

# Finding Humor across cultures

**Questions to hold as we journey through this gallery of artworks:**

What commonalities do you notice, across these representations of humor?

Which ones bring forth an emotional response? And what kind of response?

Which images can you relate to? What is it, exactly, that makes you feel that way?

What examples of humor from across cultures can you add to this collection?



In Japan **Kyogen** (mad speech) is a comedy form that dates back to the 14th century. Kyogen is slapstick and satire. It is performed in an archaic version of Japanese but is understandable because it's built around facial expressions and exaggerated movements.



**Commedia dell'arte**, also known as "Italian comedy," was a humorous theatrical presentation performed by professional actors who traveled in troupes throughout Italy in the 16th century. Masks meant limited facial expressions and minimal spoken lines. The roles represented character types and actors engaged in a mix of highly physical and gestural interactions that were partially scripted and partially improvisational.

## Koshare, Hopi sacred clown



Among the Hopi there are five figures who serve as clowns: the Payakyamu; the Koshare (or Koyaala or Hano clown); the Tsuku; the Tatsiqto (or Koyemsi or Mudhead); and the Kwikwilyak.[1] With the exception of the Koshare, each is a katsinam (personification of a spirit). It is believed that when a member of a kiva dons the mask of a katsinam, he abandons his personality and becomes possessed by that spirit.

In order for a clown to perform meaningful social commentary via humor, the clown's identity must usually be concealed.



Tsuku were somewhat feared as a source of public criticism and censure of non-Hopi like behavior. They help defuse community tensions by providing their own humorous interpretation of the tribe's popular culture, reinforcing taboos, and communicating traditions.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pueblo\\_clown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pueblo_clown)