



history through children's literature



"Santos of Puerto Rico"

Our story continues outside the museum on the island of Puerto Rico

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Smithsonian
National Museum of American History

Welcome to the Santos of Puerto Rico Activity Guide!

In this activity book you can learn more about Puerto Rican santos and the people who make, collect and take care of them.

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Notes to adults: *This activity guide is intended for children ages 6-12 and their adult companions. Information sections answer some of the basic questions children have about santos and Puerto Rico. Hands-On activities invite children and adults to work together outside the museum in creative and enjoyable ways. Finally, a bibliography at the end of the activity book gives suggestions for books about Puerto Rico you can read and share with children.*

OurStory: History Through Children's Literature is an ongoing series of family programs at the National Museum of American History which brings history to life for museum visitors from pre-schoolers to adults. Explore America's rich cultural heritage through Museum objects, quality children's literature, and hands-on activities. Each OurStory program includes a museum experience, storytelling, hands-on activities, and a take home activity guide like the one you are reading. To find out more about the OurStory program call (202) 633-6752.

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The National Museum of American History is located at 14th Street and
Constitution

Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20560. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily;
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Admission is free. For more information and accessibility accommodations call:
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Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is an island. It is surrounded by water. It is located many miles off the coast of Florida.

Many different people have lived in Puerto Rico. A long time ago, a group of Indians called the Taino (tie-EE-noh) lived on the island. Then, in 1493, the explorer Christopher Columbus landed on the island and claimed it for the King and Queen of Spain. For 400 years, Spain ruled Puerto Rico, and many new people came to live on the island. Then, one hundred years ago, there was a war between the United States and Spain. Spain lost the war and gave control of Puerto Rico to the United States. Today, Puerto Rico is a "commonwealth" of the United States.

 Can you find Puerto Rico on this map? (Hint: Remember, it is an island, so it is surrounded by water!)

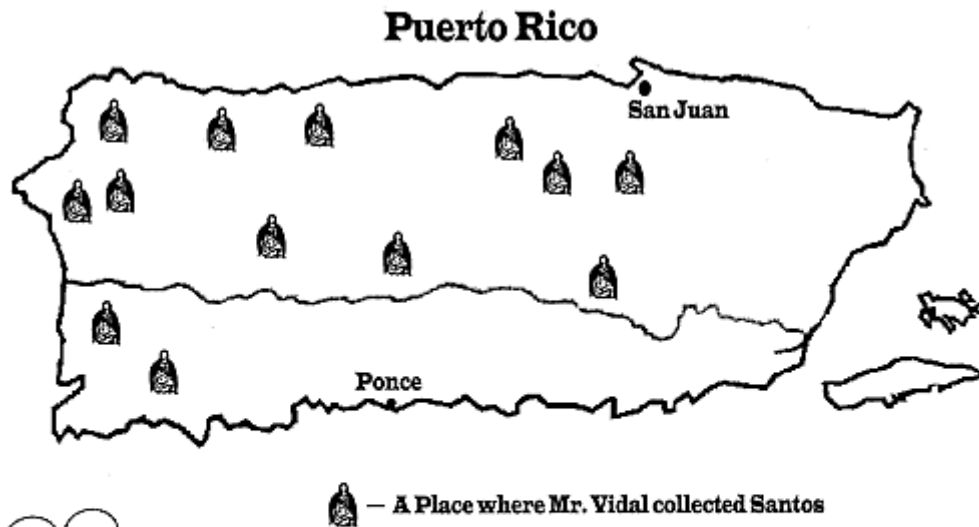


Color the map above!

A Collector's Vision of Puerto Rico

Many years ago, a gentleman named Teodoro Vidal became a collector in Puerto Rico. He traveled all over Puerto Rico collecting artwork, furniture, toys, and much more. He collected many of the santos that you will see in this activity guide.

? Are you a collector?
? What is in your collection?
? Stamps? Baseball cards?



Look! This map shows many of the places
around the island where Mr. Vidal
collected these santos.

Mr. Vidal collected objects because he wanted to share the history and culture of Puerto Rico with other people. Last year, Mr. Vidal gave some of his collection to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. His collection was used to create the exhibition, *A Collector's Vision of Puerto Rico*. Later in this activity book you can learn how to collect and preserve your own collection.

What is a Santo?

A **santo** is a wood carving of a saint or religious person in the Catholic Church. Large santos are usually placed in a church. Smaller santos, like the ones you see on this page, are made for someone's home.

Some people pray and ask a santo to cure them or someone they know is who is sick. Sometimes they leave a small offering at the santo called a **milagro (miracle)**. Milagros are usually made out of metal, and are often shaped into parts of peoples' bodies that may become sick, like a tooth or a heart.

The wood carvers who create santos are called santeras (female) and santeros (male). Santeras use basic knives and carving tools to create santos. Sometimes, the santera carves the body of a santo out of one piece of wood, and the arms and legs of a santo from other pieces.



Meet a Santero from Puerto Rico

Pedro Pablo Rinaldi Jovet is a santero who lives in Ponce, Puerto Rico. (See map on page 2) Mr. Rinaldi Jovet carves many different kinds of santos. On this page you can see a picture of one of his santos, called "Los Tres Reyes Magos a Caballo" or "The Three Kings on Horseback." Mr. Rinaldi Jovet teaches and writes about santos in Puerto Rico. He has shown his santos to people around the world. He is also writing a book about santos carving.

- ? What kinds of things do you like to make?
- ? If you were going to write a book about something you like to make, what would you write about?



Become a Collector!

Collecting helps to preserve objects for the future. By studying objects from the past, we can learn about the people who used them and how they lived. In the future, people will look at the objects that we use everyday to learn about us.

When you start your own collection, keep these questions in mind.

? What kinds of things do you like?

You can collect all kinds of things. Objects do not have to be expensive or rare to be collected.

? What kinds of things go together?

Objects in a collection usually go together in some way. For example, you could start a "stuffed animals" collection, and collect all different types of stuffed toys. Or, you could start a "Stars and Stripes" collection, and collect all kinds of objects about the American flag.



Make a list of some things you might like to collect.

| | |
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? How are you going to take care of your collection?

Collecting Tips

Things to watch out for:

light - Don't store materials in direct sunlight.

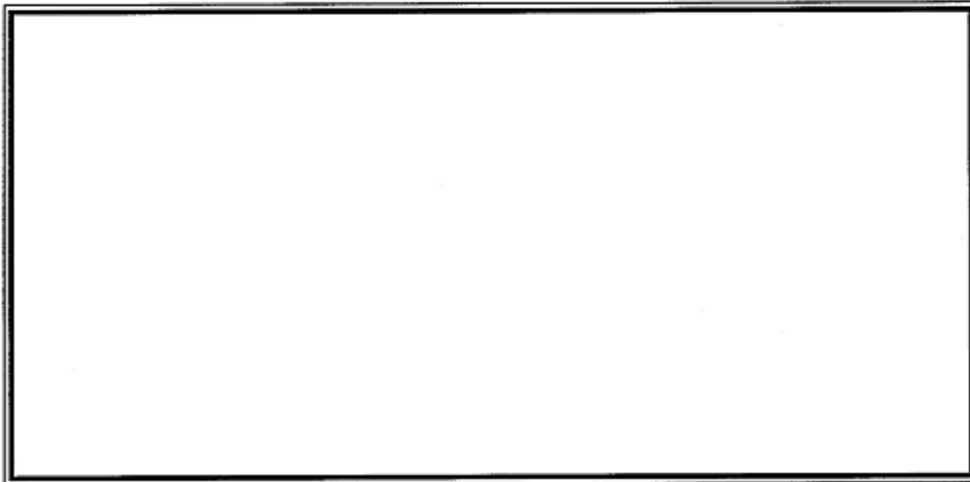
temperature - Don't let your objects get too hot or too cold. Store them in a closet, not in a basement, attic or garage.

air pollution - Keep dust off your objects. Don't exhibit your objects near the kitchen or fireplace.

insects - Store your objects away from places bugs live, like kitchens and damp places.



Draw your own collection



What is Conservation?

? Do you have a favorite book?

? How about a shirt, stuffed animal, toy, or photograph?

You might want to save those things for when you get older. Everything deteriorates, or breaks down, with time. If you want to save something special, you will need to do certain things to it to keep it in good condition. If it gets damaged, you may even need to do some repair work.

Many things you see in museums have been saved from getting damaged or broken. **Conservators** are the people who work in museums to make sure objects, photographs, and materials stay in good condition.

Taking care of Santos at the Smithsonian

At the Smithsonian, conservators are studying the santos in Mr. Vidal's collection. They use different types of equipment to identify what the santos are made of, how old they are, and whether any damage has already occurred.



**Teodoro Vidal & Jia-Sun Tsang discuss a wooden sculpture from Vidal's collection, "La Virgen de Monserrate."
(Photo by Doc Dougherty)**

Xeroradiography
X-Rays

? Have you ever seen an X-Ray?
? Where?

In hospitals, doctors use x-rays to look inside our bodies. An x-ray can show the bones under our skin. Doctors use x-rays to see if someone has broken their arm or leg.

One way conservators study santos and other objects is to use Xeroradiography. X-ray images show dark and light patterns that help conservators see inside the santos.



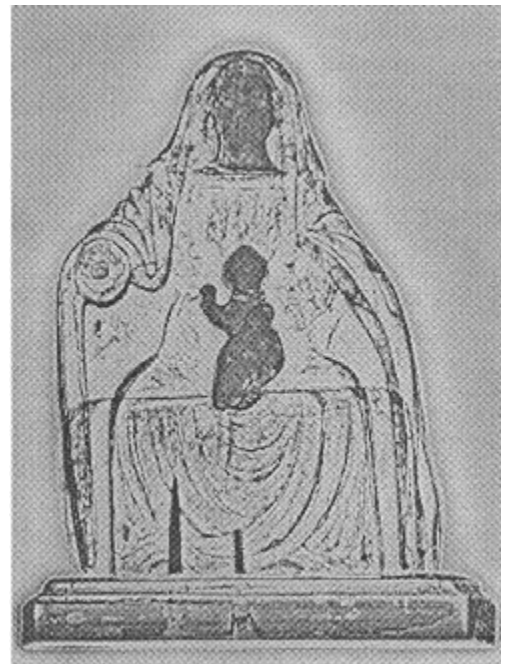
Look at the x-ray image of the Virgen de Monserrate.

The Virgen's face and the baby are dark because they are made of wax.



Photograph of the Virgen de Monserrate

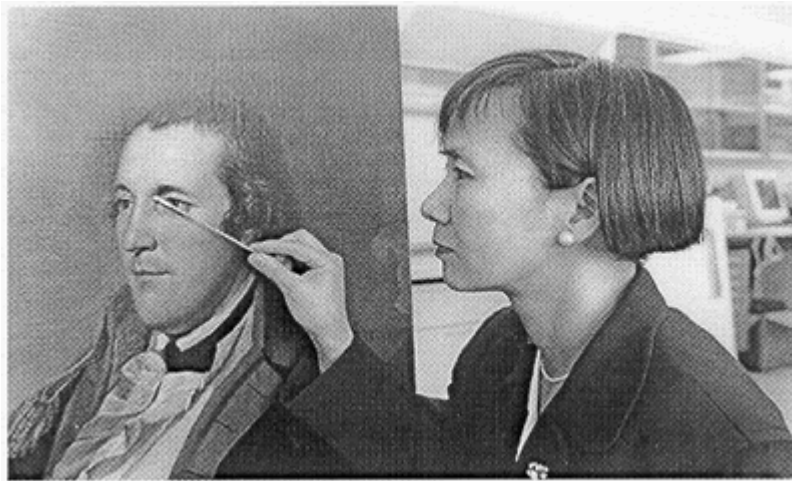
X-ray Image of the Virgen de Monserrate



? What else do you notice when you look closely at the x-ray picture?

Meet Smithsonian Conservator Jia-Sun Tsang

I love art. I work with paintings everyday, but am not a painter. I'm an art conservator. I've dabbled with my own artwork since I was a kid, and when I went to college I studied chemistry. When I got out of college I thought to myself, "How can I combine my love for art with my love for chemistry?" I asked a lot of people what I could do, and then I found out about art conservation.

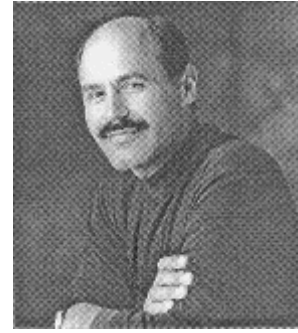


Jia-Sun Tsang working on a painting.

As a conservator I do all sorts of things, like finding the safest way to display art in a museum by checking things like lighting and air temperature. I also fix paintings that are peeling or are damaged. That's where the chemistry part comes in. Before fixing a painting, I find out what the paint is made of scientifically and how the substance used to fix it will react to it. It's great because I work in a lab and in museums. The most recent project I've worked on is a painting of a steamboat. Along with restoring the painting I learned all about steamboats and the history of boat paintings. I need to know these things to make sure the painting is restored just right. So with every project, I learn new and interesting things. The best part is that I'm around art ALL the time!

About an author

Mr. Fontáñez grew up in the rural town of Corozal, in Puerto Rico. When he was a boy, he used to entertain himself by adding "magic" to everything he did. One time, Mr. Fontáñez said that he was sure that,



"like the Lilliputians of Gulliver's Travels, there were "tiny people" living under the rocks near the stream by grandma's house. I was convinced that if I just chose the right time of day and the right rock, I was bound to find a beautiful magical creature sitting and singing peacefully under the stones..."

Today, Mr. Fontáñez shares the magic of Puerto Rico with children from around the United States. He created Exit Studio, a company that publishes children's books and videos and also teaches art workshops in museums and schools.

He is now creating a new book and video called **The Heart of the Imaginero**. (An imaginero is another name for a santero, or wood carver.) In this book, a small boy named Eduardito learns about wood carving and friendship from a master santera named Doña Rosa. To create the book, Mr. Fontáñez became an author and an illustrator, wrote, painted and carved many pictures on pieces of wood. To make the video, Mr. Fontáñez traveled to Puerto Rico to use the beautiful Puerto Rican towns and scenery as a backdrop. He also became an Imaginero himself, creating santos that were used by the actors in the movie.

To find out more about Mr. Fontáñez's publications and family activities, visit his web site at: <http://members.aol.com/ExitStudio>



Egg Tempera Painting

Egg Tempera is one type of paint that is used on santos. All kinds of paint need some pigment (color) and a medium (something to make the pigment stick together). Traditionally, pigments were made by grinding up larger materials (like plants or rocks) from nature, but artists today use many sources for pigments. Using the recipe below, you can experiment with different pigments to get the color of paint you want!

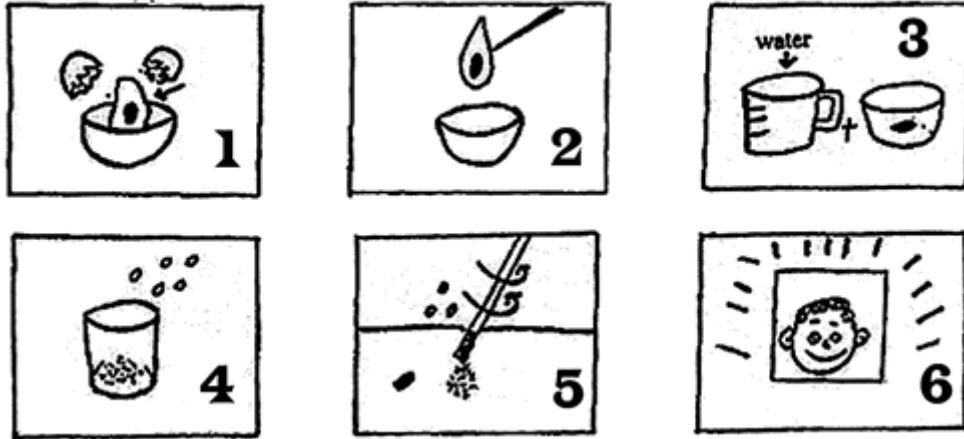
Ingredients:

For each paint color, you will need:

1. Pigment (color): Some pigments you could try are: Ground up dirt, clay or dried plants. Flavored gelatin powder or dry pigments from an art-supply store will also work.
2. Medium (something to make the pigment stick together): 1 egg yolk (you can also try water and vegetable oil as a medium to experiment with)
3. A bowl
4. A spoon
5. A paint brush or cotton swab
6. Water (add until you get the consistency you want)
7. A surface to paint on (wood, paper, etc.)
8. Paper towels to clean up

A word about gesso:

Have you ever tried to paint on wood? What happens? The paint sinks in because wood is porous, making the color look dull. If an artist wants vibrant colors on wood, he needs to coat the wood surface before painting. Gesso is a glue-like material that creates a smooth, non-porous surface for painting. Santeros often coat their carvings with gesso before painting them.



Directions:

1. Break egg into a bowl.
2. With a spoon, separate out the egg yolk and throw away the rest of the egg.
3. Place the egg yolk in the bowl, and add the water. Stir lightly.
4. Add the pigment to the water/egg mixture. Add only a little at first.
5. Stir the mixture. You can add more pigment or water until you get the color and texture of paint that you want.

Congratulations! You are ready to paint!

Bibliography

You can learn more about santos, santeros, and Puerto Rico through literature. Take a look at some of these books!

Books about Santos and Santeros

* Golden Tales: Myths, Legends, and Folktales from Latin America. Lulu Delacre. Scholastic Inc. 1996.

+Imaginero: Little Wood Carver. Edwin Fontáñez. Exit Studio. Publishing Date: Christmas 1998.

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+Arroz con Leche: Popular Songs and Rhymes from Latin America. Lulu Delacre. Scholastic Inc. 1989.

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*The Song of el Coqui and Other Tales of Puerto Rico. Nicholasa Mohr and Antonio Martorell. Viking: Published by the Penguin Group. 1995

+Taino: The Activity Book. Edwin Fontáñez. Exit Studio. 1996.

+The Vejigante and the Folk Festivals of Puerto Rico. Edwin Fontáñez. Exit Studio. 1996.

+Vejigante Masquerader. Lulu Delacre. Scholastic Inc. 1993.

* Bilingual Book
+ Available in English and Spanish