

Exploring Concepts of Immigration and National Identity through Art

Paintings of BC Artist Chrystal Phan

By artist Chrystal Phan

Estimated time required: 60 minutes

Rationale:

This activity encourages students to recognize how their own life experiences and biases inform their thoughts and opinions. Using artwork, students can find similarities and differences between themselves and the people depicted in the paintings. This activity also encourages students to be curious about different cultures and build confidence in communicating their ideas.

Lesson Activity:

The questions provided are designed as prompts to help students think about the paintings in different ways. After completing the written exercise (approximately 25 minutes), students can participate in a group discussion and share their observations (approximately 35 minutes).

Inquiry Guide

Find photographs of Chrystal Phan's paintings in the Look section of this pathway. Please note that some of the photo captions may answer questions that are asked here. You may have to instruct students not to read the captions or to look at the images first in the smaller thumbnails before clicking on the images to expand. Depending on the screen you are using, you may be able to position the image on the screen so that the captions cannot be read by the students.

Painting 1: *Pool Party*

Describe what a pool party would look like with your friends and family.

Are these friends, family members or strangers in the painting? Describe how you think each person is related to one another and why you think so.

Observe what everyone is wearing. How is it different or similar to the clothes you might wear to a pool party?

Painting 2: *Turkey Dinner*

This painting represents a turkey dinner being prepared. Why do you think it is being cut up?

What ingredients and appliances do you notice in this painting? What ingredients or appliances does your family use when preparing a special meal?

What does a turkey dinner mean to you? What do you think it means to the character in this painting?

Painting 3: *My Still Life*

What do you notice about how the table is set?

What do you notice about how people are eating?

Try to name the objects on the small table at the very back of the painting. Why do you think they are there?

Painting 4: *Heart to Heart*

This painting represents a conversation between a father and daughter. What do you think they're talking about?

What emotions do you think these characters are experiencing in this moment?

What do you notice about the table setting?

Painting 5: *Camping*

Describe what you think is happening in this scene.

What does the activity of camping mean to you?

In what ways is your idea of camping similar or different to what is happening in this painting?

Painting 6: *Biking for Charity*

Describe what you think is happening in this painting.

What do you think the characters are thinking about?

This painting represents the way cultural values are attached to objects such as cars and bicycles. Describe what they mean to you.

To me, a car represents _____.

To me, a bicycle represents _____.