

Exploring Concepts of Immigration and National Identity through Art

Paintings of BC Artist Chrystal Phan

By artist Chrystal Phan

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.

First Peoples Principles of Learning: Learning requires exploration of one's identity; Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story; Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational.

Curriculum Connections:

Grades 5, 6 Arts Education

Big Ideas: Engaging in creative expression and experiences expands people's sense of identity and belonging (and community); Experiencing art is a means to develop empathy for others' perspectives and experiences. (Grade 6)

Content: Influence of visual culture on self-perception and identity

Curricular Competencies: Reflect on the influences of a variety of contexts on artistic works

Grades 5, 6 and 10 Social Studies

Big Ideas: Immigration and multiculturalism continue to shape Canadian society and identity. (Grade 5/6)

Curricular Competencies: Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to — ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyse ideas; and communicate findings and decisions; Explain and infer different perspectives on past or present people, places, issues, or events by considering prevailing norms, values, worldviews, and beliefs (Grade 10)

Grades 5, 6 and 10 English Language Arts

Big Ideas: Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.

Content: Story/text; Strategies and processes

Curricular Competencies: Use personal experience and knowledge to connect to text and develop understanding of self, community, and world

Grades 10 Art Studio

Big Ideas: An artist's intention transforms materials into art; Traditions, perspectives, worldviews, and stories are shared through aesthetic experiences; Visual arts offer unique ways of exploring our identity and sense of belonging.

Content: A variety of national and international works of art and artistic traditions from diverse cultures, communities, times, and places

Curricular Competencies: Describe and respond to works of art and explore artists' intent; Explore a range of cultures, and the relationships among cultures, societies, and the arts

Estimated time required: 60 minutes

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 _____.