



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2018 Volume II: Poems about Works of Art, Featuring Women and Other Marginalized Writers

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## **Ekphrastic Poetry in the Second Language Classroom**

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Poetry is a mystery to most students in their native tongue, so you can imagine how intimidating it might be for them to study poems in another language. For a second year language learner reading and analyzing a poem in the target language may appear to be overwhelming, and quite possibly impossible. Ekphrasis, an author's written response to a work of art, provides a way for the students to enter into a poem that gives them a visual perspective. This affords the language learners the confidence to comprehend the ekphrastic work at its most basic level. Ekphrastic poetry supplies the students with multiple occasions for practice and growth in the target language while learning about the culture by using rich authentic works. This unit is designed for second year language students of Spanish who will study Xánath Caraza's ekphrastic poem "Catrina," written in response to Diego Rivera's mural "Sueño de una Tarde en la Alameda." The goal of this unit is for students to develop their own techniques for self-expression in the target language through the study of ekphrastic poetry, author their own ekphrastic poem and share it with others digitally and in the form of a poetry slam.

(Developed for Spanish I and Art, grade 7; recommended for World Languages, grades 1-4, ESL Upper Levels, and Art, grades 7-12)

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