HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This curricular unit is a tool for educators designed to be used in diverse education settings and across different subject areas. It comprises a series of arts-integrated lessons that complements and responds to the exhibition *The House on Mango Street: Artists Interpret Community*, drawing from both the visual works of art presented in exhibition and Sandra Cisneros’ celebrated coming-of-age novel *The House on Mango Street* (1984).

These art-centric lessons function much in the same way as Sandra Cisneros’ novel; you can consider them a collection of interrelated vignettes that can be explored sequentially but which have the capacity to stand independently. The lessons have been flexibly designed to accommodate the addition of content (subject area, vocabulary, additional readings, etc.) and scaffolding to appropriate student levels since they do not provide a traditional cover-to-cover exploration of the novel.

Special emphasis has been given to close-looking discussion strategies intended to foster visual literacy and critical thinking skills that transfer to other subject areas. Throughout the unit, students are encouraged to investigate the communicative power of written and visual texts in order to comprehend the value of integrating content from diverse media when researching and writing.

Implementation of this unit is ideally accompanied by a visit to the exhibition *The House on Mango Street: Artists Interpret Community*.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*The House on Mango Street: Artists Interpret Community*

The National Museum of Mexican Art presents a new exhibition inspired by the novel *The House on Mango Street* by the accomplished Mexican-American author Sandra Cisneros. The contemporary works of art on display are based on some of the central topics brought to light in this consciousness-raising novel.

Narrated in a series of vignettes, the book tells the story of a young girl growing up in a diverse neighborhood of Chicago. *The House on Mango Street*, published in 1984, continues to resonate with readers from all walks of life and is read in classrooms everywhere – from inner-city grade schools to universities across the country. The exhibition, like the novel, highlights many of the issues facing adolescents growing up in urban areas. The visual artists in the exhibition explore experiences prevalent in working class neighborhoods across the U.S. The intended result is for individuals from diverse neighborhoods, cities, ethnic backgrounds and walks of life to identify commonalities in their coming of age experiences. The works of art feature some of the major themes of the book, including hope, personal dreams, hardship, disillusionment, family, community, home, identity, relationships, independence, coming of age, and storytelling. The NMMA is honored to have the participation of such a notable presence as Sandra Cisneros in this exhibition.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How do various art forms inspire one another?
2. What are the similarities and differences between visual and literary texts?
3. How can we become critical readers of visual and literary texts?
4. How can we use visual art to communicate important ideas?

NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED

Common Core State Standards
Anchor Standards for Reading
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9
Anchor Standards for Writing
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2, 3, 7, 9
Anchor Standards for Speaking & Listening
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1, 2, 4, 5

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages: Five “C” goal areas

• Communication: Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes
• Cultures: Interact with cultural competence and understanding
• Connections: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations

• Comparisons: Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence
• Communities: Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world

Core Arts Standards
Anchor Standards #1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11
LESSON 1

ESTÁS en tu casa

(MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME)

José Esquivel (b. 1935), Casa Comida y Cama, 2015, acrylic on canvas
OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Look closely at various works of visual art (visual texts) to determine what the texts communicate and to make logical inferences and predictions from them, citing concrete visual evidence when writing and speaking to support their conclusions.

- Synthesize information from diverse media formats (visual art as well as selections from Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*) to inform predictions and make revisions to their work.

- Participate in discussion of visual and literary texts, building on classmates’ ideas and citing their conclusions with textual evidence.

- Empathize with the problems of others and use teamwork and creative thinking to offer solutions to real-life problems.

- Explore how the author develops the point of view of the narrator in *The House on Mango Street*.

- Solve open-ended problems with time and material constraints working in small groups.
NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED

CCSS Anchor Standards

Reading
Key Ideas and Details:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1**
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7**
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9**
Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Writing
Text Types and Purposes:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2**
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Speaking & Listening
Comprehension and Collaboration:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1**
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2**
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4**
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

National Core Arts Standards Addressed:

Anchor Standard #1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

Anchor Standard #6 Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

Anchor Standard #7 Perceive and analyze artistic work

Anchor Standard #8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work

Anchor Standard #11 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.
## MATERIALS

- Projector or print reproductions of artwork
- Paper
- Drawing tools

### WARM UP
- Projector or print reproductions of artwork
- Twitter Bio Worksheet (click to download) (1 for every 3 – 4 students)

### FOCUS ACTIVITY
- Projector or print reproductions of artwork

### HANDS-ON ACTIVITY
- Paper lunch bags (1 for every 3 – 4 students) each containing:
  - 1 fastener (i.e., pipe cleaners, rubber bands, paper clips, string)
  - 1 surface (i.e., coffee filters, cardboard squares, balloons, paper)
  - 1 structure (i.e., straws, popsicle sticks, wood skewers, aluminum foil)
  - 1 challenge card (written slip of paper or index card)
TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About *The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros
(From the Inside Flap of Paperback Edition, 1991)

Told in a series of vignettes stunning for their eloquence, *The House on Mango Street* is Sandra Cisneros’s greatly admired novel of a young girl growing up in the Latino section of Chicago. Acclaimed by critics, beloved by children, their parents and grandparents, taught everywhere from inner-city grade schools to universities across the country, and translated all over the world, it has entered the canon of coming-of-age classics.

Sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous, *The House on Mango Street* tells the story of Esperanza Cordero, whose neighborhood is one of harsh realities and harsh beauty. Esperanza doesn’t want to belong — not to her rundown neighborhood, and not to the low expectations the world has for her. Esperanza’s story is that of a young girl coming into her power, and inventing for herself what she will become.

About the Author
(From the Inside Flap of Paperback Edition, 1991)

Sandra Cisneros was born in Chicago in 1954. Internationally acclaimed for her poetry and fiction, she has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Lannan Literary Award and the American Book Award, and of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the MacArthur Foundation. Cisneros is the author of two novels *The House on Mango Street* and *Caramelo*; a collection of short stories, *Woman Hollering Creek*; two books of poetry, *My Wicked Ways* and *Loose Woman*; and a children’s book, *Hairs/Pelitos*. She is the founder of the Macondo Foundation, an association of writers united to serve underserved communities, and is Writer in Residence at Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio. She lives in San Antonio, Texas. Find her online at [www.sandracisneros.com](http://www.sandracisneros.com).
TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

About the Artwork

Alfred J. Quiroz (b. 1944). Las Dilemas Del Barrio Millville, Tucson, Az 1954 / The Dilemmas of the Millville Neighborhood. Alfred was 10 years old when these incidents occurred.

Panel 1: “LA VENGANZA CONTRA LAS CHISMOSAS” / VENGEANCE AGAINST THE GOSSIPERS.
All the mothers in the neighborhood are struggling here to retrieve their fanciest dresses and lingerie that someone has strewn on the telephone wires. The policeman interviews Alfred (who has no idea who did it) because his mother is quick to blame him. Georgie, another barrio troublemaker and in this case the guilty one on the extreme right is standing with his mother. Alfred’s mother then tells police that she suspects Georgie, who is later taken by detectives to the Dairy Queen. They extract a confession after treating him to a banana split. He had acted out for always being blamed for mischief by all the mothers in the neighborhood.

Panel 2: “EL REMOLINO QUE LEVANTO EL TOMMY” / THE DUST DEVIL THAT LIFTED TOMMY!
Alfred and his buddies would jump into dust devils and would feel protected by chanting “Go Away Devil, Come God” in Spanish really fast and crossing their thumbs over their index fingers to make crosses (shown in vignette of hands). Typically the dusty whirlwind would dissipate. One day a particularly ominous big one was making its way down the dirt street, only Tommy jumped in, the two others were hesitant. In an instant Tommy was whipped off his feet and slammed into the telephone pole outside his house, no major harm done, but he literally had the wind knocked out of him!

Panel 3: “LA VERGÜENZA DE LOS FRIJOLES QUEMADOS” / THE SHAME OF THE BURNT BEANS.
Smoke comes pouring out of one of the homes, the fire department is called, a fireman knocks down the door and emerges with the smoking evidence. The epitome of neglecting ones hearth in that community!

(Information courtesy of artist)
TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

About the Artist: José Esquivel (b. 1935)
The career of Jose Esquivel has spanned over 50 years in the graphic and fine arts in San Antonio, Texas. In the 1960’s and 1970’s the Chicano Socio-Political Movement was a major influence on his early work and provided a direction that continues to this day.

Esquivel was a founding member of “El Grupo” in 1968, one of the earliest Chicano collectives in the country that evolved into “Con Safo” in 1971 in San Antonio, Texas. His work was included in the historical “Dale Gas” Chicano Art Exhibition held at the Houston Contemporary Arts Museum in 1977.

Artist Statement:
“It’s my main objective as an artist and communicator to express my point of view and articulate visually our cultural realities and social concerns. My paintings are barrio scenes that are reminders or memories of familiar places. The symbolism depicts some of our cultural beliefs and also the condition and struggles of a people steeped in the culture of poverty.”

Source: www.joseesquivel.com

About the Artist: Ana Serrano (b. 1983)
Born and raised in Los Angeles, Ana Serrano derives much of her artistic inspiration from working class neighborhoods in the urban environment. Of particular interest to her is the way in which the residents of the L.A. barrio refashion and decorate their buildings with a distinct Latino aesthetic.

Artist Statement:
“My work presents political and social issues in a lighthearted way, often incorporating humor, bright colors and bold fonts, and a sense of playfulness.”

– Ana Serrano

Online Resources: Artis’s website www.annaserrano.com
In the hands-on activity in this lesson (Helping Homes Design Challenge), students are given challenges and are asked to prototype a solution as a group. This activity was created to introduce participants to Design Thinking and to teach them to think with their hands. Read the information below to learn more about this mode of problem-solving and solution creation.

**Design Thinking**

Wikipedia defines design thinking as a formal method for creative problem solving and the generation of solutions with the intent of an improved future result. The Hasso-Platner Institute of Design describes design thinking as providing “a glue that brings teammates together around a common goal: make the lives of the people they’re designing for better” and “a methodology for innovation that combines creative and analytical approaches and requires collaboration across disciplines.”

Design thinking began as a methodology for designers (graphic designers, industrial designers, architects, urban planners, etc.), but is now used in business, classrooms, and other professional and educational settings.

In contrast to the scientific method, which begins with a thoroughly defined problem and then moves on to look for a solution, design thinking starts with a goal – a better future situation.

Design thinking is iterative, that is, it is a process that is meant to be repeated over and over.

**Iterative process:** a process for arriving at a decision or a desired result by repeating rounds of analysis or a cycle of operations. The objective is to bring the desired decision or result closer to discovery with each repetition (iteration). The iterative process can be used where the decision is not easily revocable or where the consequences of revocation could be costly.

Source: [http://businessdictionary.com/](http://businessdictionary.com/)

Read through *An Introduction to Design Thinking: Process Guide*, published by the Hasso-Platner Institute of Design at Stanford to learn more about each mode of the design process as displayed in the graphic below.

“Virtual Crash Course in Design Thinking.” Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford
TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

Online Resources
For more information on design and Design Thinking and their application in the classroom, check out the Cooper-Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum’s What is Design? Video Playlist [http://cooperhewitt.org/education/school-programs/designk12/dk12videos/].

To view the lesson on which the Helping Homes Design Challenge is based, check out the Cooper-Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum’s Ready, Set, Design! Lesson Plan [www.cooperhewitt.org/2011/09/09/ready-set-design/].
WARM-UP

Group students into pairs, back to back, with one partner facing the projection screen and the other facing away from it. Give drawing materials and a piece of paper to the student facing away from the screen. Project image of *Casa Comida y Cama* (2015), acrylic on canvas, by José Esquivel (b.1935) (image files located in Lesson 1 Appendix; click to download). Have the student looking at the screen describe the work of art while his/her partner draws it. Have students switch roles and repeat with image of *Los Dilemas del*.

*José Esquivel (b. 1935), Casa Comida y Cama, 2015, acrylic on canvas*


*Barrio Millville Tucson, AZ. 1954 (2015), acrylic on birch panels, by Alfred Quiroz (b. 1944). As students draw, circulate and listen to their descriptions of the artwork to their partners, paying attention to vocabulary and their comfort level describing art. Discuss with students the challenge of each role (Describer and Drawer). As they completed the activity, did they revise the way they spoke about the image or listened to the description of it? What kinds of words were most helpful/effective for communicating?*
Project *Casa Comida y Cama* again and lead students in a discussion of the following questions:

- What is the setting for this artwork – the time and place? What do you see that makes you say that?
- What do you think the artist wanted to communicate?
- What feeling or mood do you get from this artwork? What about it makes you say that?
- What questions do you have about what you see?

Repeat questions with *Las Dilemas del Barrio Millville Tucson, AZ. 1954.*

Explain to students that two different artists created these works of art in response to the same novel. They will be studying this novel in class, as well as numerous works of art related to it. They will be seeing all these works of art in person on a field trip to the exhibition *The House on Mango Street: Artists Interpret Community.*

Have students write three predictions about the novel (such as themes, characters, setting, etc.). Ask students to ground their predictions in concrete visual evidence from the two images they just explored.

Show students your copy of the book *The House on Mango Street,* by Sandra Cisneros. Share information about the author and text from the Teacher Background Information. As a class, read the first vignette, “*The House on Mango Street,*” aloud. Then have students complete the Think-Pair-Share discussion below.

**Think:** Ask students to take a few minutes to reflect on what they have read and whether they would change or add anything to their written predictions about the novel after having read the first chapter (1-3 minutes)

**Pair:** Ask students to turn to their partner and share their responses (2-5 minutes)

**Share:** Project the images *Casa, Comida y Cama* and *Las Dilemas del Barrio Millville Tucson, AZ. 1954* once more. Reconvene the group and ask the pairs to share what they discussed with the whole class. When students mention one of their predictions based on one of the images, ask them to come up and point to the part of the picture that caused them to make that prediction. Likewise, when they mention that a certain part of the text made them change or add to their prediction, have them reread that word/sentence/paragraph aloud. Extend the discussion as partners highlight different dimensions of their predictions and amendments.
In groups, have students read the following vignettes aloud:

- “Alicia and I Talking on Edna’s Steps”
- “A House of My Own”
- “Bums in the Attic”
- “Linoleum Roses”
- “Elenita, Cards, Palm, Water.”

Have groups discuss:

- What is important to the narrator in her ideal home?
- What can we infer about the narrator from these reading selections?

Have each group fill out a Twitter Bio Worksheet (click to download) about the narrator based on what they have read in the passages.

Reconvene the class to observe and discuss the similarities and differences between each group’s Twitter Bio Worksheet. How did each group interpret the reading? Did they make different or similar inferences based on what they had read?
Project the images below one at a time (image files found in Lesson 1 Appendix; click on the images below to download): Allow students at least a full minute to observe each image.

Lead the class in a discussion of the following questions* for each artwork:

- What is important or of value to the people that live in this home?
- Who do you imagine would live in this home?
- What are their needs and wants?

*Follow up each question with: “What do you see that makes you say that?”

Nicholas Herrera & Susan Guevara, The Story of My Mother / La Historia de mi Madre (2012), oil paint and mixed media

Ana Serrano, Orange House / La casa anaranjada (2009), cardboard house

Ana Serrano, Leaves in HP / Hojas en HP (2012), cardboard house

Ana Serrano, Mustard House / La casa mostaza (2012), cardboard house
HANDS-ON ACTIVITY: HELPING HOMES DESIGN CHALLENGE

This design challenge is a quick group activity that uses simple, inexpensive materials as an effective tool for problem solving, creative thinking and team building. This activity can be used by any audience as a way to engage in design thinking. Participants are asked to solve an open-ended problem with time and material constraints. Working in small groups, solutions are developed quickly and yield surprising solutions that may not have been immediately obvious.

**Teacher Prep:** Stuff one paper lunch bag per group with one fastener, one surface, and one structure. No glue, tape or scissors are allowed. Excluding these items forces participants to use materials more creatively!

Write each of the following challenges on a small piece of paper or an index card and stuff one into each bag. There is no need to match the materials with the challenges – remember that you want your teams to use the materials in surprising and creative ways!

- I need to create a safe light source for a home with no electricity.
- Imagine a system for a person in a wheelchair to live in a second floor walk-up apartment.
- Design a system for an elderly couple with arthritis to clean their home.
- How might children who live on a busy street have a safe place to play outside their home?
- Imagine a new communication system for a multi-unit apartment building.
- Imagine a system for neighbors to share food.
- I need a way for a person who cannot leave their bed to take care of themselves.
- I need to keep a family warm in a home with no electricity.
- I need a way to purify water in the home.

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This activity is based on the Cooper-Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum's "Ready, Set, Design" activity. Visit cooperhewitt.org/education to learn more about the design process!
HANDS-ON ACTIVITY: HELPING HOMES DESIGN CHALLENGE

Procedure
Divide students into teams of 3 or 4. Distribute one of the pre-stuffed paper lunch bags to each team.

Introduce activity to teams in the following manner:
In the bag you received, you will find everyday materials and a challenge card. The first thing you’re going to do is read your challenge card. Your team’s job is to find a solution to that challenge using only the materials in your bag. You’ll have 15 minutes to create a prototype of your idea. A prototype is a small model of your final design.

Remind the teams that the prototype isn’t meant to be a perfectly rendered model, but a rough physical sample that demonstrates how the idea will function. It’s like making a sketch, but with objects instead of drawing.

Give the teams 15 – 20 minutes to prototype a solution using only the materials in their bag. Remind the teams that they can’t design a solution that already exists!

When time is up, have the teams present their solutions to each other. Ask a representative of each team to read their challenge card aloud and articulate how their solution addresses that challenge.

Assessment
Have students write a descriptive, explanatory paper that provides someone who has never seen their prototype with a description of their solution. Remind them to use lots of explanation and description to help the reader visualize their solution.
LESSON 2

en los ojos
DE LOS DEMÁS
(IN THE EYES OF OTHERS)

Deborah Roberts, Hoodratgurl, 2013, mixed media on paper
OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Look closely at Deborah Roberts’ artwork (visual text) to determine what the text is communicating and to make logical inferences and predictions from it, citing concrete visual evidence when writing and speaking to support their conclusions.

- Integrate content presented in diverse media and formats and analyze how two or more texts (Deborah Roberts’ artwork and Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*) address the topics of assumption and stereotype.

- Learn and discuss the definitions of assumption and stereotype.

- Compare and contrast the approaches of authors and visual artists and explore the similarities and differences between literary and visual texts.

- Use visual language to explore the concept of identity, incorporating self-perception and the perceptions of others into their Identity Boxes.

- Reflect on the role of intention and perception in works of art through discussion and writing.
NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED

CCSS Anchor Standards

Reading
Key Ideas and Details:
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1**
  Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Craft and Structure:
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5**
  Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7**
  Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9**
  Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Writing
Research to Build and Present Knowledge:
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7**
  Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9**
  Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Speaking & Listening
Comprehension and Collaboration:
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1**
  Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages Goal Area
Connections
Cultures
Communication

National Core Arts Standards Addressed:
- Anchor Standard #1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard #2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work
- Anchor Standard #6 Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Anchor Standard #7 Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Anchor Standard #8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
- Anchor Standard #10 Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- Anchor Standard #11 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.
MATERIALS

• Projector or artwork reproductions
• Post-It Notes

WARM UP
• Cross-Text Evidence Collection Tool (located in Lesson 2 Appendix; click to download)

FOCUS ACTIVITY
• White cardboard boxes
• Decorative papers
• Glue
• Scissors
• Paint markers
• Materials brought from home (wood skewers, aluminum foil)

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY
TEACHER PREP

Create an example Identity Box that displays how you think others see you on the outside and shows how you see yourself on the inside. You will show your box to your students to help them understand how the hands-on activity functions (you can also show students our example in the photo below).

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the Artist: Deborah Roberts

Video
Deborah Roberts: One and Many. Produced by Art Palace Gallery, Houston, TX
http://vimeo.com/110407538

Article
Huete, Betsy. “Deborah Roberts: One and Many.” Glasstire. Glasstire, 29 Nov. 2014. (located in Lesson 2 Appendix; click to download)

Press Release
Art Palace Gallery. Deborah Roberts: One And Many. 2014. (located in Lesson 2 Appendix; click to download)
Project the image of Deborah Robert’s *Hoodratgurl* (2013), mixed media on paper, in front of class (image file found in Lesson 2 Appendix; click to download). Give students 1 – 3 minutes to observe the work of art.

Then, invite students to create speech balloons or thought bubbles to share what they imagine the main figure in the image (the young girl with glasses) might be thinking or saying.

Provide them with Post-it notes and allow them to put the speech balloons/thought bubbles directly on the screen or reproduction. They will need to observe the artwork closely in order to make inferences about what the main figure could be thinking or saying. Choose select Post-it notes and ask students to explain what they wrote.

Discuss the following as a class:

- Ask students what they think is the relationship between the words in the image and the figure. Why did the artist put each in this work? How do they contribute to meaning?
- What is the artist communicating to the viewer?
In groups or pairs, have students read the vignette “Those Who Don’t” from *The House on Mango Street*.

Share and discuss the definitions of “assumptions” and “stereotypes” with students:

**assumptions:** the act of assuming, supposing or believing something is true or taking it for granted even though there is little or no evidence to support it

**stereotypes:** a generalized and oversimplified (positive or negative) belief about a person or group of people based on previous assumptions or limited information

Use the [Cross-Text Evidence Collection Tool](#) (located in Lesson 2 Appendix; click to download) to discuss how *Hoodratgurl* and “Those Who Don’t” address the ideas of stereotypes and assumptions. Then, choose another central idea common to both and write it in the bottom row. Look for evidence from the artwork and text.

**Optional:** Extend analysis to include the vignettes “Alicia Who Sees Mice” and “Marin” from *The House on Mango Street*.
Step back and look at Cross-Text Evidence Collection Tool as a whole. As a class, discuss similarities between visual and verbal texts. What approaches do authors and artists use to communicate? How do they vary and how are they similar? What can a verbal text communicate that a visual text cannot? Vice versa? When can/should one be used over the other? Use this chart for reference if students get stuck for ideas. Keep in mind that this chart is by no means comprehensive or definitive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author’s word choice, phrases, and language patterns</td>
<td>Artist’s line, color, shape, texture, form, placement of objects, people, or shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s structure: how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene or stanza) relate to each other and the whole</td>
<td>Artist’s composition (how elements of art work together to create a composition: balance, texture, pattern, rhythm, contrast, focal point, vantage point, location of objects/people, size or scale, materials)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s point of view</td>
<td>Artist’s interests and motivations (role of artist in shaping content and style of artwork, time period, other works by this artist, the perspective taken in the piece, who it was made for, whether or not it was commissioned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s purpose</td>
<td>Artist’s purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s arguments or claims (nonfiction, usually)</td>
<td>Artist’s arguments, claims, commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s main idea</td>
<td>Artist’s subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s setting (time, place)</td>
<td>Artist’s setting (period, time, place)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s literary form (novel, poem, drama, short story, etc.)</td>
<td>Artist’s medium (oil on canvas, screen print, mural, sculpture, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s characters</td>
<td>Author’s figures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HANDS-ON ACTIVITY: IDENTITY BOXES

Explain to students that they will be creating an art project called Identity Boxes. These are small boxes that they will decorate using paint markers, decorative papers, and other items, including objects/elements they bring from home. Ask students to make the outside of the box look like what they think people see about them. For the inside of the box, they should decorate the box to show how they see themselves. Encourage students to think about colors, shapes and textures they can use to communicate their ideas. Show your example box or the one below and walk students through how you used visuals to tell about yourself.

Examples
Outside: How I Think Others See Me

Inside: How I See Myself
HANDS-ON ACTIVITY: IDENTITY BOXES

To begin, show students the blank boxes and the materials they will have access to. Have students use the Identity Box Planning Worksheet (located in Lesson 2 Appendix; click to download) to begin brainstorming their box design.

When students have completed their Identity Boxes, break them into groups of 4 – 5 students. Have them observe one student’s box at a time and interpret what characteristics or qualities their classmate intended to represent on the outside and inside of the box. Afterwards, have the maker of the box share their original intentions for the visual elements they used to convey their ideas.

When everyone’s artwork has been discussed, come back together as a class and discuss how often groups interpreted each other’s boxes as the maker had intended for it to be viewed. Discuss how this could relate to the ideas of stereotypes and assumptions, Deborah Robert’s Hoodratgurl and the vignette “Those Who Don’t” from The House on Mango Street.

Assessment

Have each student write a short paper discussing:

- How what their classmates saw compared and/or contrasted with their intention. Did their classmates “read” anything other than what they, the maker, had intended? What does this tell you about the nature of creating and interpreting art? Is it okay for someone to interpret something differently than the artist intended?
- What can they do to become a more informed, critical viewer of art? What can they do to become a more informed, critical reader of written texts?
- Reflecting on your discussion of stereotypes and assumptions, what can they do to avoid making assumptions and stereotypes about others?
MOMENTOS DECISIVOS
(DEFINING MOMENTS)

Karen Miranda-Rivadeneira (b. 1983), Tonzo / Tonzo, 2009-2012, photo archival paper with handwritten text
OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Look closely to determine what Karen Miranda-Rivadeneira’s photographs are communicating to the viewer and to make logical inferences, citing evidence to support conclusions.

- Evaluate and compare the craft and structure of Karen Miranda-Rivadeneira’s photographic series and Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*.

- Investigate artistic process and complete a planning process to create their own original works of art (staged photographs).

- Collaborate with classmates to stage and document through photography defining moments from each student’s life.
NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED

CCSS Anchor Standards

Reading
Key Ideas and Details:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1**
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Craft and Structure:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5**
Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6**
Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9**
Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Speaking and Listening

**Comprehension and Collaboration:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1**
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2**
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

**Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5**
Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

**National Core Arts Standards Addressed:**

**Anchor Standard #1** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

**Anchor Standard #2** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

**Anchor Standard #3** Refine and complete artistic work.

**Anchor Standard #4** Select, Analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation.

**Anchor Standard #6** Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

**Anchor Standard #7** Perceive and analyze artistic work

**Anchor Standard #8** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

**Anchor Standard #10** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
MATERIALS

- Projector
- Computer access and/or downloaded articles from Lesson 3 Appendix
- Digital cameras or camera phones
- Access to computers with PowerPoint
- Props and costumes brought from home
- **Momentos Decisivos Planning Worksheet** (located in Lesson 3 Appendix; click to download)
WARM-UP

Project the photographs on the following page by Karen Miranda-Rivadeneira (b.1983) one by one (image files located in Lesson 3 Appendix; click on the images in the following page to download), allowing students at least 1-3 minutes to observe each photograph. As a class, discuss the following questions:

• What is going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that?

• What is the setting for this picture – the time and place? What do you see that makes you think that?

• What vantage point is the photograph taken from? Are we looking from above, below, front on, or in some other way at the subject? How does this affect your ideas about the artwork?

• If this were a film still, what do you imagine would have happened moments prior?

• What do you imagine the characters would do or say right after this moment?

• What is the mood of this photograph? What makes you say that?

If students are unable to read the captions under each photograph, read them aloud. After reading the caption, would they change their answers to any of the above questions?
WARM-UP

(click on the images to download)
After students have shared their observations and inferences, share the following information:

The artworks we just looked at are photographs by the artist Karen Miranda-Rivadeneira. They are all part of a series (a series is a collection of pieces of art created by an artist usually made around a central theme). This series is called “Other Stories” and contains over 18 photographs. The artist created the photographs in order to recreate, or restage, memories from her childhood in Ecuador.

Read the following quotation to students about the artist from a New York Times article:

“When she [Karen Miranda] looked back on the most important moments of her life, she realized that there weren’t photos of them, the way there were of graduation days or Christmas Eves. ‘I thought, wow, all the significant moments of my life were never ever captured,’…She was interested in how memories change over time, and wanted to fix those memories – even if they were staged. When a recollection came to her, ripe for the record, she would immediately sketch it, including all the elements, even the peripheral details that receded into the background.”


Ask students to share their ideas about Miranda-Rivadeneira’s process for creating these photographs. How do they think she would go about taking photographs that recreate memories from childhood? What materials would she have had to use? How would she have planned for and carried out her photo shoots?
FOCUS ACTIVITY

Ask students what unanswered questions they have about the photographs. About the artist who created them? Write down students’ questions.

Ask students how they would propose going about finding out the answers to these questions. Discuss with students that one of the best ways to learn about art and artists is through research.

Break students into small groups and assign one or two of the student-generated questions to each group. Have students research Karen Miranda-Rivadeneira’s work using the following online resources located in Lesson 3 Appendix, click to download:

- “Karen Miranda-Rivadeneira,” Blue Sky, Oregon Center for the Photographic Arts.

If you have time and computer access, have students search for more information on her work and practice on the internet. Have groups share their findings with the class.

Assign one Karen Miranda-Rivadeneira photograph to each group. Allow the group to choose one vignette from The House on Mango Street. Have the groups discuss the techniques each one uses to tell a story. How is it different to read a story in a book versus looking at a story in one of these photographs?
Ask students to take some time to think about and choose a significant or defining moment in their lives that they would like to stage and photograph.

Divide students into groups of 4-5. Have each student use the *Momentos Decisivos Planning Worksheet* (located in Lesson 3 Appendix; click to download) to plan how they will recreate their defining moment in a staged photograph. Remind them that their group members will be helping them reenact and stage their scene, so they must keep them in mind as they cast roles and consider costumes.

Review the following camera angle concepts – the position from which the camera sees the scene – with students. What effect does each camera angle have on potential viewers?

- **High Angle (shooting from above):** may allow the viewer to feel superior to or distanced from the subject of the photograph.
- **Low Angle (Shooting from below):** can make the viewer feel that the subject of the photograph is in control. Causes viewer to have to look up to the subject.
- **Eye level:** puts the subject on eye level with the viewer. Can create empathy/emotional connections
- **Bird’s Eye:** shooting the scene from directly above. Shows the positions and motions of people and objects.
- **Slanted:** tilting the camera purposely to one side so the horizon is slanted. Creates a dramatic angle.

Give students a number of days to meet, plan their stagings, gather supplies, photograph their defining moments, and assemble a PowerPoint with all their images. Encourage students to get creative and think outside the box when recreating their defining moments.
HANDS-ON ACTIVITY: MOMENTOS DECISIVOS STAGED PHOTOGRAPHS

Our Example

Assessment

Students will present a PowerPoint of their photographs to the class. Have students allow the class to first attempt to ‘read’ the photograph to discern what is going on, citing information from the photograph to support their inferences. Then, have the presenter read their caption from the Momentos Decisivos Planning Worksheet, explain their process for staging their significant moment, and explain why this moment was significant in their life.

First Time Playing Ouija, 1989
LESSON 4
usted está
AQUÍ
(YOU ARE HERE)

Amanda Williams (b. 1974). Color(ed) Theory: Homage to an Englewood Block No.1v.1 / Teoría de color(eado):
Homenaje a una cuadra en Englewood Núm. 1v.1, 2014, inkjet print, courtesy of the artist
OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Explore the concept of community asset mapping
- Participate in collaborative community asset mapping discussions and activities centered around goals for their community, existing resources that support those goals, and sites for improvement.
- Map community resources to share findings with others in their neighborhood.
- Use visuals to propose an intervention in an underused or undervalued space in their neighborhood.
- Look closely at the work of Chicago artist Amanda Williams and discuss what it communicates about neighborhoods.
NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED

CCSS Anchor Standards

Reading
Key Ideas and Details:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Speaking and Listening
Comprehension and Collaboration:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5
Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

National Core Arts Standards Addressed:

Anchor Standard #1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
Anchor Standard #2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
Anchor Standard #4 Select, Analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation.
Anchor Standard #7 Perceive and analyze artistic work
Anchor Standard #8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
Anchor Standard #10 Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
Anchor Standard #11 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding
MATERIALS

- Flip chart paper
- Green and brown construction paper
- Phone cameras or digital cameras
- Printer
- Transparent report covers
- Paint markers
TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the Artist: Amanda Williams (b. 1974)

Drawing on her experience in art and training in architecture, Amanda Williams continues to explore color systems that intuitively emerge from cultural and architectural signifiers in the city of Chicago. Her artwork emphasizes communication, identity, memory and place. In Color(ed) Theory: Homage to an Englewood Block. No. 1v.1, Williams investigates abandoned and isolated houses slated for demolition by the city. With the assistance of friends, they mow the grass, pull up weeds, trim the hedges and paint the entire house a vivid color. In doing this, Williams not only accentuates the architectural beauty of the house, but also poses questions regarding valued and protected (or undervalued and neglected) urban spaces. Her sociopolitical practice examines these abandoned properties in the context of housing, economics, and art theory.

Online Resources


Amanda Williams’ online portfolio <http://awgallery.com/home.html>

Article and Video from 3Arts, a nonprofit organization that advocates for Chicago’s women artists, artists of color, and artists with disabilities who work in the performing, teaching, and visual arts:

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

What is Mapping?
(Adapted from: Brown, Eric, ed. “Mapped! A Youth Community Mapping Toolkit for Vancouver.” Sustainable Cities [2009]. The City of Vancouver and The International Centre for Sustainable Cities.)

Mapping – sometimes called community mapping or community asset mapping – is a participatory planning tool that engages youth in exploring their assets within the physical and social environment. The purpose is to create a concrete output – a map, either in paper or web based format, which can be incorporated into formal and/or informal community planning processes.

Rather than focus on problems or deficiencies, an “assets based” philosophy suggests that the first step in a community development process is to identify the community’s capacities and assets, including those of its residents, and then use these assets to build an action plan.

What makes asset mapping unique is its diversity of application. Asset mapping has been done with youth from urban and rural communities, developed and developing countries, and a broad diversity of cultural backgrounds.
TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION (CONTINUED)

Assets vs. Needs based approach

There can be little doubt that youth and communities face a huge range of challenges. From poverty to environmental degradation to health crisis, the problems seem insurmountable and people are often overwhelmed. As such, when beginning a community development process, it can be hard to know where to start.

The traditional starting point is to focus on a community’s needs, deficiencies and problems. Commonly, a needs assessment is done in order to identify the problems, and from there create a plan. This is by far the most common community planning practice, and where most of the resources in community development go.

An alternative starting point is the one utilized by community mappers – the mapping or identification of the personal, local and institutional assets of a community. Though this is a less common approach, it is one that can bring about long-term, sustainable solutions for a community.

Assets exist in human relationships, community, institutions and economic activity. There may be room for improvement, but they are the basis for community development. When working with marginalized communities it is particularly valuable to use an asset based approach. By identifying the internal resources of a community, it is possible to use external and existing resources more efficiently.

An asset based approach is effective because it acknowledges and values existing resources and allows agents of change to build on this foundation.

Additional resources on community asset mapping may be found in Lesson 4 Appendix; click to download:


WARM-UP

Project image of Amanda Williams’ *Color(ed) Theory: Homage to an Englewood Block*. No. 1v.1, inkjet printer. (Click on image to download.)

Show the following video about the work of Amanda Williams to students:

- Video from 3Arts, a nonprofit organization that advocates for Chicago’s women artists, artists of color, and artists with disabilities who work in the performing, teaching, and visual arts:

  <https://3arts.org/artist/amanda-williams/>

  (Can also be accessed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6srb2EOQWjk)
Visit Amanda William’s online portfolio for her Color(ed) Theory series
Go to: Amanda Williams’ online portfolio awgallery.com, then click on “COLOR(ED) THEORY: interventions”

Enlarge each image in the series and click through them as you discuss the following questions as a class:

• Compare these works of art with the other works we have seen in this unit so far. How are they different? How are they similar?
• What do you think the artist is trying to communicate with these works? What do you see that makes you say that?
• What do these works of art have to say about neighborhoods? About cities?
• Do these works of art send a positive message? A critical message? Both? Explain your ideas.
• What do you imagine has been the effect for neighborhoods where the artist created these works of art?

• How would you react if you saw a work of art like this in your neighborhood? How would it make you feel? What would it make you think about?
• If Amanda Williams came to your neighborhood, what building or place do you think she would paint? Why?

Introduce students to the concepts of community planning.

**community planning** (sometimes called community development): A form of town or neighborhood planning and design carried out with the active participation of the people who live in the community.

In this lesson, students will be exploring community planning centered around their neighborhood. Explain to students that there are many ways people go about planning change for their community. The way they are going to explore today takes what is called an “assets-based” approach.

**asset:** a valuable person or thing. “The state’s natural assets include mountains and beautiful lakes.”
Instead of focusing on the problems or weaknesses of their neighborhood, which is how many people begin exploring how to improve their community, the first thing they are going to do is to figure out what strong points and resources their neighborhood has, including the people who live and work there (themselves, their parents, friends, teachers, etc.), places, its location, qualities, etc., and then use these strong points to reach for some goals!

**Think:** Ask students to think how Amanda William’s work could relate to the idea of an assets-based approach to thinking about neighborhoods.

**Pair:** Have students share their ideas with a partner.

**Share:** Have groups share their discussion points with the whole class.

As a class, discuss:
- How does the narrator describe the trees in this passage? What key descriptive or action words does she include?
- What are the qualities of each part of the trees?
- Review the concept of metaphor. What might these trees stand for in the mind of the narrator?

Drawing from the ideas embedded in the vignette “Four Skinny Trees,” discuss and come up with four hopes for an ideal future of your neighborhood as a class. Write down your class’s four hopes. Some examples might include: “A Youth-friendly Little Village,” “A Sustainable Pilsen,” “An Inclusive Albany Park,” etc.

As a class or in partners, have students read the vignette “Four Skinny Trees” from *The House on Mango Street*. 
Pass out a sheet of white paper to each student. As a warm-up, have students map their own ‘assets’ in relation to one of the four hopes. In pairs, have partners lie on the floor to trace the outline of each other’s head and shoulders on paper. Each student will then choose one of the four hopes to address and write it at the top of their paper. They must then brainstorm what they personally bring to the table for achieving that hope.

On the inside of their outline, have students write down personal, *internal* assets they possess in relation to their chosen topic, i.e., knowledge, mental or physical skills, personality traits or qualities. Outside the outline, have them write the *external* assets they possess in relation to their chosen hope, i.e., relationships with other people, memberships in organizations or groups, resources they know about, etc.

**Examples**
FOCUS ACTIVITY: FOUR SKINNY TREES NEIGHBORHOOD ASSET MAP

Divide the class into four groups and assign each one of the four “hopes” for your neighborhood. Each group will use brown and green construction paper and markers to create a neighborhood asset map in the form of a tree. Ask students to design their trees with the following guidelines:

- **Trunk:** Write your group’s hope for the neighborhood’s future on the trunk.
- **Roots:** Create one root to represent the assets your neighborhood has (people, places, programs, qualities, beliefs, etc.) that will help this hope become a reality.
- **Leaves:** Specific outcomes of what success will look like. For example, if your group’s hope were “A Youth-friendly Little Village,” some specific outcomes might be “More street lights,” “More skate areas,” “Teen computer labs.”

Example with “A Youth-Friendly Little Village”:

Have groups discuss and share their trees with the class. Can their classmates come up with any additional assets or outcomes?

Display all four groups’ trees together with a reproduction of Sandra Cisneros’ vignette to share with other school/neighborhood members.

*As a follow-up, have each student brainstorm and write down one place or space in their neighborhood that is currently underused or undervalued but which has the potential to contribute towards their group’s “hope,” i.e., an abandoned building, an empty lot, etc.*
FOCUS ACTIVITY: FOUR SKINNY TREES NEIGHBORHOOD ASSET MAP

Photo Visioning

Provide students with the opportunity to go out into the neighborhood and take photos of each of the assets (places, people, and resources) they brainstormed for the ‘roots’ section of their Four Skinny Trees project and make them into a map that will allow others to locate and even add to the assets they identified in their groups.

While they are taking their photos in the neighborhood, have students also take a photo of the place or space they identified as having the potential to contribute to their hope for their neighborhood.

When students have returned with their digital photographs, upload them to Google’s My Maps, following the steps here: support.google.com/maps/answer/3045850?hl=en. (please be aware that the photos must first be uploaded to blog such as Tumblr; My Maps does not yet have the capacity to let you upload photographs directly. They must have an existing URL, which is why it is easiest to upload them to a blog page first). Google’s My Maps allows you to create an interactive map that contains written information, links, and photos. Furthermore, it can be shared with others or even made public through a link.

Alternative Mapping Options

Print the photos and pin them to a paper map of your neighborhood.

Get creative! Choose an alternative digital or analog format for mapping your neighborhood assets. Check out the alternative cartography website created by SLAB, the spatial analysis lab at USC Price slab.today/maps for ideas.
HANDS-ON ACTIVITY: USTED ESTÁ AQUÍ

This activity enables students to design an intervention to an existing space in their neighborhood. Encourage them to think big – the sky is the limit with this project!

Print students’ photos of their designated undervalued or underused space to letter size (8 ½” by 11”). Show students how to slide their photo into the plastic report cover. Show our example of an intervention with paint markers that we designed to reimagine an unused lot next the museum with the hope of “A Sustainable Pilsen” as our focus. Explain to students how we used the paint markers to reimagine the place we chose.

**Design & Work Session:** Have students first brainstorm how they would alter their chosen site to meet their hope for their neighborhood. Students will then use the paint markers to finalize their designs on the topmost layer of the report cover. Be sure to allow layer to dry thoroughly before storing.

Ask students to present or write about how their ideas for intervention would help the neighborhood meet their chosen “hope” as discussed in the asset mapping activity.
Become a member!

312.738.1503

Open Tuesday – Sunday, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Admission is always FREE