José Guadalupe Posada produced a variety of images, including illustrations for games, shocking news stories, children’s chapbooks, and devotional images. These illustrations appeared in numerous inexpensive penny press publications that were directed to growing middle- and working-class audiences. The most popular illustrations Posada produced were satirical representations of calaveras (skeletons). Posada’s calaveras were printed on broadsides, cheap illustrated handbills, to be distributed during the Day of the Dead celebrations every November.

In 1870, Posada found work in the studio of José Trinidad Pedroza, where he learned a variety of printing techniques and produced many illustrated publications. After two years, Posada and Pedroza moved their business to León de la Aldama, Guanajuato; Posada stayed for fifteen years, developing his career. Then, in 1888 a flood destroyed the town of León, and Posada decided to move to Mexico City.

In the capital, Porfirio Díaz’s long and controversial presidency supported developments in industry, transportation, income and literacy, improvements that benefited publishers and printers. Before joining the workshop and publishing house of Antonio Vanegas Arroyo, Posada worked with a number of other publishers including editor and journalist Ireneo Paz, grandfather of Nobel Prize winning poet Octavio Paz. Posada lived the rest of his life working for Arroyo and with other publishers in Mexico City until his death.

The works for this exhibition are organized in partnership with The Trout Gallery of Dickinson College and are on loan from David J. Sellers.

**INFLUENTIAL PRINTMAKER AND ILLUSTRATOR**

**JOSÉ GUADALUPE POSADA (1852-1913)**

**WAS BORN IN AGUASCALIENTES, ZACATECAS, MEXICO.**

**POSADA: José Guadalupe Posada and the Mexican Penny Press**

**JANUARY 31 – MARCH 10, 2017**

**RECEPTION:**
February 3, 4:30-6:30 pm
**LECTURE BY DIANE MILIOTES, INTERIM CURATOR OF MODERN ART AND DESIGN, SMART MUSEUM OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO:**
February 9, 2017, 5:30-6:30 pm, Bowen Auditorium, Gettysburg College. Reception to Follow in Schmucker Art Gallery, 6:30-7:30 pm
**GALLERY TALK BY VANESSA MARTINEZ ’19:**
February 15, noon-1 pm (light lunch provided)

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**José Guadalupe Posada, La calavera de los artesanos, 1913, 11 ⅝ x 15 in.**
**José Guadalupe Posada, La calavera de los camiones, 1918, 11 ⅝ x 15 ⅛ in.**
**José Guadalupe Posada, La serpentina 29, colección de canciones modernas para 1894 (chapbook cover), n.d., 7 ⅞ x 5 ⅞ in.**
**José Guadalupe Posada, El muchacho de la vaquilla cuento (chapbook cover), n.d., 7 ⅛ x 5 ⅞ in.**
**José Guadalupe Posada, ‘Calavera Zumbona’, n.d., 11 ⅛ x 15 in.**
It is speculated that Posada met illustrator Manuel Manilla (1830-1895) while working at Arroyo's publishing house. By working alongside Manilla, it is thought that Posada may have adapted and developed Manilla's imagery of the calavera. Scholars find it difficult to verify the authorship of many prints because of the similarities in style and subject of the two illustrators.

Posada was able to gain a reputation for his remarkably inventive and impactful prints. However, when he died in 1913, Posada was buried in a pauper's grave. It was not until the 1920s that Posada was recognized for his work and his importance in the history of graphic art in Mexico. Artists such as Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and Jean Charlot championed Posada's work and can be credited for the continued interest in the significance of his contribution to Mexican art and culture.

This exhibition features a selection of the diverse illustrations of José Guadalupe Posada. Although the messages, styles, and techniques of each work differ; overall, the prints, books, and broadsides illustrate a vibrant picture of Mexican culture and society in the early twentieth century.

— Vanessa C. Martinez '19

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