Mexican mural painter Diego Rivera (1886-1957) came to the Detroit Institute of Arts in the 1930s to paint a tribute to industry and workers, inspired by car production at the Ford Motor Company River Rouge Factory.

Depicted here is just one portion of four walls that make up the murals. Use the captions on the back side of this page to explore a few details and learn something new!
1. **Blast Furnace**

The bright orange glow represents a blast furnace. In the front, workers assemble parts made of the metal melted in that furnace. Rivera organized the scene this way to suggest movement and connection between different stages in the manufacturing process.

2. **Spindle Machines**

The two large spindle machines that frame the blast furnace have been compared to the ancient 15-foot sculptures of warriors and guardians from the ancient Toltec civilization, which still stand on the top of a massive pyramid in central Mexico, as shown here.

3. **Multicultural Workforce**

Rivera envisioned a utopian society when he depicted a diversity of peoples together on the assembly line during a time of economic depression and segregation. He modeled the workers after the people he befriended in Michigan.

4. **Rivera's Self Portrait**

The figure in the bowler hat in the upper left corner is Rivera himself, looking into the murals as an observer: both of technological advancement and of capitalism—a system that can exploit workers like those he depicted.

5. **Predella Panels: A Day in the Life of a Worker**

The scenes along the bottom, painted in gray depict “a day in the life of the worker,” from punching in at the start of the day to receiving payment at the pay truck. Rivera painted these scenes in gray, suggesting the appearance of ancient Greek and Roman carving in marble, like the one shown here.