

TALL TALES & HUGE HEARTS  
Raúl Colón



FAMILY GUIDE

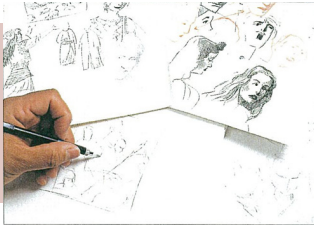
Welcome to the National Center For Children's Illustrated Literature! Use this guide to explore the art and stories of books illustrated by artist Raúl Colón.

## From the drawing board to the page:



1. Colón accepts the manuscript from his publishers.

2. Colón begins with extensive research. For instance, while working on *Weave of Words*, Colón went to the Armenian Council in New York to gather information about the costumes and symbolism appropriate to the story. Similarly, *Tómas and the Library Lady* had Colón studying at a lot of Mexican muralists' works, such as Diego Rivera and Siqueiros, who simplified form and that was what he wanted to work into his illustrations.

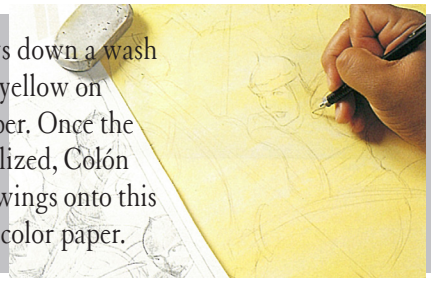


3. Colón makes quick sketches and thumbnails of the first images that come to him. At this point he has to decide if he wants the book to be realistic or highly stylized. Sometimes he blends the two.

4. Colón makes pencil sketches showing full composition and submits it for approval to the publisher and unlike many artists, Colón does not make detailed drawings before sending it.

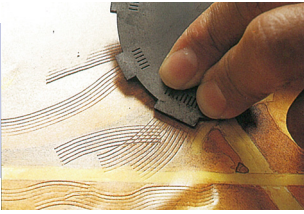


5. Colón always lays down a wash of aureolin yellow on watercolor paper. Once the pieces are finalized, Colón transfers his drawings onto this washed watercolor paper.



6. Colón then starts layering his washes over the pencil tracings, which can take a full day. He starts off with the medium tone and then starts deepening the yellow by mixing in vermilion, cobalt green or hooker's green for darker hues. He never uses black paint, preferring to use red or green to deepen the tones.





7. Colón then uses a scratcher on the art. He starts cutting into the areas where he needs rhythm and texture.



8. Next, in a kind of glazing process, Colón layers in and around the scratch mark with Prisma colored pencils.



9. Using an empty ball point pen, he then etches lines where needed.



10. Colón will sometimes finish using a black Lithograph pencil or crayon.

Included in this guide is scratch paper. Use it to make your own scratch art!

**Before you begin your tour, please follow these simple guidelines while in the gallery.**



If you decide to draw on this guide while at the NCCIL, please use only a pencil, not a pen or marker.

The art on the wall is to be “touched” by eyes only! Please feel free to pick up the books, look at the illustrations, and read the stories!



AND...



Share your ideas with each other in a quiet voice. Thank you!

In *Tomás and the Library Lady*, Tomás Rivera and his family travel by car from a small farming town in Texas to a similar town in Iowa – a trip of almost 1,300 miles. If you were to make that same trip, it would take nearly 19 hours to get there – imagine how tired you would be once you finally arrived. When Tomás Rivera was a child in the 1930s and 40s, many migrant families would have to make just such a trip and sometimes several in order for the parents to find work on farms, usually picking and harvesting fruits and vegetables. While the farm owners provided shelter for the workers, it was often a very small and uncomfortable place, nothing at all like what anyone would want to call a home. Most people became migrant workers out of necessity – they were new to the country and didn't understand the language, or didn't have much schooling and didn't qualify for other types of jobs. Many migrant workers, however difficult their situations were, still felt somewhat fortunate to have any employment, especially during the Great Depression when jobs could be extremely difficult to find.

“Hola! ¿Cómo estás?” (Hello! How are you?)

“Muy bien.” (Very Well.)

There's no easy trick to learning a language, it just takes practice. Listening to a foreign language and trying to speak new words will help you learn. Do you know or speak a language other than English?

Here are a few words in Spanish you will find in this book.

Papá Grande - Grandfather

Buenas tardes – Good afternoon

Buenas noches – Good night

Papá – Father

Mamá – Mother

Libro – Book

Pájaro – Bird

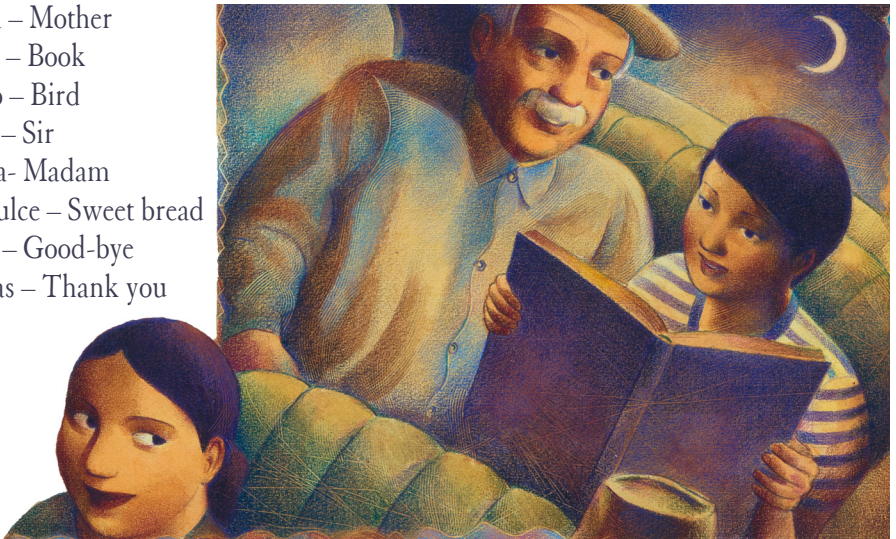
Senór – Sir

Senóra- Madam

Pan dulce – Sweet bread

Adiós – Good-bye

Gracias – Thank you



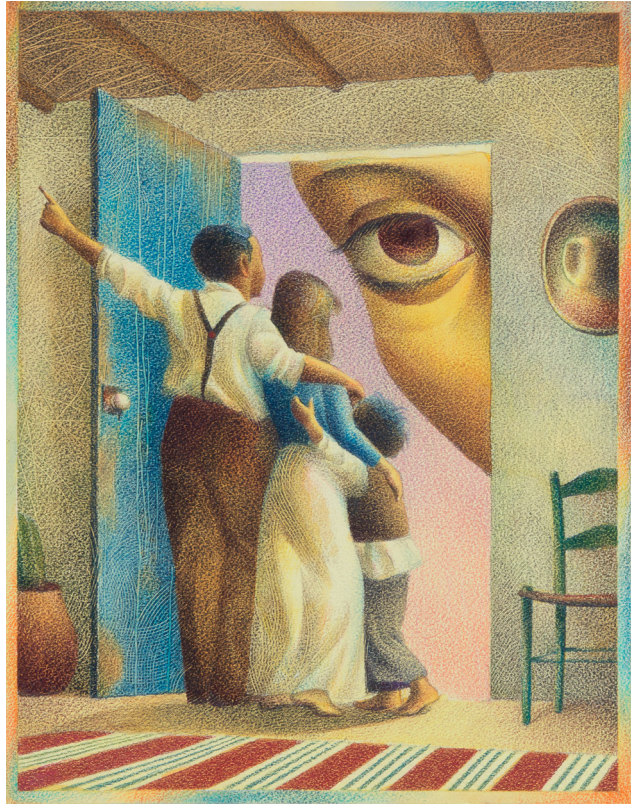
**Let's take a trip...** Draw a line from Texas to Iowa retracing the drive Tomás Rivera and his family took. Can you draw different routes you might take to go from where you live to Washington D.C. or Yellowstone National Park? How long do you think it will take you? What about going to Mexico or to some place in Canada from California? Where else would you like to take a trip? Read Colón's biography. Where was he born and where did he move with his parents in the 1960s? Can you find those places on this map?



# Look around you...

As you look around the gallery, find the works of art where you appear to look at the scene from above or below, from far away or close up. How about the image on this page? How does it make you feel? How about motion? Can you find a piece where you can feel Roberto Clemente rushing to catch the baseball? Have you heard of the phrase *Viewpoint* or *Perspective*?

Use this space to jot down what you see!



The word perspective originally comes from the Latin words *per* meaning "through" and *specere* which means "to look." In art, creating an appearance of depth or a viewpoint is achieved by placing or depicting people or objects to create the illusion of depth and space on a flat surface. Colón achieves this by layering, by positioning the different objects and varying their sizes.

Things can look very different when you change the perspective, angle, or view point of an image. Stand back and look around the gallery. To change your perspective, close one eye, then another. Does the picture you are looking at seem to move? How about trying to look at it upside down? Try making circles with your hands and putting them over your eyes as goggles!

“Creating the illustration where Angela is picking up the baby Jesus in the church was challenging. I needed to make the Virgin Mary and Joseph look like statues and not real people standing around the crèche. I hope that will be clear to children.”

~ Raúl Colón



In the book *Angela and the Baby Jesus*, note the tones of the statues, and that of Angela and her family. Do the statues have more of a gold undertone? The statues also have a still look to them. This has been achieved by giving them stiff arms and legs, and having them always in the same position in the book. Their eyes always look straight ahead.

What do you think is happening in this picture?

What if it were you? Describe what you might feel slipping and sliding down the hill. Would it be exciting? Scary? Thrilling? Would you make sounds or leave tracks behind you?





## JAR or BOX?

Those who study the Greek Myths are often undecided about whether Pandora opened a jar or a box. The original story has the story of Prometheus painted on the jar as a warning... Illustrate your own story on the jar. What would your story be?





# Take Me Out to The Ball Game...

**Did you know** the first modern World Series in Major League Baseball was played in 1903. Pitted against each other were the Boston Americans from the American League and the Pittsburgh Pirates of the National League.

Which MLB team has won the most World Series Championships and how many?

Here's a clue: The same team has lost it thirteen times!

Trivia

Have fun searching for these baseball terms!

E L B U O D S O U T P E V H C  
I T T P T T I N X I N L E O X  
B I E R E W X A T Y R G E M L  
H W I A I M D C M E B N C E I  
T G L X Y P H S K O Z I W R M  
S T R I K E L N E Y N S R U O  
R L R P R Q I E W S L D L N U  
W U F E R S E U K K A I H E N  
I O V G N F S P K S V B S B D  
U F L P R N T S M W S I I M P  
S R K C O B U S I X I E E Y S  
Z K M L R S P R K J D E K D P  
K A W B R Q Y H N P U Q E Y B  
I L L A B W X L P Y D Q T P W  
L O S L K V S D I K G B I G K

BALL, BASE, DIAMOND, DOUBLE, FOUL, HIT, HOMERUN, MOUND, PITCHER,  
OUT, RUNNER, SINGLE, SINKER, STEAL, STRIKE, TRIPLE

# Parlez-vous français?

Ballet has its origins in the Italian Renaissance courts of the 15th and 16th centuries. It then quickly spread to the French court of Catherine de' Medici where it flourished and in the late 17th century Louis XIV founded the *Académie Royale de Musique* within which emerged the first professional theatrical ballet company, the *Paris Opera Ballet*. As such many terms in ballet have been adapted from French words.

**Fun fact:** Some words in ballet and cooking mean the same! In case you are not a ballerina... like most of us, this may come handy! Below is the list of some of the words along with their meaning.

**Sauté:** to fry in a small amount of fat; Ballet term: to jump off the ground on either one or two legs.

**Entrée:** first course; Ballet term: entrance

**Frappé:** a drink or in French means to beat; Ballet term: a fast action with the leg.

**Fouetté:** a quick whipping movement; Ballet Term: to stand on one leg and to change the hip and body direction while keeping the leg in the same place.

**Passé:** to pass; Ballet term: this means to pass where the working legs' foot is pointed to the side of the supporting legs' knee.

**Poisson:** fish; Ballet term: to jump from two feet with legs tight together with the body bent backwards

Can you identify this pose? Bonne chance!



# O Beautiful ...

As you go around the gallery, find the art from the book, *How to Bake an American Pie*. The words will remind you of a patriotic song, *America the Beautiful*. Katharine Lee Bates originally wrote a poem entitled *Pikes Peak*, that was later published in the Fourth of July edition of the church



periodical *The Congregationalist* in 1895 and titled as *America*. Bates, an English professor at Wellesley College, had taken a train trip to Colorado Springs, Colorado, to teach a short summer school session at Colorado College. Several of the sights on her trip were her inspiration for this poem.

Can you unscramble the words from this famous song?

SUIPOSCA

						○	
--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--

RABME

		○		
--	--	---	--	--

LEPRUP

	○		○	○	○
--	---	--	---	---	---

DUTFIER

○				○		
---	--	--	--	---	--	--

RAACIEM

						○
--	--	--	--	--	--	---

GHSINNI

				○		
--	--	--	--	---	--	--

Unscramble each of the clue words. Take the letters that appear in 

○
---

 boxes and unscramble them for the final message.

America the

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Have you been inspired to write a poem? *Don't Forget, God Bless Our Troops* by Jill Biden and illustrated by Colón is a story of five year old Natalie who eagerly awaits the return of her father who is deployed in Iraq. Do you know of someone who is in the Armed Forces? Next time you see them, don't forget to say a big "THANK YOU!"

Use the space below to write a short poem about your city or your country.



The National Center For Children's Illustrated Literature  
Literacy through Art

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The National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature exhibits, tours, collects, and preserves original art from the finest children's literature.

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