mud flaps:

Painting on each shows a warrior on horseback with bow and arrow. These images reinforce the message to not follow behind the truck too closely.

16. Tehuacán, Puebla,  
Mexico, 1984

---

Back panel of hand cart:

**No Me Choque Cuidame**  
*Don't Wreck Me—Take Care of Me*

17. Izúcar de Matamoros, Puebla,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Front panel on truck bed:

**Chico Malo**  
*Naughty Guy*

---

Front window and front bumper:

**Juan Antonio**

18. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983
- 

Back bumper:

**Que Murmuren las Viboras**  
*Let the vipers gossip*

19. Guatemala City,  
Guatemala, 1983
- 

Back bumper:

**Para Que Cortarlas Verdes si Maduras Caen Solas**  
*Why cut the green ones, when mature they fall by themselves*

20. Iguala, Guerrero,  
Mexico, 1983
- 

Back bumper:

**Si de Dios Hablaron Porque no Diran de Mi**  
*If they have spoken of God, why wouldn't they talk about me*

21. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983
- 

Front grill and front bumper:

**Baby Face –  
Carita de Niño**

*Baby Face – in English and Spanish*

22. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983
- 

Front bumper:

**El Muchacho Alegre**  
*The Happy Guy*

The marigolds and cockscombs decorating the grillwork are colorful flowers used to ornament altars during the Day of the Dead celebration in Oaxaca. Here the driver has adopted them for his truck.

23. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983
- 

Back bumper:

**Corazon**  
*Heart or Love*

- with picture of a heart pierced with an arrow.

24. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1982
- 

Back bumper:

**Deja que Tus Ojos Me Vuelvan a Mirar**  
*Let your eyes look at me again*

25. Zunil,  
Guatemala, 1983
- 

Back gate:

**Lloraras al no Ver Me. Tu Castigo es Verme**  
*You will cry when you don't see me. Your punishment is seeing me*

26. Izúcar de Matamoros, Puebla,  
Mexico, 1983
- 

Back door:

**Va Sin Mi**  
*Go without me*

This is probably an abbreviation of - Que Tal Te  
Va Sin Mi – How is it going without me.

---

Back bumper:

**Las Mujeres Son Como las Carreteras Falsas  
Resbalosas y Tracioneras**  
*Women are like highways: false, slippery, and  
treacherous*

**Albertito**  
*Little Albert*

---

Lower back panel:

**Triste Soñador**  
*Sad Dreamer*

27. Tierra Colorado, Guerrero,  
Mexico, 1983
- 

Front bumper:

**Soy tu Leño**  
*I am your firewood*

This could refer to setting his sweetheart on fire,  
but the word “leño,” being a thick piece of wood,  
has other connotations.

28. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1982

---

Gas tank on side of truck:

**Si Me Muebes Me Sacas Todo Lo Que Tengo**  
*If you move me, everything I have will fall out or*  
*If you get me going, you get everything I have*

This could refer to using up the gas as the truck moves down the road, but it also alludes to the driver and his sweetheart.

29. Atlatlahuacan, Morelos,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Back bumper:

**Un Hogar Sin Sancho es Como un Jardin Sin Flores**  
*A house without Sancho is like a garden*  
*without flowers*

---

Back lower panels:

**Cupido**  
*Cupid*

- with painting of a heart

---

Over the top of the truck bed:

**Atlatlahucan(o?)**  
*I'm from Atlatlahuacan*

30. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1984

---

Back bumper:

**Yo Se Que Te Acordaras...**  
*I know you will remember...*

---

Lower back panel

**El Principe Azul**  
*Prince Charming*

31. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1982

---

Front bumper:

**Ladrón de Besos**  
*Thief of Kisses*

32. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Front bumper:

**Si Sufres Con El Vente Con Migo**  
*If you suffer with him, come with me*

33. Almolonga, Quetzaltenango,  
Guatemala, 1991

---

Back lower panel:

**¿Porque Lloras Si Aqui Vengo?"**  
**Why do you cry if I am on my way here?**

-with a painting of a heart

34. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Front bumper:

**Ya Yego (Llego) Tu Viejo**  
*Your old man has arrived*

35. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1984

---

Front of cab:

**Pequeño Sheriff**  
*Little Sheriff*

---

Front bumper:

**Regalame Un Beso y Dime Adios!**  
*Give me a kiss and bid me goodbye!*

36. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Front bumper:

**Rojo de Amor Pero no de Verguenza**  
*Red from love, but not from shame*

37. Oaxaca, Oaxaca,  
Mexico, 1983

---

Front bumper:

**Mi Novia Ya no Es Virginia**  
*My girl friend is no longer Virginia (or a virgin)*

38. Panama City,  
Panama, 1984

---

Front top panel over window:

**Transistmica**

*Trans-isthmus*

- with landscape painting

Route name—indicating that this bus crosses the  
Panama isthmus.

---

Front bumper:

**Mucho Amor**

*Much Love*

---

Side panel:

**Virgen de Guadalupe**

*Virgin of Guadalupe*

39. Panama City,  
Panama, 1984

---

Front handrails in interior of bus:

**100 Años de Soledad A Tu Espera**

*100 Years of Loneliness. . . Waiting for You*

Note the landscape painting over the front  
window and other decorative paintings  
above the side windows.

40. Panama City,  
Panama, 1985

---

Over back window in interior of bus:

Painted scene showing Panama buses in rain  
with the Hotel el Parador (roadhouse) in the  
background.



41. Panama City,  
Panama, 1985

---

Exterior side panel of bus and side windows:

**Rivoli, Rita, Ro(sa)**

The side windows of many buses in Panama are decorated with the names of women.

---

Front window:

Painting of Sylvester the Cat

Panama buses are often decorated with popular cartoon characters.

42. Panama City,  
Panama, 1985

---

Fuel tank cover on side of bus:

**Tomando Diesel**  
*Drinking Diesel*

- with painting of bottle pouring liquid

43. Panama City,  
Panama, 1984

---

Panel on side of front stairway into bus:

**Suba Con Quidado**  
*Step up with Care*

- with painting of a cartoon character with large clumsy feet

44. Panama City,  
Panama, 1984

---

Panel over back window:

Painted landscape with railroad train.

---

Back window:

**Asi Lo Dicen**

*That's what they say*

---

Back door panel:

Portrait of woman holding paper money who is probably a well-known personality in Panama.

Panamanian bus artists often put their best work on the emergency door panel on the back of the bus where they paint a portrait of a religious figure or authority.

---

Back bumper:

**No Me Compares**

*Don't Compare Me*

The driver felt he was incomparable.

**E R**

These are probably the initials of the artist who painted the bus.

45. Panama City,  
Panama, 1985

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Back door frame:

Painted scene showing a small Panama bus, called a "chivita" or "little goat," on a barge going through a lock of the Panama Canal.

46. Panama City,  
Panama, 1985

---

Back window:

**Se Vende**  
*For Sale*

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Back door panel:

Painting showing a group of dogs playing  
poker.

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Back bumper:

**Noche de Perros**  
*Night of Dogs*

This refers to the guys' night out.

47. **Large Farm Truck**

Painted wood  
Guatemala, 1991

48. **Large Bus**

Wood, tin with Lucite windows  
Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, 1991

49. **Small Car**

Painted tin  
Puebla, Mexico, 2003

50. **Cargo Truck**

By Arturo Sosa Pérez

Painted tin  
Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico, 1991

51. **Painted Metal Bumper with *Dicho***

Created for exhibition  
1992

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**Mi Novia**  
**Ya No Es Virginia**  
*My girl friend is no  
longer Virginia (or a virgin)*

Courtesy Grant LaFarge

52. **Painted Metal Bumper with *Dicho***

Created for exhibition  
1992

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**Panama Bendita**  
*Blessed Panama*

Courtesy Grant LaFarge

53. **Painted Metal Bumper with *Dicho***

Created for exhibition  
1992

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**Traigo de Todo**  
*I carry everything ... [but the kitchen sink]*

Courtesy Grant LaFarge

54. **Painted Metal Bumper with *Dicho***

Created for exhibition  
1992

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**Si Dios Quiere Volvere**  
*God willing, I'll return*

Courtesy Grant LaFarge

*Dichos: Word to Live, Love, and Laugh By in Latin America*

Final Checklist

December 1, 2008

Total pages: 7

Checklist summary: 46 color photographs, 4 toy vehicles, and 4 painted bumpers

All dimensions given in inches, height preceding width preceding depth

All works collection Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe unless otherwise noted

Introduction

1. **Truck front with *dicho* "Que Me Vez - Que Soy El Mismo"**  
Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico  
1984  
Photograph  
48 x 36 x 7/8 each
  2. **Front bumper with *dicho* "Fe en Dios y...Adelante"**  
Taxco, Guerrero, Mexico  
1981  
Photograph  
43 3/4 x 30 x 7/8
  3. **Truck back with *dicho* "Dios es Nuestro Amparo y Fortaleza"**  
Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico  
1984  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8
  4. **Bus back with painted scene of the Last Supper of Jesus and His Disciples, *dicho* "Sdo (Sagrado) Corazon"**  
Panama City, Panama  
1984  
Photograph  
45 x 30 x 7/8
  5. **Back bumper with *dicho* "Si Dios Quiere Volvere ¡Porque los Envidiosos Lloran por Mi!"**  
Otavalo, Ecuador  
1984  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8
  6. **Back bumper with *dicho* "Siga Cristo Alto al Pecado"**  
Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico  
1983  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8
  7. **Bus back with decorative painted landscape and *dicho* "Santa Librada Ilumuna mi Camino"**  
Panama City, Panama  
1983  
Photograph  
45 x 30 x 7/8
  8. **Back bumper with *dicho* "Todo te lo Debo Ati ... Señor"**  
Taxco, Guerrero, Mexico  
1983  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8
  9. **Truck front with *dicho* "Dios Nunca Muere"**  
Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico  
1983  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8
  10. **Front bumper with *dicho* "Hagace Señor Tu Voluntad"**  
Taxco, Guerrero, Mexico  
1983  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8
- Commentary, Wit, and Egotism
11. **Truck front with "Armandin" and *dicho* "El Travieso"**  
Izúcar de Matamoros, Puebla, Mexico  
1983  
Photograph  
45 x 30 x 7/8

***Dichos: Word to Live, Love, and Laugh By in Latin America***

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| <p>12. <b>Truck back with <i>dicho</i> "Nomada"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>13. <b>Back bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Caminante no Hay Camino se Hace Camino al ANDAR"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>14. <b>Truck front with <i>dicho</i> "El Jefe"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>15. <b>Truck back with <i>dicho</i> "Guarde Distancia"</b><br/>Almolonga, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala<br/>1991<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>16. <b>Back panel of hand cart with <i>dicho</i> "No Me Choque Cuidame"</b><br/>Tehuacán, Puebla, Mexico<br/>1984<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>17. <b>Truck front with <i>dicho</i> "Chico Malo"</b><br/>Izúcar de Matamoros, Puebla, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>45 x 30 x 7/8</p> <p>18. <b>Back bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Que Murmuren las Viboras"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> | <p>19. <b>Back bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Para Que Cortar las Verdes si Manuras Caen Solas"</b><br/>Guatemala City, Guatemala<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>20. <b>Back bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Si de Dios Halbaron Porque no Diran de Mi"</b><br/>Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>21. <b>Truck front with <i>dicho</i> "Baby Face - Carita de Niño"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>45 x 30 x 7/8</p> <p>22. <b>Front bumper with <i>dicho</i> "El Muchacho Alegre"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p><u>Love</u></p> <p>23. <b>Back bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Corazon"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>24. <b>Back bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Deja que Tus Ojo Me Vuelvan a Mirar"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1982<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>25. <b>Back gate with <i>dicho</i> "Lloraras al no Ver Me. Tu Castigo es Verme"</b><br/>Zunil, Guatemala<br/>1983</p> |
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| <p>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>26. <b>Truck back with <i>dicho</i> "Va Sin Mi"</b><br/>Izúcar de Matamoros, Puebla, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>27. <b>Front bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Soy tu Leño"</b><br/>Tierra Colorado, Guerrero, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>28. <b>Gas tank on side of truck with <i>dicho</i> "Si Me Muebes Me Sacas Todo Lo Que Tengo"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1982<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>29. <b>Truck back with <i>dicho</i> "Un Hogar Sin Sancho es Como un Jardin Sin Flores"</b><br/>Atlatlahuacan, Morelos, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>30. <b>Truck back with <i>dicho</i> "Yo Se Que Te Acordaras..."</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1984<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>31. <b>Front bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Ladrón de Besos"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1982<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>32. <b>Front bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Si Sufres Con El Vente Con Migo"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph</p> | <p>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>33. <b>Back lower panel with <i>dicho</i> "Porque Lloras Si Aqui Vengo?"</b><br/>Almolonga, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala<br/>1991<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>34. <b>Front bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Ya Yego (Llego) Tu Viejo"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>35. <b>Truck front with <i>dicho</i> "Pequeño Sheriff"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1984<br/>Photograph<br/>45 x 30 x 7/8</p> <p>36. <b>Front bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Rojo de Amor Pero no de Verguenza"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>37. <b>Front bumper with <i>dicho</i> "Mi Novia Ya no Es Virginia"</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1983<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p><b><u>Buses from Panama</u></b></p> <p>38. <b>Bus front with <i>dicho</i> "Transistmica"</b><br/>Panama City, Panama<br/>1984<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>39. <b>Front handrails in interior of bus with <i>dicho</i> "100 Años de Soledad A Tu Espera"</b><br/>Panama City, Panama</p> |
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| <p>1984<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>40. <b>Bus interior with a painted scene showing Panama buses in rain</b><br/>Panama City, Panama<br/>1985<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>41. <b>Bus side with "Rivoli, Rita, Ro(sa)"</b><br/>Panama City, Panama<br/>1985<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>42. <b>Bus side with <i>dicho</i> "Tomando Diesel"</b><br/>Panama City, Panama<br/>1985<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>43. <b>Bus side with <i>dicho</i> "Suba Con Quidado"</b><br/>Panama City, Panama<br/>1984<br/>Photograph<br/>45 x 30 x 7/8</p> <p>44. <b>Bus back with painted landscape with railroad train and <i>dicho</i> "Asi Lo Dicen"</b><br/>Panama City, Panama<br/>1984<br/>Photograph<br/>30 x 45 x 7/8</p> <p>45. <b>Bus back with painted scene showing small Panama bus, called a "chivita" or "little goat," on a barge going through lock of the Panama Canal</b><br/>Panama City, Panama<br/>1985<br/>Photograph<br/>45 x 30 x 7/8</p> <p>46. <b>Bus back with <i>dicho</i> "Se Vende"</b></p> | <p>Panama City, Panama<br/>1985<br/>Photograph<br/>45 x 30 x 7/8</p> <p><b><u>Toy Vehicles</u></b></p> <p>47. <b>Farm truck</b><br/>Guatemala<br/>1991<br/>Painted wood<br/>11 1/2 x 21 1/2 x 9<br/>Courtesy Grant LaFarge</p> <p>48. <b>Bus</b><br/>Quetzaltenango, Guatemala<br/>1991<br/>Painted wood and tin with lucite windows<br/>7 3/4 x 16 3/4 x 6 1/4<br/>Courtesy Grant LaFarge</p> <p>49. <b>Small car</b><br/>Puebla, Mexico<br/>2003<br/>Painted tin<br/>3 3/4 x 7 1/8 x 4 3/4<br/>Courtesy Grant LaFarge</p> <p>50. Arturo Sosa Pérez<br/><b>Cargo truck</b><br/>Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico<br/>1991<br/>Painted tin<br/>10 x 20 x 3/4<br/>Courtesy Grant LaFarge</p> <p><b><u>Painted Bumpers</u></b></p> <p>51. Bret Furneau<br/><b>Mi Novia Ya No Es Virginia</b><br/>1992<br/>Painted metal bumper<br/>6 1/2 x 77 1/2 x 8 1/2<br/>Courtesy Grant LaFarge</p> <p>52. Bret Furneau<br/><b>Panama Bendita</b><br/>1992<br/>Painted metal bumper<br/>7 x 76 x 8 1/2</p> |
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***Dichos: Word to Live, Love, and Laugh By in Latin America***

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Courtesy Grant LaFarge

53. Bret Furneau  
**Traigo de Todo**  
1992  
Painted metal bumper  
6 x 7 1/2 x 8 1/2  
Courtesy Grant LaFarge
54. Bret Furneau  
**Si Dios Quiere Volvere**  
1992  
Painted metal bumper  
7 x 7 1/2 x 8 1/2  
Courtesy Grant LaFarge

**Text Panels**

- P1. **ExhibitsUSA Credit Panel**  
24 x 20 x 1/2
- P2. ***Dichos* Introduction panel**  
45 x 30 x 7/8
- P3. ***Faith and Devotion* panel**  
45 x 30 x 7/8
- P4. ***Commentary, Wit, and Egotism* panel**  
45 x 30 x 7/8
- P5. ***Love* panel**  
45 x 30 x 7/8
- P6. ***Buses from Panama* panel**  
45 x 30 x 7/8

*Dichos: Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*

Touring 12/15/2008 through 11/30/2011 by ExhibitsUSA, a division of Mid-America Arts Alliance

December 15, 2008      March 10, 2009

**The Alameda National Center for Latino Arts and Culture**

San Antonio, Texas

March 25, 2009      April 30, 2009

**ON HOLD**

Dallas, Texas

May 15, 2009      June 20, 2009

**Kansas City Public Library**

Kansas City, Missouri

July 05, 2009      August 16, 2009

- open date -

September 01, 2009      October 05, 2009

**Texarkana Regional Arts and Humanities Council, Inc.**

Texarkana, Texas

October 21, 2009      January 19, 2010

**Cheekwood Botanical Garden & Museum of Art**

Nashville, Tennessee

February 03, 2010      March 10, 2010

- open date -

March 25, 2010      April 30, 2010

- open date -

May 15, 2010      June 20, 2010

- open date -

July 05, 2010      August 16, 2010

- open date -

September 01, 2010      October 05, 2010

**Neville Public Museum**

Green Bay, Wisconsin

**Prepared December 2008**

Materials accompanying the exhibition are marked with an asterisk (\*).

### Books – Adult (Vehicle painting traditions and folk art)

Arias Chaverri, Lidilia. *Las carretas decoradas en el estilo Sarchí*. San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Universidad de Costa Rica, 2006.

This book deals with the cart painting tradition of Costa Rica.

Croce, Marcella, and Moira F. Harris. *History on the Road: The Painted Carts of Sicily*. St. Paul, MN: Pogo Press, 2006.

Croce and Harris explore the history and use of decorated carts from Sicily. Contains black-and-white and color illustrations.

\*Harris, Moira F., and Leo J. Harris. *Art on the Road: Painted Vehicles of the Americas*. Pogo Press art and popular culture series. St. Paul, MN: Pogo Press, 1988.

Harris examines the vehicle painting traditions of Costa Rica, Panama, Haiti, Colombia, and the United States of America.

*Homenaje a un arte popular: los buses de Panamá*. Panama City: Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, 1983.

This publication was produced in connection with a bus painting competition in Panama. Spanish text.

\*La Farge, Grant. *Faith in God and Full Speed Ahead [Fe en Dios y ¡Adelante!]* Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1985.

This book contains images and *dichos* from the exhibition *Dichos: Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*. Photographs by Grant La Farge, M.D.

Sims, Michael. *The Painted Oxcart: Heart of Costa Rican Culture [La Carreta Pintada: Corazón De La Cultura Costarricense]*. San José, Costa Rica: BAC San José, 2006.

Sims examines the tradition of oxcart painting in Costa Rica.

## Books – Adult (*Dichos*, Proverbs, and Folktales)

Aparicio, Eduardo. *101 Spanish Proverbs: Understanding Spanish Language and Culture Through Common Sayings*. Lincolnwood, IL: Passport Books, 1998.

An English equivalent is provided with each Spanish proverb in this book. Also contains illustrated cartoons.

\*Aranda, Charles. *Dichos: Proverbs & Sayings from the Spanish*. Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone Press, 1983.

This collection of Spanish sayings is structured in dictionary format. Spanish and English texts.

Avila, Adrienne, and Leslie Pockell. *Only the Best: 100 Great Quotations and Proverbs [Sólo lo mejor: 100 gran refranes y frases célebres]*. New York: Warner Books, 2005.

*Only the Best* features words of wisdom from such individuals as Miguel de Cervantes, Jorge Luis Borges, Octavio Paz, and St. Teresa de Avila. English translations included.

Ballesteros, Octavio A. *Mexican Proverbs: The Philosophy, Wisdom and Humor of a People*. Burnet, TX: Eakin Press, 1979.

Ballesteros explores various proverbs from Mexico. Bilingual text.

Ballesteros, Octavio A., and María del Carmen Ballesteros. *Mexican Expressions: The Spice of a People [Expresiones mexicanas : el sabor de un pueblo]*. Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2002.

The expressions contained in this bilingual publication will help students (middle school through college) learn more about Mexican and Mexican-American cultures.

Ballesteros, Octavio A., and María del Carmen Ballesteros. *Mexican Sayings: The Treasures of a People*. Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1993.

This collection contains more than 400 Mexican *dichos* about love, religion, and advice.

Bierhorst, John, ed. *Latin American Folktales: Stories from Hispanic and Indian Traditions*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2002.

An extensive anthology of Latin American folk narratives, most of the presented tales were not translated into English before this publication. Includes a useful register of tale types and selected motifs, glossary of native cultures, and bibliography.

Blanco, José Antonio. *Oasis: los mejores proverbios del mundo* [The world's best proverbs: English-Español]. México: McGraw-Hill, 1997.

In this book, Blanco examines well-known proverbs. Bilingual text.

\*Burciaga, José Antonio, Carol Christensen, and Thomas Christensen. *In Few Words: A Compendium of Latino Folk Wit and Wisdom: a Bilingual Collection* [*En Pocas Palabras*]. San Francisco: Mercury House, 1997.

A bilingual compilation of Latino folk sayings and *dichos*, this book is arranged by themes that deal with subjects such as ability and adversity.

\*Carbonell Basset, Delfín. *A Dictionary of Proverbs, Sayings, Maxims, Adages, English and Spanish* [*Diccionario de refranes, proverbios, dichos, adagios, castellano e inglés.*] Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 1998.

Ideal for students, translators, and interpreters, this dictionary shows how English and Spanish proverbs are different yet deal with similar subjects – love, hate, money, poverty, men, and women. Nearly 2,500 famous English and Spanish proverbs are featured with translations and approximate equivalents in the opposite language. Includes cross-references and origin information.

Cantera Ortiz de Urbina, Jesús, Julia Sevilla, Manuel Sevilla Muñoz, and Wolfgang Mieder. *Refranes, otras paremias y fraseologismos en Don Quijote de la Mancha*. Supplement Series of Proverbium, v.17. Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, 2005.

This book examines Spanish proverbs found in the literary classic *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. Spanish text.

Díaz-Rivera, María Elisa. *Refranes usados en Puerto Rico*. Río Piedras, P.R.: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1994.

Díaz-Rivera assembles common Spanish sayings found in Puerto Rican culture. Spanish text.

Flonta, Teodor. *A Dictionary of English and Spanish Equivalent Proverbs*. [S.l.]: Proverbio.com, 2001.

A useful reference tool for scholars and researchers, this dictionary assembles 2,201 English proverbs and their Spanish equivalents.

Holtz, Déborah, and Juan Carlos Mena. *Del dicho al hecho: Refranes y Grafica Popular Mexicana*. Trilce Ediciones S. A. de C. V., 2008.

Popular sayings are transformed by clever and humorous illustrations by anonymous artists. Images were taken from unsuspecting places such as fences, placards, curtains, and steering wheels.

Mertvago, Peter. *Dictionary of 1000 Spanish proverbs: with English Equivalent*s. Hippocrene Bilingual Proverbs. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1996.

This reference collection offers readers insight into the language and culture of Spain. An approximate or literal translation is provided.

\*Nava, Yolanda. *It's All in the Frijoles: 100 Famous Latinos Share Real-Life Stories, Time-Tested Dichos, Favorite Folktales, and Inspiring Words of Wisdom*. New York: Fireside, 2000.

This collection of Latino wisdom features inspiring recollections and anecdotes by well-known figures, both past and present, including Edward James Olmas, Isabel Allende, Octavio Paz, and Saint Teresa de Avila.

Ohara, Maricarmen. *Tesoro de refranes populares* [A treasure of popular proverbs]. Ventura, CA: Alegria Hispana Publications, 1990.

Ohara presents a collection of popular Spanish proverbs.

Pérez, Cristina. *Living by Los Dichos: Advice from a Mother to a Daughter*. New York: Atria Books, 2006.

Pérez shares her mother's influential *dichos* which have guided the author throughout her life. The book offers sound advice for women of all ages.

Remolina Lopez, Maria Teresa, Becky Rubinstein Wolojviansky, and Maria Luisa Isabel Suarez de la Prida. *El refranero mexicano*. Selector. México: Selector S.A., 2004.

A collection of Mexican proverbs. Spanish text.

Sayer, Chloë, and David Sievert Lavender. *Arts and Crafts of Mexico*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1990.

This book combines text and color photographs to explore the rich tradition of Mexican people and their art. Textiles, ceramics, and jewelry making are among the subjects covered in the publication. Includes a glossary, bibliography, and "People of Mexico" chart.

\*Sellers, Jeff M., Gary Soto, and Annika Maria Nelson. *Folk Wisdom of Mexico: Proverbios y dichos mexicanos*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle, 2004.

This bilingual publication contains over 100 *dichos* from the wisdom rich culture of Mexico. Illustrations by Annika Maria Nelson. English and Spanish texts.

Serrano, Juan, and Susan Serrano. *Spanish Idioms, Proverbs and Slang of Yesterday and Today*. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1999.

The book explores the history of proverbs in Spain and discusses the importance of proverbs in Spanish literature and oral tradition.

Tirado Zarco, Miguel. *Refranero*. Ciudad Real: Perea Ediciones, 1987.

A collection of Spanish proverbs. Spanish text.

\*Zona, Guy A. *Eyes That See Do Not Grow Old*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Compiled by Guy A. Zona, the Latino sayings and proverbs of this book are eye-opening observations from the cultures of Mexico, Central America, and South America.

### **Books – Juvenile**

Ada, Alma Flor. *The Rooster Who Went to His Uncle's Wedding: A Latin American Folktale*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1993.

Ada retells this light-hearted Latin American story of a rooster's ordeal on the way to a wedding. Illustrated by Kathleen Kuchera.

Ada, Alma Flor, and Isabel F. Campoy. *Tales Our Abuelitas Told: A Hispanic Folktale Collection*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006.

Ada and Campoy retell a mixture of twelve popular tales and literary lore celebrating Hispanic culture and its many roots – Indigenous, African, Arab, Hebrew, and Spanish. Each tale is accompanied by an explanation and illustrations.

Bermejo Meléndez, Belén, and Tomás Hijo. *Refranes populares*. Colección Alcancía, 2. Zaragoza [Spain]: Luis Vives Editorial, 2002.

This book contains alphabetically arranged entries that provide explanations of popular Spanish sayings. Also includes illustrations. Spanish text.

\*Franklin, Sharon, Mary Tull, and Cynthia A. Black. *Mexico & Central America. Artisans Around the Worlds*. Austin, TX: Raintree Steck-Vaughn Publishers, 2000.

Franklin and Black explore folk art traditions of Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Guatemala. Contains maps and other geographical information, projects, and a glossary.

\*Gonzalez, Ralfka, and Ana Ruiz. *Mi primer libro de dichos* [My first book of proverbs]. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press, 1995.

In this collection of popular Mexican *dichos*, or proverbs, artists Ralka Gonzalez and Ana Ruiz vividly illustrate their favorite sayings acquired in their travels throughout Mexico and the United States.

\*Longo, Alejandra, Daniel Chaskielberg, and Andrés Sobrino. *Refranes*. New York: Scholastic, 2005.

*Refranes* contains familiar sayings to children from all parts of Latin America and the Caribbean. Spanish text.

Miller, Mary. *Traditional Crafts of Mexico*. Glenview, IL: Pearson/Scott Foresman, 2006.

Miller discusses folk art traditions of Mexico.

Palomar de Miguel, Juan, and Cecilia Rébora. *En boca cerrada y otros refranes*. México, D.F.: Ediciones Destino, 2004.

A juvenile publication of Spanish proverbs and poems. Spanish text. Reading level: ages 4-8.

Scheffler, Axel. *Proverbs from Far and Wide*. London: Macmillan Children's, 2001.

This book presents proverbs from all over the world. Reading level: ages 4-8.



## Articles

- Arora, Shirley L. "Proverbs in Mexican American Tradition." *Aztlan--International Journal of Chicano Studies Research*. 13, no. 1-2 (1982): 43-69.
- Asis, Karen. "Paint your Wagon." *Travel-Holiday* (February 1986): 92.
- Benson, Le Grace. "A Report from Haiti." *Art International* XXVI, no. 5-6 (May/June 1982): 117-130.
- Briggs, Peter S. "Panamanian Popular Art from the Back of a Bus." *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 1 (1982): 187-195.
- Cobb, Jr., Charles E. "Panama: Ever at the Crossroads." *National Geographic Magazine* 169, no. 4 (April 1986): 466-492.
- \*Giffords, Gloria Fraser. "Soul of the Mexican Trucker." *El Palacio* 87, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 3-17.
- Hahner, June E. "Brazilian Truck Bumper Sayings." *Revista Interamericana* V, no. 3 (Fall 1975): 422-432.
- \*Harris, Moira F. "Art on the road: popular art and culture reflected in colourfully decorated trucks and buses." *UNESCO Courier* (October 1990).  
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**DVD/ Video**

*Globe Trekker: Ecuador*. Pilot Guides. Escapi New Media Studios. 2004.

Travel guide Justine Shapiro visits Guayaquil, the Andes, capital of Ecuador (Quito), the Amazon, and the Galapagos Islands.

*Globe Trekker: Panama and Colombia*. Pilot Productions. 2007.

Follow Megan McCormick as she visits Panama's capital and the Panama Canal. She also journeys to Colombia's capital Bogota, the historic city of Cartagena, and the town of Santa Marta. Mentions Panamanian buses. **(Please note: Some images may be unsuitable for young children. Discusses Colombia's drug history. Recommended for ages 10+)**

*Globe Trekker: Ultimate Central America*. Pilot Productions/ Escapi New Media Studios. 2003.

Contains three shows: *Honduras and El Salvador*, *Costa Rica and Nicaragua*, and *La Ruta Maya: Yucatan, Guatemala, and Belize*

*Globe Trekker: Ultimate Mexico*. Pilot Productions. 2006.

This DVD includes four episodes: *Mexico City*; *Southern Mexico*; *La Ruta Maya*; and *Baja California and the Copper Canyon*. A special bonus disc contains four other short series on Mexico.

\*Müller-Schwarze, Nina K. *Diablos Rojos: los buses de Panama*. 2005. (DVD)

This experimental ethnographic documentary discusses transportation, globalization, and the expression of Panamanian cultural identity. English subtitles. **(Please note: Potential uneven audio quality.)**

**Audio**

\*Various Artists. *Dichos: Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*. Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, NM. (2 Discs)

Discs feature a variety of Latin music including Salsa, Mariachi, Merengue, and Cumbia.

## Websites

There are many websites that discuss Latin American culture, Spanish proverbs, and Panamanian buses. Below is brief list of websites:

### **National Geographic**

[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)

This website provides cultural and geographical information on Latin America countries such as Mexico, Colombia, and Panama. It also includes a special site for children.

### **Mexico for Kids**

[http://www.elbalero.gob.mx/index\\_kids.html](http://www.elbalero.gob.mx/index_kids.html)

This interactive site for children provides information about Mexico's culture, history, and animal life. Includes fun facts and games. Bilingual website.

### **The Panama News: Panama's Online English-Language Newspaper**

[www.thepanamanews.com](http://www.thepanamanews.com)

This online newspaper has several articles on Panamanian bus artists.

### **Dichos: A Mexican Saying in a Cookie!**

[www.dichosonline.com](http://www.dichosonline.com)

This small Arizona-based company produces taco-shaped cookies with *dichos* or proverbs inside. Similar to fortune cookies, the tasty treats are a great way to introduce people to Mexican sayings.

### **Spanish proverbs and sayings with their English equivalents**

<http://cogweb.ucla.edu/Discourse/Proverbs/Spanish-English.html>

The UCLA site provides a useful list of Spanish proverbs and English equivalents. Proverbs from other countries are also listed.

### **Spanish Pronto! Dichos, Refranes, Sayings, Proverbs**

[www.spanishpronto.com/spanishpronto/spanishsayings.html](http://www.spanishpronto.com/spanishpronto/spanishsayings.html)

List of Spanish sayings with some English translations.

### **National Society of Hispanic Professionals – Spanish Sayings**

[www.nshp.org/dichos\\_spanish\\_sayings\\_0](http://www.nshp.org/dichos_spanish_sayings_0)

A short list of Spanish sayings with English translations, the page also offers brief explanations of their meanings.

### **Quizlet – Dichos y Refranes**

<http://quizlet.com/set/166341/>

An interactive website that will help familiarize people of all ages with Spanish sayings and their English equivalents.

Reproduced from UNESCO Courier. October 1990.  
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***Art on the road - popular art and culture reflected in colourfully decorated trucks and buses - includes related article***

**By Moira F. Harris**

### **Art on the Road**

Pick a street, any street, in Panama City or Port-au-Prince and you'll probably see them. You'll find them in Medellin, Colombia, as well, but there you must visit the outskirts of town or the market area. "They" are the wonderfully decorated buses and trucks which are the privately-owned public transportation of these cities. Ride a tap-tap, chiva or bus and you're in for an aesthetic treat. You'll travel down the street in a marvellous mix of art and words, accompanied by flashing lights and pulsating music.

Each of these vehicles began life as a solid colour truck or bus accented with chrome. Each has now been rebuilt for its new role in life and decorated to suit the current fashion. Students of popular culture agree that the paintings and words decorating these vehicles offer an insight into widely shared attitudes and beliefs, into the "soul", perhaps, of Panama, Haiti and Colombia.

The art of decorating these painted trucks and buses basically started after the Second World War, although there may be older examples of it. Chivas, tap-taps and buses quickly won an important place in the local economies and affections. Every so often other types of buses or trucks are brought in to replace the painted vehicles, but these interlopers will never obscure the place which chivas, tap-taps and buses have already earned in the literature and art of their respective countries.

In Panama, yellow school buses built in the United States are the raw material. The original colour is quickly hidden under layers of sprayed or airbrushed paint. Along the sides of the bus, beneath the windows, very long images are shown. A speeding semi-trailer truck, a mermaid in her undersea home, a view of mountains with a distant castle, or even the turning, writhing form of a dragon are among the images painted here.

### **Bus art**

The rear emergency door is regarded as the most important spot for bus art, a focal point where an artist concentrates his best work, probably because the rear door is seen the most easily and for the longest time as the bus passes. Artists sign these back door paintings with name or nickname, sometimes with "Painted by ..." and, occasionally, with a telephone number so that other customers may locate them.

The subject for a back door bus painting can be religious or secular, but it is almost never political. Artists become adept in certain categories. Those bus owners who want Christ,

the Virgin Mary, or various saints painted know which artists to choose, as do those who prefer comic strip superheroes like Mexico's Kaliman, commercial cartoon characters like the Playboy Bunny, or television actors. A star's popularity could well be rated by his appearance or disappearance from bus art. Hollywood's "Mr. T" in his gold chains and Don Johnson, the "Miami Vice" cop, may well be painted over now that their programmes no longer appear on prime time television.

Jesus Teodoro de Villarue, or "Yo To" as he is affectionately known, is regarded as one of the old masters of Panamanian bus art. Yo Yo taught his sons and other apprentices how to paint, but he felt that there were other bus artists who needed his guidance as well. So Yo Yo created for posterity a series of lessons in rear door painting. Carefully numbered and titled "Arte Popular", Yo Yo's lessons can be seen on the rear doors and windows of twenty Panamanian buses.

Ferocious lions, fierce eagles and even cigar-smoking dogs are portrayed on the back doors of buses and trucks. Two painters, one in Panama and the other in Colombia, were inspired by the same advertising calendar printed by the Brown and Bigelow Company, a North American advertising specialties firm. For many years Brown and Bigelow calendars have featured a series of dog paintings originally created by a New York artist named Cassius Marcellus Coolidge who died in 1934. Often shown smoking fat cigars (Coolidge had earlier painted cigar box lids), these bulldogs, collies and Great Danes played cards, billiards and baseball, and went to the races.

While Panamanian bus art reflects the changing urban popular culture of television, movies and music, the subjects for Colombian chiva painters focus more often on rural life. Chivas are rebuilt trucks, converted to carry both passengers and agricultural products from Colombian villages to markets in larger cities such as Medellin, Cali or Cartagena. Both the names for these trucks and the styles of decoration vary from one Colombian province to another. Many observers feel that the camion de escalera or ladder truck of Antioquia province is the most beautiful of all.

### **Cows and coffee**

To rebuild a large Ford or General Motors truck, workers remove the entire cargo area, replacing it with a partially enclosed structure. The interior is arranged with rows of removable seats which can be entered from the outside at every row. This arrangement was copied from old trolley cars which also had numerous side entrances. If the chiva's load is large, two cows, for example, or multiple sacks of coffee, it is easy to remove most, if not all, of the seats.

The design along both exterior sides of the chiva is, by longtime convention, geometric. Carefully measured triangles, circles and lines are painted in the area below the windows and between the rows of seats. The rear door is reserved for the chiva painter's major effort.

The clients of chiva painters bring postcards to suggest the subjects that they want to see painted on the rear door. Perhaps San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, a cottage in a mountain valley, or a jumbo jet in flight, will remind the chiva owner of places he might like to visit someday. Religious scenes are often based on chromolithographs, as they are in Panama and Haiti. The Virgin and Child, St. Peter against a fluffy background of clouds, or scenes from the Life of Christ, all can be traced to readily available printed sources. A particular scene showing Christ carrying the Cross is intended to refer to a pilgrimage site in the nearby town of Girardota.

What is completely missing in the range of Colombian chiva painting is any reference to the worlds of television, movies and popular music. Tina Turner, Rambo and Janet Jackson have not made it to Colombia. When the chiva heads down the road to the market in the nearest big city, the passengers may well have glimpsed a copy of Millet's *The Gleaners* on the back door, but not a whiff of *Miami Vice*.

Medellin does not allow chiva drivers to follow routes within the city as they once did since it is felt that overload chivas are dangerous. In Haiti, overloaded or not, tap-taps are everywhere. For short trips within the cities or for long hauls between towns, tap-taps and their larger cousins, the bois fouille trucks, rule the routes.

In Haiti a tap-tap begins life as a pickup truck. Once tap-taps were built on the bodies of Fords and Chevrolets, but now the names of Isuzu, Mazda and Toyota are more often seen on the tailgates. The cargo area of a pickup may be small, but it can be arranged to provide seats and easy access. First the tailgate is removed. It is divided with the sections placed on either side of what is now the entrance to the tap-tap. Sides and a roof are built of wood making the "habitat" in which the passengers will ride, seated on benches paralleling the walls. Even though this size tap-tap does not have a great deal of space to decorate, whatever room there is on the exterior walls and doors is painted with fruits, flowers, birds and animals. The habitat of the large bois fouille truck is built with an open side entrance, the opening often having a carved and brightly painted frame.

Tap-taps have names painted over the windshields and along the roof of the habitat. Bumpers and fenders provide space for a constantly expanding literature of slogans, mottoes and references to biblical verses. There is not always enough space to transcribe an entire passage from the Scriptures, so tap-tap painters abbreviate by writing Psalms 1, Exodus 14:14, or Romans 15:7 in available places. Names include those of family members and friends, names of saints, places, or those of well-known people such as Jean-Paul Belmondo, Al Capone, or Diego Maradona the soccer player. Tap-tap writing is a multi-lingual world of Creole, French, Spanish and English which freely mingles the topical and the religious, but seldom includes any political comment.

### **Erzulie Freda's flamingoes**

At first the portraits of the saints and of the Holy Family on Haitian tap-taps seem very familiar since they are often based on the same stock images used by artists in Colombia and Panama. However, the viewer's interpretation may not be the same at all. Believers in



vodun, the syncretic religion of Haiti, look at St. James the Major (or Santiago) and see Ogun the "loa" or god of war. The Virgin Mary in crown and robes as the Queen of Heaven is understood to be really Erzulie Freda, the loa of love in Haiti. Colours, birds, animals and flowers are linked to certain loas so the tap-tap artist will often incorporate Agoue's boat, Ogun's sword, or Erzulie's flamingoes in his overall design. Paintings and slogans showing Christ as the Good Shepherd may be interpreted both as Christian imagery and as the tap-tap owner's wish for divine protection in his often risky business.

Haiti's tap-tap painters are said to have been inspired by the example of one car painted by many artists in the 1940s. It was a jeep owned by DeWitt Peters who had come to Port-au-Prince to teach english, but stayed to become the founding father of the contemporary art movement in the country. Peters' students painted and repainted that historic jeep which then served as a prototype for tap-tap painters who wanted to expand their repertoire beyond the lettering of routes, fares and owner's names.

Both the words "tap-tap" or "quickly" in Creole and "chiva" or "little goat" in Spanish suggest the speed with which these trucks travel in search of passengers. Music from radios and tapedecks heralds their passage through crowded streets. Tap-tap drivers string Christmas tree lights around the habitats' roofs while the engines of Panamanian buses are draped with blinking lights so the buses seem like enormous pinball machines when they are driven after dark. Plastic streamers fastened to rear view mirrors flutter in the wind to accent the speed of buses and trucks.

With each of these vehicles there is a sense that a rider is entering a driver's private domain. Lured by the music, the fluttering ribbons and the flashing lights, the rider climbs aboard to find more paintings and words within. On the dashboard may be a small shrine where a protective figure stands surrounded by flowers, charms and medallions. Painted on the back windows are swags of curtains with fringes and tassels, a perfect touch to complete the decor of a travelling home. While outside the slogans hint at the driver's bold, macho persona, inside the dashboard shrine suggests his awareness of the daily risks and gambles he takes as a driver. Driving isn't an easy way to earn a living. Traffic is fact and the competition for riders constant. Riders won't choose a poorly painted vehicle and perhaps may bypass one with the wrong religious message or outmoded decor. So the paintings are renewed and replaced, the slogans are reworded and repainted. With new music and new lights on their vehicles, drivers seek new business in the constantly developing world of art on the road.

MOIRA F. HARRIS is an American art historian who specializes in forms of popular culture such as outdoor murals and painted vehicles. She is the author of *Art on the Road: The Painted Vehicles of the Americas*, Pogo Press, Minnesota, 1988.

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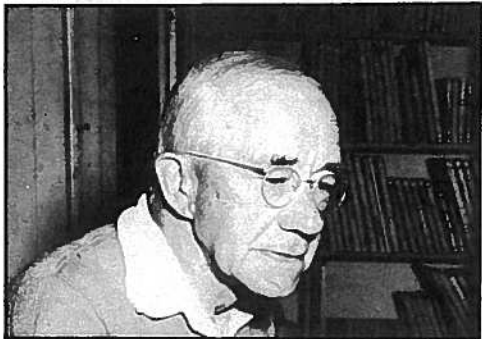
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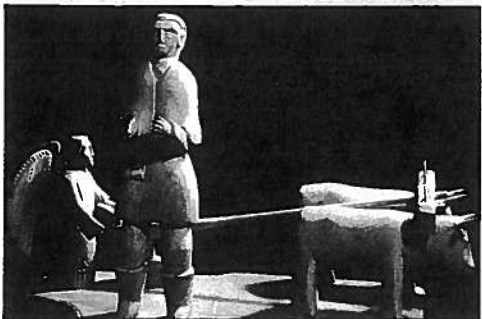
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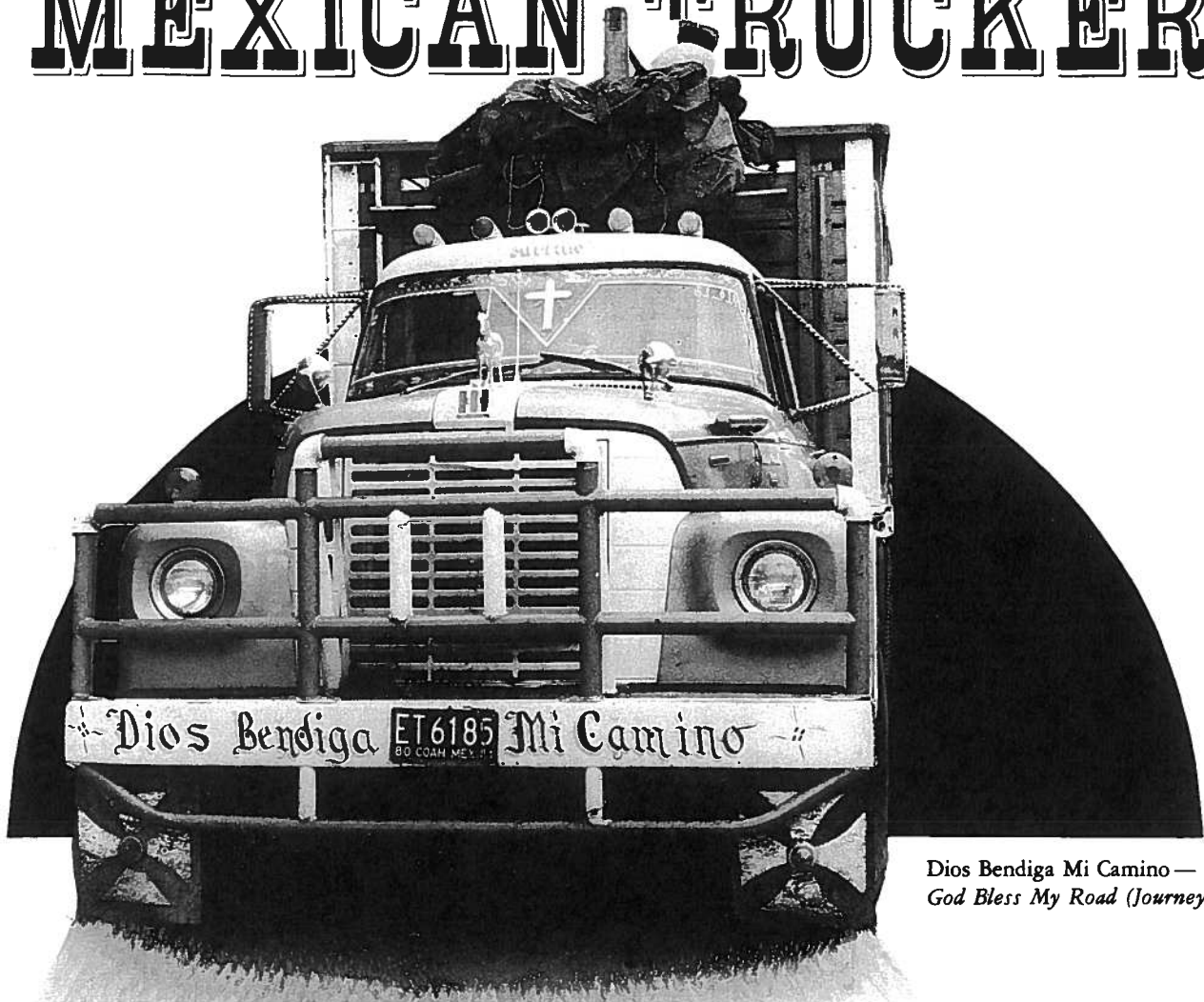
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# SOUL of the MEXICAN TRUCKER



Dios Bendiga Mi Camino —  
*God Bless My Road (Journey).*

**T**HE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO has approximately 20,000 miles of paved highways and several times as many miles of dirt roads, improved or otherwise. From beat-up pickups with "Servicio Particular" scrawled on their doors to shining, massive Kenworth and DINA diesel tractor and trailer rigs belonging to multi-million-peso concerns, Mexico's trucks share in hauling seventy-five percent of Mexico's commerce. Even though Mexico has some 16,000 miles of main railroads, the inaccessibility of most of the country's land by rail and the great numbers of people living in rural areas make widespread truck transport a prime requisite.<sup>1</sup>

Narrow and crowded roads are main arteries of Mexico's commercial, agricultural, and industrial distribution. The men who haul

By  
*Gloria Fraser Giffords*

freight of every kind over these roads are hard working and resourceful; they are often seen doing major overhauls on engines and drivelines by the side of the road, driving marathon hours, even sleeping near wrecked equipment to guard their cargo. They are the legitimate heirs of preceding *arrieros*, the muleteers. There is, as well, an obvious camaraderie existing between the *camioneros* and their vehicles.

Nearly every Mexican truck, depending to some extent upon ownership or company policy, is decorated to some degree. In the cab, above the windshield, dangle pom-poms or fringes. Religious figurines adorn the dash; photos or lithographs of religious objects are glued to the headliner along with an occasional pin-up or photo of girlfriend, wife, or family. Many times, crowning all this adornment is a name on the bumper, across the hood, or on top of the cab.<sup>2</sup> Accompanying or instead of a name might be a phrase or expression—a *dicho*. Variations on placement include names painted on bug deflectors or dichos painted on the rear of the truck bed or on the mud flaps. The strong relationship between the man and vehicle is clearly evident: trucks are frequently blessed by a priest upon the owner's request, to insure safety for the driver and to engender success.

Aventurero en el camino — *Adventurer on the highway.*

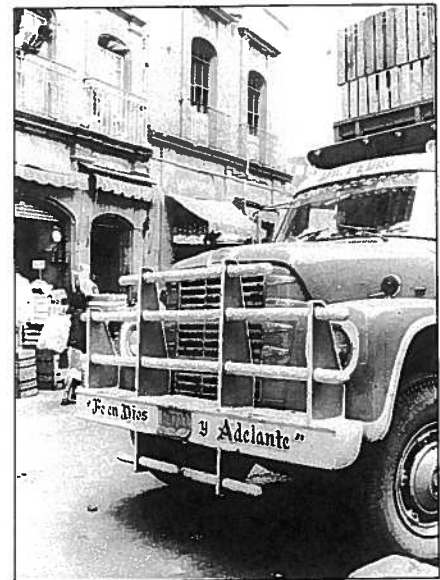


**A**LTHOUGH it might be tempting to draw a comparison between this custom and the recent bumper sticker proliferation in the United States, there are some great differences. Informants can recall names and expressions on Mexican trucks and buses as long as forty years ago, while the bumper stickers in the United States began their popularity only in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> And while numbers of Americans now adorn their cars and light trucks with paper declarations of their politics, religion or other causes, names and dichos are not seen on *cars* in Mexico; they are not political or cause-oriented, and, if religious, they are in the form of a blessing or name of a saint. In Mexico, the lettering is always *painted* on, often by professionals of widely varying talent.

It is not customary in the United States for truck drivers to put names on their vehicles, although sometimes a driver's name can be found on the cab door.

Assumptions might be made about unsophisticated drivers of a lower socio-economic class naming their trucks, in contrast to the habits of more "sophisticated" individuals who can afford a personal car. These would be false because many of the truck drivers own cars and these, although they may be decorated with fringes and figurines on the inside, are never named. "It's not the tradition," is the simple but recurring explanation.

When asked why the truck is named, some drivers say: "It's just a custom." Others will tell you that it's his wife's (or daughter's, son's, girlfriend's or mother's) name, or that it is in memory of or in honor of whom or whatever. Saints, a driver's birthplace, popular songs and



Fe en Dios y Adelante  
— Faith in God, and Forward.

Guidanos, Virgencita de la Soledad — Guard us, Little Virgin of Solitude.



Se de celos tevas por amor regresaras — If you go because of jealousy, you will return because of love.



movies all provide inspiration. Puns, double meanings, short poems, prayers, and jokes form the bulk of the dichos. Several individuals interviewed who make a living decorating trucks with names and sayings confirmed this general individuality.

**I**N the past fifteen years, as Mexico's trucking industry has become more organized and capitalized in response to her industrial and agricultural growth, changes have gradually appeared. As larger, more sophisticated vehicles began to dominate the trucking industry, the smaller trucks belonging to small companies and individuals began to take a diminishing role. Because of the growing dominance of the trucking industry by companies and the enormous investment involved in owning and operating large equipment, individually owned equipment is now becoming a shrinking percentage. Since large trucking concerns hire many drivers who drive whatever truck is assigned to them, the individualization of these trucks by the driver rarely occurs. Because the units are the property of a company or agency, there is an effort to have them appear similar to one another. Moreover, officials may want to use the bumper space for the company name or the truck's number. Consequently, the application of names or sayings on trucks owned by large companies or various federal agencies is rarely seen. As the opportunity for painting slogans or names on trucks decreases, the tradition will suffer.

While the absence of names and sayings is not a hard and fast rule on government vehicles or among all companies, the great majority appear on privately owned trucks. Several tabulations were kept during this project, and out of independently owned trucks, ninety percent of all dichos appeared on trucks up to and including the two and one-half ton stake type; they are far scarcer on tractor-trailers. On semis the painted *letreros* are mostly restricted to proper names on the massive front bumpers, on the cabs above the windshield, or on the bug deflector.

Sr. Permite mi Regreso — *Lord, allow me to return.*





Pato de Goma — Rubber Ducky

Women's names are very popular and, if not on the front bumper, are used in conjunction with individualization of the cab in the other two locations. It's intriguing to compare the monicker "knights of the open road," referring to truckers in the United States, with chivalric character of Mexican drivers who place their lady's name prominently on their vehicles.

Mistakes have been made, in the author's opinion, by aficionados of these popular dichos who try to categorize the inscriptions by complex systems. Ascribing deep sociological significance to a connection between the name or message on the bumper and the occupation of driving a truck or the makeup of the driver's personality stretches a point. If these inscriptions can be considered expressions of popular art or folklore, then, as with all examples of popular art or folklore, they perhaps provide a rough type of "personality inventory" of the people. But to record a sample of expressions, to speak casually with several drivers, and then to hypothesize that Mexican truck drivers are typically politically cynical, pious, sexually irresponsible, marginally literate, and trapped in the *machismo* belief system hardly meets acceptable standards for conducting sociological or psychological surveys.





Gran Canario 1 — *Great Canary 1*

THE names and mottos mean everything and nothing, reasons for them are the most profound and the most innocuous. Many of them are simply jokes. The men who have their trucks decorated are individuals as well as products of their culture. It is both obvious to say that they reflect their particular civilization, and futile to categorize and assign percentages to a limited sample in an attempt to explain what comes mainly from individual spontaneity. Mistakes also occur when the observer is not a native speaker and/or not completely familiar with Mexican life, popular music, movies, and television. Knowledge of Mexican subtleties, slang, and innuendos as well as the current social and entertainment spheres provides the most important keys to the translation of meanings.

The names and expressions are as varied as the individuals who drive the trucks. There are categories, however, into which most of them can be fitted: (1) proper names, (2) geographical references, (3) religious, (4) popular songs or characters in movies and television programs, (5) whimsy, heroes, villains, and puns, and (6) expressions, proverbs, and dichos. There is a subtle humor in most of them and vulgarity in some. Special emphasis seems to be placed on the double entendre.

The decorators are quick to respond to popular movies. Almost as soon as the movie *The Godfather* was released in Mexico, bumpers bore the name "El Padrino." The same thing happened with *Jaws*, consequently "Tiboron." Occasionally an expression is in English or a name anglicized.

Que los dioses Me Protejan de las Viejas Que Manejan — *May the gods protect me from little old ladies who drive.*





Amada Amante — *Beloved Lover* (No te creo — *I don't believe you*).

Ornate Gothic and Old English lettering are popular, although sometimes so ornate it is difficult to read. Words are often divided on the bumper to accommodate the license plate, and some single names are not divided phonetically, but split in half to balance the design. When the expression is painted by someone who may be semiliterate, it is often hard to decipher. But from elaborate lettering to faulty grammar and backward letters, the graphic variety is endless.

**M**EN seem to have a proclivity for giving names to objects of power. While women might name their children or the family pet, men seem to give names to battleships, trains, airplanes, and machines. In naming, magical character is given to the object. While the name provides identification or individualization, with the name sometimes goes a prayer, an endearment, joke or pun, or something that acts as a talisman. Mankind's urge to express himself publicly with graffiti, the coining of slogans to meet every occasion, the magic of naming, humor, piety, and a sense of color and poetry — all these elements are part of the tradition created by twentieth century Mexican males engaged in a lonely, grueling, and often dangerous occupation. On the

cabs, bumpers, and beds of their trucks, they have found a field fertile for individual expression.

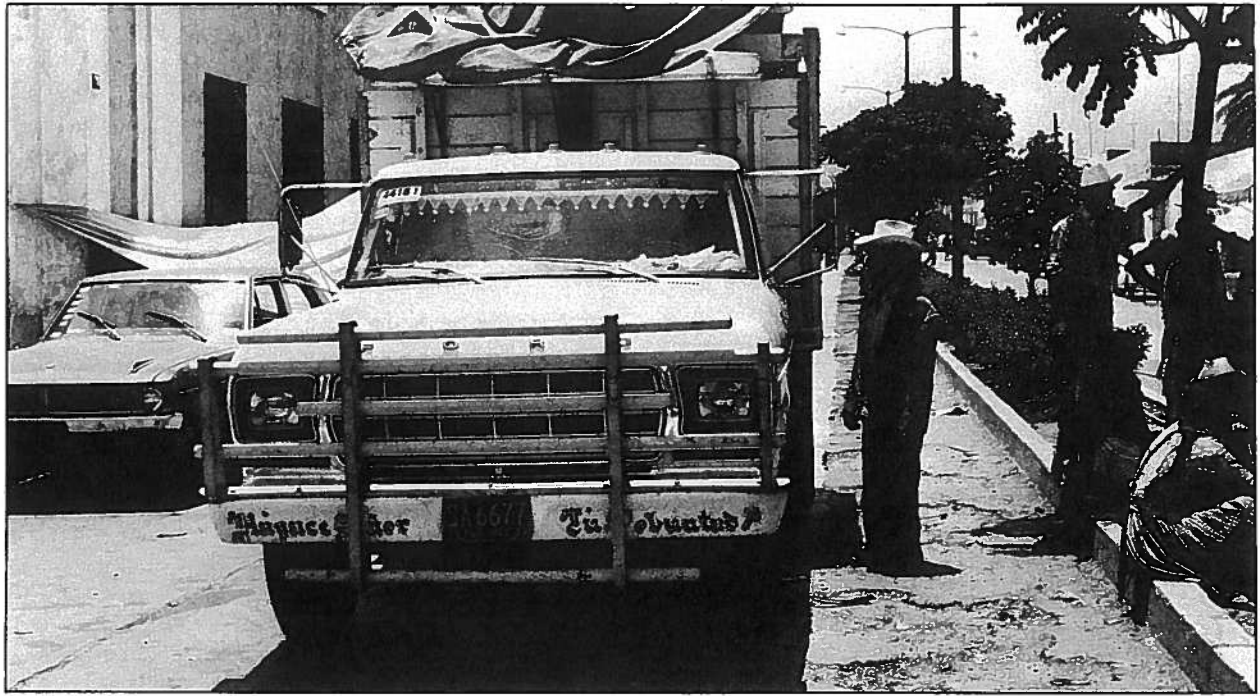
Names and expressions on trucks are not limited to Mexico among Latin American countries—they appear on trucks and buses in Central American republics, and one informant gave me a list he had collected from Peru.<sup>4</sup> Mexican buses, especially local, rural or second class, also carry inscriptions, but this discussion has been limited to the trucks.

The spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in the samples that follow are as they appeared. Translations attempt to capture the meaning. An asterisk after the name or expression indicates that these have turned up on several vehicles, hence suggesting a certain popularity. Among the thousands of names and expressions moving along Mexico's roads, the sampling here is drawn from our collection of about 2,500.

For reasons mentioned above, the wonderful tradition may be forced to wane, although I doubt if it will completely die out. At least I hope it doesn't, because it seems to me just another expression of the unique Latin American spirit of individualism, humor, and personality.

"El chofer que no toma, es como una flor sin aroma" — *The trucker who doesn't drink is like a flower without scent.*





### PROPER NAMES

Rosita	Gaby
Ceci (Cecilia)	Pete
Ann Isabel	Paty*
Davicito (Little David)	Eduardo
Juan Carlos	Olga
Lupita	Charles
Don Pedro	Gabrielita

### SAINTS' NAMES, RELIGIOUS EXPRESSIONS, AND PRAYERS

San José de Garcia  
 Hagace Senor Tu Voluntad (Lord, your will be done)  
 King of Kings\*  
 San Francisco  
 San Lorenzo  
 San Luis  
 Sn. Miguel Arcangel  
 Santo Nino VI (Possibly the sixth vehicle named after the Child of Atocha, a representation of Christ popular in Mexico.)  
 Dios Bendiga mi Camino\* (God bless my road is the literal translation, but meaning perhaps, May God bless the driver's coming and going.)  
 Primero Dios\* (God First)  
 Dios Dira (God will say)  
 Dios es mi Copiloto\* (God is my co-pilot. This was a popular expression in the United States in the 1940s after the publication of a book by the same name by Robert Lee Scott.)  
 In God we Trust (also seen in the Spanish equivalent: *En Dios Confiamos*, and similarly: *En Dios me Confide*)

Sr. Tenpiedade (Lord Have Mercy)  
 Guidanos, Virgencita de la Soledad (Guard us, little Virgin of Solitude)  
 Fe en Dios y Adelante (Faith in God, and Forward)  
 Mi Dios una oracio y de mi madre su bedicion (My God, a prayer, and from my mother her blessing)  
 Dios es me Guia (God is my Guide)  
 Si[!] Dios Quiere (Yes! God wills it; or possibly, If God is willing )  
 Dios Bendiga todo que me Sigue (God blesses all that follow me)  
 Dios, Tu y Yo (God, you and me)  
 La Fatima (from the Virgin of Fatima)  
 Sr. permite me regreso (Lord, permit me to return)

### NAMES INSPIRED BY POPULAR SONGS, MOVIES, OR TELEVISION

Volver Volver\* (*Returning, Returning*, a popular song written and sung by Vicente Fernandez)  
 El Triste (*The Sad One*, song recorded by José José)  
 Gwendlyn (song popularized by Julio Iglesias)  
 El Chavo de Ocho (popular TV comedy program)  
 Viejo, mi Querido Viejo (*Old man, my beloved old man*—popular song)  
 El Capulin (The hero of a popular TV comedy program. He appears dressed like an insect, complete with bobbing antennae.)  
 Kiko (one of the characters of "El Chavo de Ocho")  
 Corazon Salvaje\* (*Savage Heart*, popular song)  
 Arroz (translated literally is "rice"; however, comedian Mauricio Garces uses the word with extended pronunciation as a comic expression.)  
 Caballo sin nombre (*Nameless Horse*, a song)  
 Me Gusta Estar Contigo (*I'd like to be with you*, a popular song)



El Padrino (*The Godfather*)  
 Amarga Navidad (*Bitter Christmas*, popular song  
 done by a number of artists, among them Lucha  
 Villa)  
 Los Picas Piedras (*The Flintstones*, popular cartoon  
 show)  
 Speedy Gonzalez  
 Stardust  
 Feelings  
 Zorba  
 Baretta  
 Rio Revelde (song written and sung by Julio Iglesia)

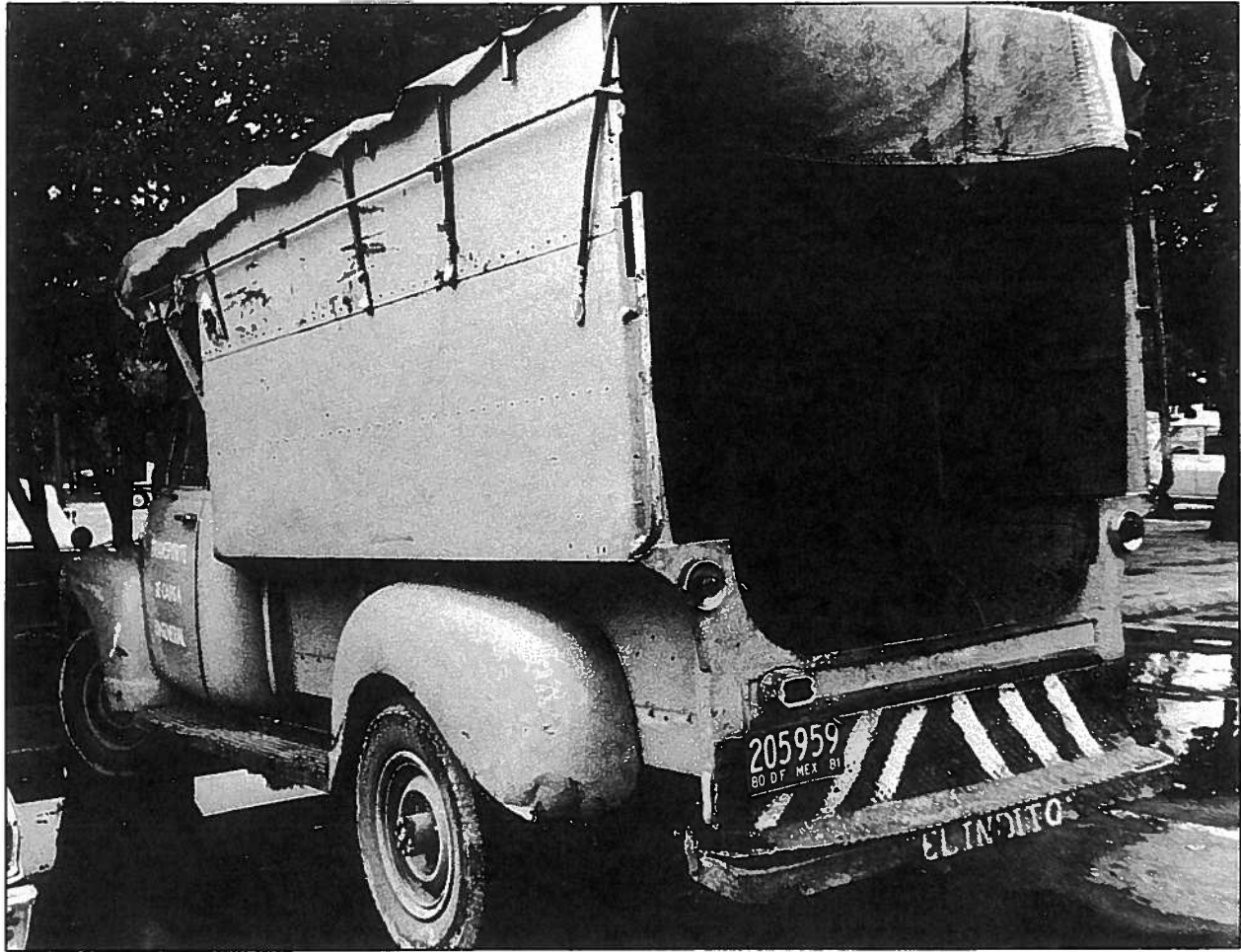
(Because many Mexican and Latin American songs,  
 movies and literature deal with matters of the heart  
 and suffering from these affairs, some of the truck  
 titles and some of the popular sayings might be isolated  
 text or lyrics. In many cases it would be extremely  
 difficult to say for certain that an expression had or  
 had not been used before in the media.)

### EXPRESSIONS, PROVERBS AND DICHOS

Cero en Conducto (Zero in conduct [a troublemaker  
 or perhaps a philanderer])  
 Ya Legga su Gueron (Here comes your blond [but the  
 driver was a brunette!])  
 No Joven, ni viego (Not young, but not old either)

Cual es tu prisa (What's your hurry?)  
 El Rey de las Nenas! (King of the Girls)  
 Calma tus nervios (Calm your nerves)  
 Que nos entierren juntos (Let them bury us together)  
 No me sigas que voy perdido y todo por no estudiar  
 (Do not follow me, for I am lost, and all because I  
 didn't study [learn])  
 El chofer que no toma, es como una flor sin aroma  
 (The trucker that does not drink is like a flower  
 without scent)  
 Si no Vuelo lo bautista (If I don't return, baptize it)





No te creo (I don't believe you)  
 Vuele al oculista (Get to an eye doctor)  
 Me fe en ti (My faith in you)  
 Pura Falsedad (Pure falsehood [whether "pure" here means virtuous or complete is not known])  
 Ya viene el papa del hijo (Here comes the son's father)  
 Cuidado soy Virgincito\* (Be careful, I'm a little virgin [careful, this truck is cherry])  
 Y no mas lo que soy (I'm just what I am—perhaps derived from the lyrics of a popular Beatles song)  
 So lo Dije (I told you so)  
 No crean se sufre (They don't believe how I suffer)  
 A Tu Recuerdo (I remember you)  
 Mi noches sin ti (My nights without you)  
 Biejita pero no de todos (An old one, but not everyone's [This one's paid for])  
 Espero a regreso (I expect to return)  
 Llegue, vi y Venci (I came, I saw, I conquered)  
 Si, Pero no (Yes, but no)  
 Viejita Pero Señorita (An old lady, but still a maiden [refers to unblemished condition of truck])  
 No es Dina, pero si Camina (It's not a DINA, but it runs. "DINA" is a name of a Mexican manufacturer of diesel cabs. This expression was seen on an old beat-up pickup.)  
 Hay a ver Que (Let's see what [happens])  
 No tiene la culpa el indio (It's not the Indian's fault)  
 Pato de Goma (Rubber Ducky)  
 Si de celos tevas por amor (If because of jealousy you leave, for love you shall return.)

Que los dioses me protejan de las viejas que manejan (May the gods protect me from little old ladies who drive)  
 Aventurero en el camino (Adventurer on the road)  
 Conmigo Andas mugrosa pero con la Barriquito llena (With me you'll go dirty, but with your belly full. Meaning, life with me may not be luxurious, but you'll be content.)  
 Amor para una y pension para Muchas (Love for one but care for many)  
 Ten Fe y me Volveras a Ver (Have faith and you'll see me again)

#### \* GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES OR NAMES INSPIRED BY GEOGRAPHY

Chiapas  
 Hungaro\* (Hungarian)  
 El Arabe (the Arab)  
 Veracruz  
 Colorado River  
 Yucatan  
 Rio de Sonora  
 Lagunero (native of Torreon)  
 El Norteño (one from the north)  
 Mi Linda Mazatlán (my beautiful Mazatlán)  
 El Indito (The Little Indian)  
 Gran Canaria I (Great Canary I)

## WHIMSICAL NAMES, HEROES, VILLAINS, AND PUNS

El Tiliche (the piece of junk)

El Frijolito (the little bean)

La Pipa de la Paz\* (The Peace Pipe; this is seen on water trucks and occasionally gas trucks. In Mexico tank trucks are popularly called "*pipas*" [pipes], hence the play on words.)

Pises (The zodiacal sign Pisces. All signs of the zodiac have been seen.)

Bambino

Mister Joe

White Rabbit (the truck was white)

Oro Verde (green gold—the truck was painted green)

El Canario\* (the canary— truck painted yellow)

Albatros

El Bastardo (the bastard)

Grillito (little cricket)

Murmuren vibaras (whispering snakes—probably gossiping women)

Indio Necio\* (foolish Indian)

Los Gitanos\* (gypsies)

El Kid

¿Bueno? (a greeting used when answering the telephone)

Ramases

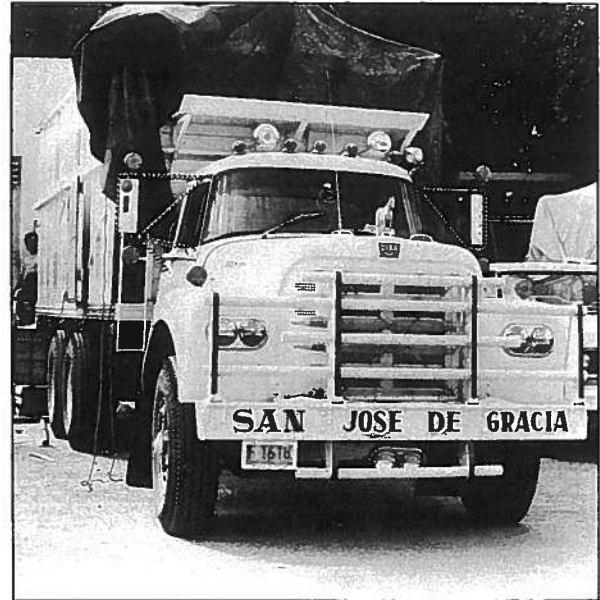
El Chivon (the big goat)

Chavito (little guy)

Criaturon (big kid)

El Puma

Le ts Go ("let's go" divided into three sections to accommodate equipment on the rear of the truck bed)



Mala Yerba (weed)

Rabano (radish)

El Potrillo\* (the colt)

Bismark

Hitler (with accompanying swastikas)

Patton\* (popular after the movie appeared in Mexico)

Rommel

Lusitania

Diogenes

Queen Mary (perhaps referring to the ocean liner and not to the Virgin Mary)





D'Artangeun  
 El Zorro  
 Galileo  
 Demetrio  
 Principe Alberto (Prince Albert)  
 Blue Demon (popular wrestling personality)  
 Gran. Juan Perez  
 Septiembre Negro (Black September terrorist group)  
 Pionero (in this case, in honor of the spacecraft)  
 Comodin (the joker in playing cards)  
 El Perdido (the lost one)

Fu Manchu  
 Moby Dic  
 El Cid\*  
 Cain

Aristacrato (aristocrat)  
 Principante (apprentice or beginner)  
 Bucanero\* (buccaneer)  
 Drackenstein (a combination of Dracula and Frankenstein—maybe a product of some low-budget horror film?)  
 El Timido (the timid one)  
 Toro Viejo (old bull)  
 Caro de Niño (baby face)  
 Vagabundo\* (vagabond or bum)  
 De 1,000 Amores (of 1,000 loves)  
 Ajente Viagero (traveling salesman)  
 El fugitive de destineo (fugitive from destiny)  
 El robo vacas (cattle rustler)  
 El mal querido (the poorly loved one)  
 Corazon bandelero (heart stealer)  
 El Rey de los Palomas (The King of the Doves)  
 Paciente Loco (crazy patient)  
 Alma Grande\* (large soul)  
 El Negro Gaupachuso (literally, the black dude)  
 El Mate Suegara (the mother-in-law killer)  
 Corpus de Cristy (a play on words referring to a girlfriend's body.)  
 Gran Ilusion\* (grand illusion)  
 El semental (literally, the stud—seen on the back of a seed company's truck)  
 El Chico del Boutik (a young man working in a boutique who might be looked upon as being gay)  
 El Tontito de la Colonia (the little dummy of the neighborhood)  
 Bufalo\* (buffalo)  
 El Cura (the priest)  
 El hijo prodigo (the prodigal son)







### Acknowledgements

This project became a family affair on numerous trips through Mexico. As our daughters grew older they started spelling out the names and insisting theirs be put on the list. My husband gets special thanks for stopping "at a big truck stop where there'll be lots of names," tailgating trucks close enough to read the lettering or to take a picture, and tracking down drivers to question them about the names. A lot of credit goes to Alex Giffords, a young man raised in Mexico City, to whom these titles and expressions meant more than just an exercise in translation. Professor Jorge Olvera generously provided criticism and comments and Arlette Peha unwittingly got trapped into assisting during a trip to Atlixco, Puebla. In addition, Roberto Rios, driver of the Museum of New Mexico Education Bureau's Mobile Exhibit vehicle, gave a final check to the often elusive meanings of the names, phrases, and dichos.

### Notes

1. These are approximate figures based on data from the Dirección General de Estadística, Distrito Federal, México. Exact figures were not made available. The information was obtained in October 1978.
2. An 1840 lithograph by D. T. Egerton entitled *Plan de Rio de Conducta* shows *arrieros* driving their mules; on the rump strap of each animal is its name: "Bobo," "Quaco," "Viejo." Although a pack animal's rump serves a different purpose than a truck's bumper, the possible transmission of the custom of lettered names from one object of hauling to another is an interesting possibility.
3. Personal communication with Arthur Woodward, Patagonia, Arizona, March 1979.

4. Personal communication with Keith McElroy, Department of Art, University of Arizona, Tucson, September 1979.

5. Personal communication with J. Bankston, maritime historian, Bisbee, Arizona, November 1979. His research revealed an even older meaning. In the sixteenth century there was a standard measurement used by the Spanish navy called a *pipa*. A *pipa* was a liquid measurement (but not oil) consisting of 136 fluid gallons, approximately, or two *pipas* to a ton. A *pipa* then was a large barrel with the above capacity fitted into the hold of a ship.

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No Me Sigas Que Voy Perdido... y todo por no estudiar — *Do not follow me, for I am lost... and all because I didn't study.*

## SOUL OF THE MEXICAN TRUCKER

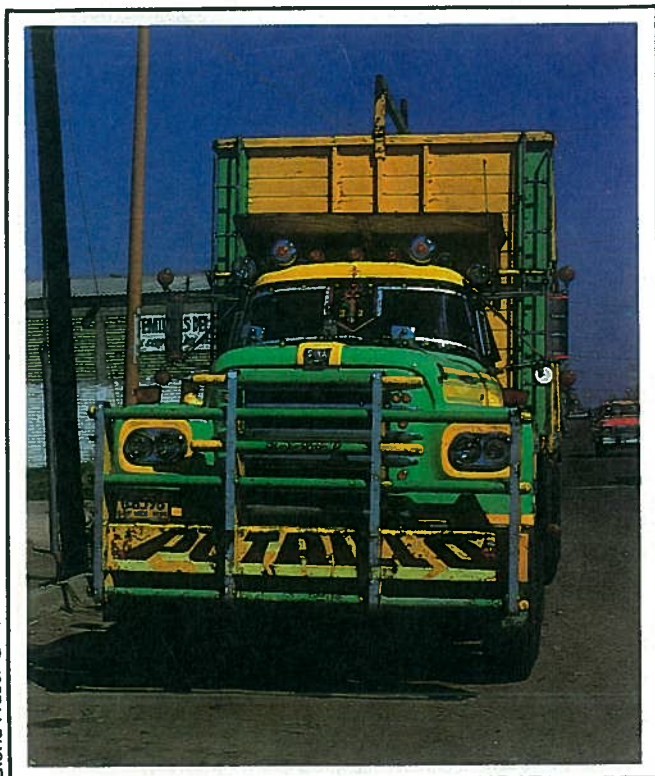
The truck drivers of Mexico drive long hours on often treacherous roads, moving three quarters of the republic's commerce. Mexican *camioneros* share an interesting custom: they decorate their vehicles with elaborate names, phrases and sayings, expressive of their individual spirit. Gloria Fraser Giffords explores this tradition in our featured article, "Soul of the Mexican Trucker."

### Also in this Issue:

**THE CHARLES ILFELD COMPANY**—A perspective on a prominent mercantile family of the Territorial and early statehood era.

**GUSTAVE BAUMANN**—America's beloved woodcut print artist found his most brilliant inspirations in New Mexico.

**ST. ISIDORE, HUSBANDMAN**—Scholar Charles Briggs examines a Córdoba wood carving by George López and discusses several important implications.



Gloria Fraser Giffords

One of the best ways to enhance the exhibition and engage your community is to host a program with a speaker. This can include the photographer of *Dichos: Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*. Please contact the individuals to confirm availability and all fees, including speaking fee, transportation, and lodging.

It is also recommended that you consider people in your community or at your local college or university who have knowledge or expertise in Spanish proverbs or Latin American culture.

Mexicans Sayings (*Dichos*)

Ms. Olga Olivares

7012 Willard Ave

Lincoln, NE 68507

402/202-6933 (cell) (Best to contact by cell phone.)

402/471-0530 (fax)

Spanish proverbs demonstrate the wisdom and values of Mexican people, and they must be told in order to preserve the tradition. Ms. Olivares is available to share insightful *dichos* and their meaning and present lectures on the importance of *dichos* in Mexican culture. A living treasure of traditional Mexican sayings, songs, stories, and crafts, Ms. Olivares currently serves on the speaker roster of the Nebraska Humanities Council. She also founded the Mexican-American Historical Society in Scottsbluff, NE.

Grant La Farge, M.D.

PO Box 4750

Santa Fe, NM 87502

505/470-3011 (cell)

505/988-5196

[davinci@cybermesa.com](mailto:davinci@cybermesa.com) (Best to contact by e-mail.)

[Grant.LaFarge@state.nm.us](mailto:Grant.LaFarge@state.nm.us)

Photographer, Grant La Farge, M.D. will present an engaging PowerPoint lecture of his endeavor to photograph painted vehicles of Mexico and Central and South America, which resulted in the book *Faith in God and Full Speed Ahead* (1985) and the exhibition *Dichos: Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*, organized by the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, NM.

An effective program can be built around a local scholar, art historian, or artist. The following organizations may be able to help you locate those experts who would be willing to be involved in an event at your museum. Contact the national organizations to determine if there are members in your area.

State arts and humanities councils often have traveling speakers who may meet your needs or be able to refer others in your state to speak at your museum. Locate your state and local arts or humanities council at the following websites:

- A list of state arts councils can be found at [www.arts.endow.gov](http://www.arts.endow.gov) or call the National Endowment for the Arts at 202.682.5400.
- A list of state humanities councils can be found at [www.neh.gov/whoweare/statecouncils.html](http://www.neh.gov/whoweare/statecouncils.html) or call the National Endowment for the Humanities at 800.NEH.1121.
- A list of local arts organizations, by state, can be found at [www.neh.gov/whoweare/statecouncils.html](http://www.neh.gov/whoweare/statecouncils.html) or contact Dinah Walls, Locals Specialist, at 202.682.5429, or e-mail her at [wallsd@arts.endow.gov](mailto:wallsd@arts.endow.gov).
- The US Regional Arts Organizations represents six nonprofit entities created to encourage development of the arts and to support arts programs on a regular basis. Their website is at [www.usregionalarts.org](http://www.usregionalarts.org) and lists all state arts agencies. You can also check your regional arts organization for information on their performing arts programs.

Do not hesitate to contact other museums on the exhibition's tour schedule found on page 28 of this guide to ask about programming ideas that worked for them.

Remember, your community events and programs are only as good as your marketing and promotion efforts. Please refer to the promotional materials that accompany this exhibition, provided by ExhibitsUSA's Exhibitor Relations department.

## Design Your Bus!

Ages 8+

Time Required: 1 session

### Introduction:

For this activity, participants will incorporate imagery of painted Panamanian buses and other Latin American painted vehicles to design their own bus. Please use the following steps only as a guide to stimulate creativity. Participants are free to design their buses any way they choose. ***Please note: Decorate each section of the bus before cutting out and assembling.***

### Materials Needed:

- Bus cutout template (See Design Your Bus! PDF located on *Dichos* Programming Guide CD)
- Markers, oils, acrylics, poster paint, color pencils, crayons, etc.
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Card stock paper (*recommended for bus cutout*)
- Book of English and Spanish proverbs
- Digital educational images from the exhibition *Dichos* (optional)

### Terms to Know:

**Dicho** – A Spanish proverb or often humorous saying that expresses a truth or offers advice.

**Latin America** – Countries of Central and South America whose official languages are Spanish, Portuguese, or French. Latin America also includes Mexico, Haiti, and Puerto Rico.

**Folk Art** – Traditional art made by people of a particular region whose styles and craftsmanship have been handed down over the generations from artist to artist.

### Information:

The following are commonly seen on the painted buses and trucks in Latin America:

- Proper Names (side windows)
- Geographical References/Landscapes (front and back)
- Religious Imagery or Themes (side panels and back)
- Popular Songs; Movies, Television, and Cartoon Characters (back)
- Whimsy, Heroes, Villains, and Puns (side and back)
- Street sayings, Proverbs, and *Dichos* (front and back)

## Steps:

### 1. Background information

Give the participants background information on the folk art tradition of vehicle painting in Latin America. Explain that artists in countries such as Panama, Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Haiti paint images and text on trucks and buses to attract passengers. Names, landscapes, religious figures, celebrities, cartoon characters, and sayings are some images that artists paint on vehicles in bright colors.

### 2. What is a *dicho*?

Tell the participants that the sayings on the vehicles are called *dichos*, Spanish for proverbs. Explain that these humorous, affectionate, or religious sayings are painted on the front or back bumpers of trucks or buses. A *dicho* also expresses a truth or offers advice. Give the participants an example of a *dicho* or proverb, for example, “The early bird gets the worm.” Ask the participants to explain the meaning of the proverb.

### 3. Handout (Bus diagram)

Give each participant a diagram of the bus. Go through each section of the bus (**see below and information section**) and have participants think about images he or she will paint on the bus prior to receiving the cutout. If available you may show participants images of painted vehicles from the exhibition *Dichos* provided in the educational programming guide.

#### A. Side Windows and Surfaces

Tell each participant that names (usually female) are painted or lettered in a single color on the *side windows*. Have participants think about male and female names of friends, classmates, and family members to paint or write on each window. They may also make-up names. For a more “authentic” appearance, participants should apply names to the bottom rows of windows only.

Explain that the *larger spaces below the windows* on the side of the bus are particular areas of creativity. Here, fantasy scenes are often painted. Have participants think of imaginary creatures and worlds, such as sea or space life forms. Participants are free to be creative in drawing or painting scenes on both sides of the bus.

Explain that in the *large space above the windows* artists paint animals and geometric shapes. Participants may think of favorite animals or creative designs for these spaces.

#### B. Front

Tell the participants that in addition to bus numbers and colors indicating the routes, drivers enjoy depictions of landscapes on the front of the bus, located in the *space above the windshield*. A wooden cottage set in an autumn scene is a typical landscape. Exotic and non-Latin American places are also favored. Have participants think of parks and others places they have visited or would like to visit. Participants may also use their imagination in drawing a winter or summer scene.

*Across the windshield* instruct participants to write or paint the route destination, for example Chicago – St. Louis, in large letters. Participants may opt to create fictitious

destinations, such as Candy Land – Bikini Bottom. Other details on the front include pinstripes and streamers. Here, participants may draw various linear designs across the hood and near the grill and head lights of the bus.

Tell participants that short *dichos* or phrases are painted on the *front bumper* of the bus. For this space have participants think of family nicknames, brief words that best describe their personality, or sayings heard from a parent or grandparent (please note space is limited). They may also make up a name for the bus. Here are some examples: “King (or Queen) of the Road,” “Come Along Now,” “Slow your roll,” or “What’s your hurry?” These phrases can be in Spanish or English.

### **C. Back**

Explain that artists paint their best work on the back of the bus, specifically the *emergency door panel*. Images and text painted inside the bus and on the emergency door are easier to view. Typically, an artist makes sketch drawings for the emergency door panel from which the vehicle owner may choose. The image is generally a single figure composition. For this space (below the window), the participant may draw or paint a picture of a popular cartoon, movie, or television character. Favorite singers, celebrities, and religious figures are also ideal.

Like the front of the bus, landscape scenes are painted in the *space above the emergency door*, and short *dichos* or phrases appear on the *back bumper*. For decorating these spaces, please see instructions for **Front**.

### **D. Other Surfaces**

The roof of the bus is an excellent place for participants to paint longer *dichos* and/or other images. Again, have participants think of sayings expressed by their parents or grandparents, for example “The early bird gets the worm.” Also, they may select a saying from a book of Spanish and English proverbs or create their own proverb, then draw a picture to illustrate the proverb. Students are free to decorate the other spaces, such as the door, side back windows, and stop sign.

## **4. Bus Cutout**

After going through each section of the diagram, tell the participants that they will now design their own bus using a bus cutout template and provided art supplies. Participants should receive each section of the cutout. After decorating each section, instruct the participants to cut out and assemble their buses by folding down and gluing the tabs to the appropriate parts. You may need to assist the participants with assembly.

### **For Younger Participants:**

Have younger children draw a picture and write their name on a side section template of the bus. When cutting out be sure to remove the tabs.



**References:**

Giffords, Gloria Fraser. "Soul of the Mexican Trucker." *El Palacio* 87, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 3-17.

Harris, Moira F., and Leo J. Harris. *Art on the Road: Painted Vehicles of the Americas*. Pogo Press Art and Popular Culture Series. St. Paul, MN: Pogo Press, 1988.

## Art That Is Beyond the Real

Ages 7+

Time Required: one class session

For this adapted activity, participants will discuss the style of art in the book, *My First Book of Proverbs / Mi Primer Libro de Dichos*, look at examples of surrealist art, and produce surrealist art of their own.

The activity is located at the Children's Book Press – *My First Book of Proverbs* [Teacher's Guides] website: [www.childrensbookpress.org/guides/proverbs/crosscurricular.html](http://www.childrensbookpress.org/guides/proverbs/crosscurricular.html). This site contains several lesson suggestions in connection with the book, yet these lessons may be adapted to use with other publications. Ideal for museum or classroom activity.

### Materials Needed:

- The book *My First Book of Proverbs / Mi Primer Libro de Dichos*
- Book of English and/or Spanish proverbs (optional)
- Reproductions of surrealist paintings, such as Frida Kahlo's *The Little Deer* ([http://artchive.com/artchive/k/kahlo/kahlo\\_deer.jpg.html](http://artchive.com/artchive/k/kahlo/kahlo_deer.jpg.html)), Salvador Dali's *The Persistence of Memory*, or René Magritte's *The Son of Man* (<http://bertc.com/g9/index.htm>).
- White paper for drawing
- Cardboard for the frame
- Crayons, oil pastels, acrylic paints, and /or markers
- Tape

### Terms to Know:

**Surrealism** – an art and literature movement of the early twentieth century that attempted to represent the subconscious mind by creating fantastic imagery and juxtaposing ideas that seem to contradict each other.

**Proverb** – a short well-known and often humorous saying that expresses a truth or offers advice. In Spanish, it is called a *dicho*.

### Steps:

1. Have participants look at the illustrations in *My First Book of Proverbs / Mi Primer Libro de Dichos* and conduct a discussion of what makes the art in this book different from other books. For instance, instruct the participants to describe some physical features of the characters in the book.
2. Explain that the art found in the book is sometimes called *surrealism* and provide a definition of the term. Show participants examples of surrealist art (see Materials Needed), and invite them to talk about the ways in which these examples are similar to or different from the illustrations in the book. Some guiding questions may be:

How are the colors similar or different? Do the figures look happy or sad? How does this picture make you feel in comparison to the other?

3. Ask participants to write down the familiar items they see in the book illustrations and in the art examples. Encourage participants to look at how the illustrations do not look like anything from nature, but rather combine elements from nature (watermelons, combs, bees, etc.) in different ways to create new and unfamiliar images. Explain that art of this kind is also considered *surrealism*.
4. Tell participants that they will now create their own surrealist art to illustrate a familiar proverb, using crayons, oil pastels, acrylic paints, or markers. Have participants select a proverb from *My First Book of Proverbs* or another book of proverbs. Instruct participants to think about their proverb's meaning and what images would best describe the meaning. Encourage creativity.
5. Finally, have participants look at the different frames (the decoration surrounding the illustrations) in the book. Tell the participants that they will design and cut out a cardboard frame for their own artwork. Their selected and illustrated proverb should be enclosed in a banner along the bottom of the frame.
6. At the completion of the project, assist participants with taping the drawings to the frames. You may want to mount an exhibition of the participants' surrealist works in a hallway.

The following ideas represent just a sampling of the various exhibition-related events to implement in connection with *Dichos: Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*. For more programming ideas, call previous venues on the tour schedule to see what worked for them.

### ***Visiting Speakers/Symposium***

Arrange to have a visiting speaker discuss Spanish proverbs or Latin American culture. Use the speaker list included in this guide to find possible speakers. Be sure to include a question-and-answer period with the audience.

### ***Panel Discussion***

Panel discussions are an excellent way to ensure lively dialogue and multiple perspectives. Consider the following topics: influence of Spanish proverbs in Latin American culture, the threat of standardized public transportation to the art tradition of bus painting in Panama, or other Latin American social issues.

### ***Evening for Educators***

Early in the exhibition's stay, or even before it opens to the public, host a VIP evening for area educators. Take them on a docent-led tour of the exhibition, allow them a chance to see "behind-the-scenes" treasures held by your museum, gather their feedback on potential tie-ins with their students, and be sure to hand out and discuss the lesson plans prepared in this guide. Teachers will appreciate an evening designed just for them, and it likely will result in an increase in formal and informal student visitations.

### ***Family Day***

Organize a family day at the museum with hands-on activities related to the exhibition: collect items for children to see and touch, host visiting scholars, or establish a painting corner staffed with volunteers.

### ***Share a Proverb!***

Set up a board near the gallery or space of the exhibition and invite visitors to write down their favorite proverbs in English or Spanish. You may also want to offer a *Dicho* cookie (See List of Websites) to each visitor.

### ***Storytelling Day***

Invite a locate storyteller to read or recite popular folktales and have guests discuss the moral lessons of the stories.

### ***Looking at Art Day***

Offer a special workshop for kids (and their parents) to develop an appreciation of photography and to enhance their skills at looking at images.

Grant La Farge, M.D. was born in New York City on September 14, 1928. During 1950s La Farge received medical training at institutions in New England including Yale University School of Medicine. After college and medical school, he served four years as a physician in the United States Air Force in Colorado. In 1961 La Farge returned to civilian medical practice and would specialize in Cardiology and Pediatric Cardiology in Boston and Santa Fe for nearly 50 years, retiring only for a few years in the early 1980s. La Farge is currently practicing today and serves on the New Mexico Medical Board as director. Throughout his extensive medical career, La Farge has given several lectures and written numerous publications on heart-related issues.

Along with his passion for medicine, La Farge has fostered a love for Latin American culture. This love is shared by his wife Patricia Arscott La Farge, who is an importer of folk art and native crafts from Mexico and countries of Central and South America. For many years in the late 1970s to early 1990s, La Farge traveled throughout Latin America taking photographs of *dichos* on trucks and other vehicles that convey the personal feelings and worldviews of the drivers. At truck stops in countries such as Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Panama, he amassed a large collection of photographs, which are the source for this exhibition. Along the way La Farge also collected miniature vehicles decorated with *dichos* by well-known Latin American folk artists. As part of his project, La Farge conducted interviews with many of the vehicle owners and others to translate the *dichos* into English with as much accuracy as possible.

In addition to his book *Faith in God and Full Speed Ahead (Fe en Dios y ¡Adelante!)* which was published in 1985 and resulted in the *Dichos* exhibition, La Farge's photographs of Latin American culture and folk art have been the focus of several exhibitions. These exhibitions include *The Way of the Cross: The Way South* (1981 and 1989), *La Virgencita: The Virgins in Latin American Folk Art* (1991-1992), *El Nacimiento: Expressions of Nativities in Latin American Folk Art* (1993), and *Roadside Crosses of Latin America and New Mexico* (1993). La Farge has also guest curated several shows.

**Glossary**

**Chiva** – Spanish for *little goat*, the chiva is a truck commonly found in Colombia. The chiva is typically painted with geometric designs, religious scenes, and *dichos*.

**Culture** – The behaviors and beliefs of a particular ethnic, social, religious, or age group.

**Diablos Rojos** – Spanish for *Red Devils*, they are Panamanian buses used for transportation. These former school buses from the United States are painted with vivid colors, religious icons, pop culture figures, landscapes, *dichos*, or other street expressions.

**Dicho** – A Spanish proverb or amusing saying that expresses a truth or offers advice. *Dichos* are told within families and throughout generations to reinforce moral lessons both for children and adults.

**Folk Art** – Traditional art made by people of a particular region whose styles and craftsmanship have been handed down over the generations from artist to artist.

**Humor** – Something that is comical, amusing, funny, or witty and has the power to evoke laughter.

**Landscape** – A picture that often depicts a view of natural scenery; usually a panoramic or extensive expanse of scenery seen from a single viewpoint.

**Latin America** – Countries of Central and South America whose official languages are Spanish, Portuguese, or French. Latin America also includes Mexico, Haiti, and Puerto Rico.

**Photograph** – A representation of a person, object, or scene in the form of a print or transparency that is recorded by a camera and light-sensitive material.

**Tap-Tap** – A type of vehicle commonly found in Haiti, it is often painted with religious text and names of family members or well-known people.

**Vehicle** – A means of transporting people or objects. Vehicles include cars, trucks, buses, trains, planes, boats, and carriages.

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##### Checklist #1

**Truck front with *dicho* "Que Me Vez Que Soy El Mismo"**

Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico  
1984  
Photograph  
48 x 36 x 7/8 inches

##### Checklist #5

**Back bumper with *dicho* "Si Dios Quiere Volvere ¡Porque los Envidiosos Lloran por Mi!"**

Otavalo, Ecuador  
1984  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

##### Checklist #13

**Back bumper with *dicho* "Caminante no Hay Camino se Hace Camino al ANDAR"**

Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico  
1983  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

##### Checklist #14

**Truck front with *dicho* "El Jefe"**

Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico  
1983  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

##### Checklist #15

**Truck back with *dicho* "Guarde Distancia"**

Almolonga, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala  
1991  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

##### Checklist #19

**Back bumper with *dicho* "Para Que Cortar las Verdes si Manuras Caen Solas"**

Guatemala City, Guatemala  
1983  
Photograph  
30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

Checklist #24

**Back bumper with *dicho* "Deja que Tus Ojo Me Vuelvan a Mirar"**

Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico

1982

Photograph

30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

Checklist #32

**Front bumper with *dicho* "Si Sufres Con El Vente Con Migo"**

Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico

1983

Photograph

30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

Checklist #35

**Truck front with *dicho* "Pequeño Sheriff"**

Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico

1984

Photograph

45 x 30 x 7/8 inches

Checklist #38

**Bus front with *dicho* "Transistmica"**

Panama City, Panama

1984

Photograph

30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

Checklist #39

**Front handrails in interior of bus with *dicho* "100 Años de Soledad A Tu Espera"**

Panama City, Panama

1984

Photograph

30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

Checklist #41

**Bus side with "Rivoli, Rita, Ro(sa)"**

Panama City, Panama

1985

Photograph

30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

Checklist #43

**Bus side with *dicho* "Suba Con Quidado"**

Panama City, Panama

1984

Photograph

45 x 30 x 7/8 inches

Checklist #44

**Bus back with painted landscape with railroad train and *dicho* "Asi Lo Dicen"**

Panama City, Panama

1984

Photograph

30 x 45 x 7/8 inches

Checklist #46

**Bus back with *dicho* "Se Vende"**

Panama City, Panama

1985

Photograph

45 x 30 x 7/8 inches



These lesson plans are designed for teachers who are interested in taking their students to see *Dichos: Words to Live, Love and Laugh By in Latin America*. The plans can be easily adapted to many ages.

In advance of the exhibition's arrival at your museum, send program announcements to local schools inviting them to set up a tour. Provide teachers with these lesson plans as well as images, bibliography, glossary, or other pertinent information that is included in this programming guide. The programming guide is also available through ExhibitsUSA's website at [www.eusa.org](http://www.eusa.org).

## Pre-Lesson Plan: Proverbs

**Grade level:** 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

**Time Required:** 1 class period

### Materials Needed:

- Book of refranes or proverbs (English and Spanish translations)
- Chalk board
- World map

**Objectives:** Prior to visiting the exhibition *Dichos*, students will gain basic knowledge of the cross cultural traditions of proverbs or sayings. Students will also learn introductory information about Spanish proverbs or *dichos* by looking at examples and discussing their meaning.

### Directions:

1. Have students think about proverbs they have heard from their parents, grandparents or other relatives. You may want to give the students an example to help them get started. As the students start to think of sayings, ask them to explain what they think the sayings mean. You may also discuss the meaning of the following proverbs:

- *A friend in need is a friend indeed* (A real friend is one who can be counted on in difficult times.)
- *The early bird catches the worm* (Those who get things done sooner reap the rewards.)
- *Birds of a feather flock together* (People with common interests and ways tend to stick together.)

2. Explain to the students that proverbs are short memorable sayings that express a truth or moral lesson. Proverbs such as the ones discussed are found in other cultures. Give students a few examples:

- *Get to know new friends, but don't give up the old ones* (Bulgaria)
- *A man who has committed a mistake and does not correct it is committing another mistake* (China)
- *Haste makes waste* (Great Britain)
- *To a good hearer, a good speaker* (Spain)
- *The one being carried does not realize how far away the town is* (Nigeria)
- *Nice words are free, so choose ones to please another's ears* (Vietnam)
- *When an elephant is in trouble, even a frog will kick him* (India)

Have students locate the different countries on a world map and discuss each proverb.

3. Explain to the students that Spanish proverbs are called *dichos*. Like other proverbs found around the world, *dichos* are told within families and through generations, often to reinforce a moral lesson both for children and adults. *Dichos* are found in Spanish speaking countries

such as Mexico and Peru. Have the students locate the countries on the world map. Here are some examples of Spanish proverbs:

- *A quien no le sobra pan, no críe can* (Never spend your money before you have it)
- *A todos les llega su momento de gloria* (Every dog has its day)
- *El que no monta no cae* (If you don't ride, you can't fall)

Have students discuss each proverb.

4. Discuss the *Dichos* exhibition with the students. Explain that they will see colorful photographs of trucks and buses from Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Panama. The vehicles are painted with *dichos* similar to bumper stickers on cars. In addition to words, the students will also see painted figures, landscapes, and other images as well as vehicle models and bumpers.

5. Ask the students to read the exhibition labels and text panels and to write down *dichos* that impressed them. Students should also note the imagery in the photographs and be prepared to discuss what they saw at the next class session.

**Reference:**

*Proverbs* (Lesson Plan), created by Close the Book on Hate and found at [www.adl.org/tools\\_teachers/lesson\\_proverbs.asp](http://www.adl.org/tools_teachers/lesson_proverbs.asp).

**Post-Lesson Plan: *Dichos* (Discussion)****Grade level:** 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>**Time Required:** 2 hours or more**Materials:**

- Chalk board (optional)
- Students' notes from exhibition tour

**Objective:** Students will discuss what they viewed and learned from the exhibition *Dichos*. Students may be divided into groups for this activity.

**Directions:**

1. Use the following questions to encourage discussion:

- What picture impressed you the most? Why? Describe the photograph.
- What country was the picture taken in?
- Which *dicho* impressed you the most?
- What do you think the *dicho* means?
- What do you think the *dicho* says about the owner of the vehicle?
- What other images impressed you? Why?
- What were some themes of the *dichos* in the exhibition? For example, love and affection.
- What other information did you learn about *dichos*?

As students tell their favorite *dichos* or phrases, write them on the chalk board for all to see.

2. Instruct students to discuss what they learned with family members and friends.

## Lesson Plan: Spanish Proverbs and Sayings (Meanings, Ideas, and Language)

The following activities were created by authors Aurora Hansis and Teresa Tattersall. They are found at the Languages Other Than English Center for Educator Development website located at [www.sedl.org/loteced/scenarios/spanish\\_proverbs.html](http://www.sedl.org/loteced/scenarios/spanish_proverbs.html).

**Grade level:** 4<sup>th</sup>+ (adaptable)

**Time Required:** 2 or more class periods

### Materials Needed:

- Refranes (book of sayings and proverbs in Spanish and English)
- Computer with Internet access
- Art supplies, including paper, markers, etc.
- PresentationPro for students' presentations (optional)
- Video camera (optional)
- Note cards
- Pencils
- Chalk board

### Objectives:

Students will learn about sayings and proverbs commonly used in Spanish-speaking cultures. English proverbs and sayings are included for comparison and to guide students as they learn new proverbs in Spanish. Through this activity, students discover the value of proverbs, and they see how culture is embedded in proverbs and sayings. Students develop an awareness of the intrinsic relationship between language and culture. *Prerequisite:* Students should have some knowledge of Spanish vocabulary.

### I. Comparing Familiar English and Spanish Proverbs

- The class begins by brainstorming familiar English proverbs. They also discuss how they learned these proverbs: from a family member, in the community, in school, etc.
- Next, the class will consider a group of “equivalent” proverbs in English and Spanish. The proverbs are selected because they use different images to express a similar idea. For example: “*de tal palo, tal astilla*” (“like father, like son” or “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree”), or “*El niño que no llora no mama*” (“The squeaky wheel gets the grease”). Print the sayings on note cards and place in two columns on the chalkboard with Spanish on one side and English on the other—but not directly opposite their “mate.”
- The class’s task is to find the Spanish “match” for the English proverbs. This is a whole-class activity with the teacher guiding the students, directing their attention to

key words, cognates, and roots of familiar words. Once teacher and students have matched the pairs of proverbs, students separate into small groups where they are assigned one of the “pairs” of proverbs. The teacher provides some questions for the groups so that learners begin to think about how culture is reflected in the proverbs.

For example: What is the main idea of the proverbs? How do the two proverbs express that idea differently? Why do you think the idea is expressed differently in English and Spanish? (Why does Spanish use “this” image and English “that” one?) Even though the proverbs are in different languages, do they achieve the same results?

- After their discussion, groups share information with their classmates.

## II. Learning New Spanish Sayings

In this activity, students will learn more Spanish proverbs and sayings and complete two tasks to demonstrate their understanding of the ones they choose to work with.

- First, students receive a new list of proverbs in Spanish. Individually or in pairs, students choose a proverb from the list to illustrate (e.g., *El que se fue a Sevilla, perdió su silla*).
- The teacher discusses with students both the literal and figurative meanings of the proverbs, and they decide whether to illustrate what the proverb says (“The one who goes to Sevilla loses his seat/chair.”), what it means (“Possession is nine-tenths of the law”), or both. Student illustrations are displayed in the classroom.
- Next, working with the same list of proverbs, student groups create skits using pantomime to demonstrate the meaning of their chosen proverb. As a vocabulary review, the class is asked, with the teacher’s prompting, to provide vocabulary words or make short statements using learned material as the pantomime is occurring. Students have a list of the proverbs, and after the pantomime is complete, the “audience” guesses which proverb has been presented; they also share (in English) their understanding of the meaning of the skit.
- Finally, the class evaluates the skits as to whether or not the figurative meaning of the proverb has been captured.

## III. Creating New Proverbs

Students enjoy the vivid images of proverbs, and they now have an opportunity to use their creativity to come up with some images of their own.

- Again, sayings are written on note cards, but this time each student receives only the first half of a proverb in Spanish (*Cuando hay hambre... / Panza llena...*). The students, working either in pairs or individually, will create a new ending to the proverb. Novice-level students are encouraged to use familiar vocabulary, and the

teacher supplies new words as needed. (It may be helpful to brainstorm useful nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. with which students are familiar and to write them on the board.)

- Next, each student or pair presents the “new” proverb to classmates. Once all students have presented their new sayings, the teacher shows them the ending to the original proverbs (...*no hay pan duro* / ...*corazón contento*). Students and teacher discuss (in English) how learners came up with their original endings and how the meaning of the proverb changed with a different ending. (This is also a good opportunity to reflect again on how culture might have influenced the two versions.)
- After the discussion, the original and rewritten proverbs are displayed in the classroom.

#### IV. Connecting Proverbs and Culture

Now that students have learned several Spanish-language sayings and demonstrated their understanding of them, they will explore further the relationship between proverbs and culture.

- First, students choose two proverbs, one in English and one in Spanish. Their task is to research the history behind each proverb using the Internet, books, family, friends and any other available resource to gather information. They look for answers to questions such as: Where did the proverb come from? In what contexts is it used?

In addition to their research, students also reflect on ways that the Spanish- and English-language proverbs differ. For example, students might notice the use of infinitives in Spanish where English tends to use gerunds, etc. They consider how relevant the proverb is to the present day and whether it presents an idea or uses images peculiar to American or Hispanic cultures. The latter are abstract issues, so students present their research findings and conduct discussions in English and with the teacher’s guidance.

- Students continue their investigation of how proverbs reflect aspects of the micro- (e.g., family) and macro-culture (e.g., ethnic group) by talking with their relatives about any common family sayings or proverbs. They interview family members and friends about proverbs that have been passed down through generations (e.g., “Grandpa always used to say...”).
- Students tape (video or audio) the interviews (*optional*), and as they share them in class, they consider several questions: Are there common themes or images by language group and/or across language groups? Are certain sayings special to a particular generation? etc.
- Once the research and discussion is complete, each student or group selects a way to graphically represent what they have discovered: art work, mind-map, collage, etc.

## V. Creating Proverb Books

As a culminating activity, students create a book of ten sayings in Spanish with illustrations.

- Five of the proverbs are ones they have enjoyed and “collected” over the course of the unit that were not the object of class activities. The other five may be “half-original” proverbs created in the activity *Creating New Proverbs* by the class or totally new ones.
- Students bring their books to share with classmates, either reading their favorite “new” proverb aloud or passing the books around to be read. Students make comments and sign the back of their classmates’ books.
- Additionally, a class book of proverbs can be produced with students providing proverbs from their individual books. Students combine sayings and design the class book, and the teacher copies and distributes one to each learner.

### Targeted Standards

**Communication (Interpersonal, Interpretative, and Presentational Modes):** The interpersonal mode is used when students work in pairs or small groups and when they create skits. Students use the interpretive mode to read and match English and Spanish proverbs and to listen to classmates’ presentations. The presentational mode is used when students perform skits and present their books.

**Cultures (Products and Perspectives):** Students learn about a cultural product (proverbs) and the perspectives of the culture through the use of proverbs/sayings.

**Connections (Access to Information):** Students access information in Spanish about proverbs through the Internet, books and personal interviews.

**Comparisons (Nature of Language, Concept of Culture):** Students compare proverbs in English and Spanish to understand how one idea may be represented differently in two languages and cultures. They understand how cultural perspectives are implicit in the choice of images used in the sayings.

**Communities (Within and Beyond the School Setting):** Students use Spanish with and beyond the school as they talk with Spanish-speaking family and friends to find out about the use of proverbs in the community.



**Lesson Plan: Proverbs (Literal language versus Figurative language)**

This lesson plan was developed by Christina Sandza-Donovan (Barbieri School, Framingham, MA) and Marleny Perdomo (Key Elementary School, Arlington, VA) and is located at <http://www.cal.org/twi/toolkit/CI/lessons/fifthunit.htm>.

**Grade Level:** 5<sup>th</sup>+

**Time Required:** Three 1-hour sessions

**Materials Needed:**

- Books on fables, such as those by Aesop and Samaniego
- Books on proverbs: *My First Book of Proverbs/ Mi primer libro de dichos* by Ralfka Gonzalez and Ana Ruiz, and *125 Refranes infantiles* by J. Ignacio Herrera and Ma Luisa Torcida.
- Websites with proverbs in English and Spanish:  
<http://spanish.about.com/library/weekly/aa031901b.htm>  
<http://cogweb.ucla.edu/Discourse/Proverbs/Spanish-English.html>
- Chart paper
- Markers and crayons

**Objectives:**

*Students will:*

- make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.
- identify the meaning of common idioms and figurative phrases.
- analyze sensory details and figurative language.
- analyze and explain the use of figurative language as it appeals to the senses, creates imagery, suggests mood, and sets tone.

**Guiding Questions:**

- What is a proverb?
- What information is needed to understand a proverb?
- What is the difference between literal meaning and figurative meaning?

**Ideas:**

- A proverb uses figurative language to express a feeling or idea.
- Figurative language occurs in poetry and other types of creative writing.
- Understanding figurative language and being familiar with proverbs can promote communication.
- Proverbs convey cultural beliefs.

**Directions:**

Session 1: The teacher introduces the concept of a proverb by reading a fable that ends with a proverb and having the children infer the meaning of the proverb from the text. Students then work in small groups to read additional fables and to extract the meaning of the proverb that ends each fable.

Session 2: Students work in small groups. The teacher provides each group with a proverb they don't know and asks each group to predict the figurative meaning of that proverb. The teacher then provides a short story with the proverb embedded in it and asks the students to read the story and revise their prediction as needed. Teachers then provide the figurative meaning of the proverb so that students can confirm their prediction. Students work in their groups to create posters that convey pictures with the literal meaning of their proverb and to restate the figurative meaning in their own words. Finally, each group shares their poster and presents the literal and figurative meaning of it.

Session 3: Students continue to work with their selected proverb in their small groups. Each group writes a skit that shows the appropriate usage of the proverb and acts out the skit for the class. As a culminating activity, students work on a matching activity developed by the teacher in which they are required to match each proverb that was presented by the groups to a situation where the use of that proverb would be appropriate.

**Assessment:**

Session 1: Read response journals in which students reflect on the meaning of the proverb as inferred from the fable.

Session 2: Assess students' presentations in terms of how well they convey both the figurative and literal meanings of their proverbs.

Session 3: Observe students perform matching task, which provides an overall assessment of comprehension of all proverbs studied and presented by all groups.

This family gallery guide is designed for families or adults with children who visit *Dichos: Words to Live, Love, and Laugh By in Latin America*. The gallery guide is designed to help visitors focus on the works in the exhibition. The gallery guide and activity are not designed as substitutes for a docent-led tour or other educational activities.

The family gallery guide is available in PDF format for you to reproduce for museum visitors. The gallery guide is provided with your exhibition materials prior to the viewing period of *Dichos*. Please contact Denise Smith, Assistant Curator, if you have any questions about altering the content of these materials.