



Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

## Meet the Originals

*Texas Originals* is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Luis Alfonso Jiménez Jr. Then, answer questions about it.

### Luis Alfonso Jiménez Jr. 1940–2006

Luis Jiménez's monumental sculptures changed the course of American art in the second half of the twentieth century. His brightly hued figures of mustangs, Aztec warriors, and working-class immigrants challenged not only artistic fashion but also popular notions of the Southwest and its history.

Jiménez was born in El Paso in 1940. Childhood visits to Mexico introduced him to the grand, dramatic murals of Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. These experiences—along with learning to weld and spray paint in his father's sign shop—shaped him as an artist.

When Jiménez emerged in the late 1960s, Pop, Minimalism and Color Field Abstraction were the prevailing styles. By contrast, Jiménez's works were narrative, socially engaged, and, as one scholar put it, "meaningful at first glance."

One of his most celebrated sculptures is "Vaquero," his take on the traditional equestrian statue. Instead of bronze or stone, Jiménez fashioned his mounted rider out of brushed fiberglass painted in glossy shades of gold, maroon, and neon blue. And his cowboy is Latino, connecting this traditional symbol of the Southwest to its historic origins.

The artist died in a tragic studio accident in 2006. His works are now displayed prominently in museums and public spaces throughout the country. His "Vaquero" greets visitors to the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC, as well as visitors to Houston's Moody Park.

**Check for Understanding:** Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Luis Alfonso Jiménez Jr. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What two childhood experiences shaped Luis Alfonso Jiménez Jr. as an artist?
2. What non-traditional material did Jiménez use on his sculpture Vaquero?

**Going Further:** Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Making Inferences.** Jiménez's sculptures were created on a "monumental" scale. Why do you think he chose to make such large pieces of art?