

Alice Street Curriculum Guide



ALICE STREET



1852 MEDIA PRESENTS "ALICE STREET" AN ENDANGERED IDEAS FILM

CINEMATOGRAPHY SPENCER WILKINSON, DEMONDRE WARD, AND AYŞE GÜRSÖZ ORIGINAL MUSIC MICAH BEREK

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About The Film

Two artists form an unlikely partnership to paint their most ambitious mural to date in Oakland’s downtown, ground zero for gentrification. The mural is dedicated to the diverse cultural artists that intersect on the corner, who are threatened by displacement. As the mural paint dries, a luxury condo is planned that will obstruct the art and cultural history. The community decides to fight back.

About the Filmmaker

Spencer Wilkinson

After a decade working with gang-involved and homeless youth in the California Bay Area, Spencer founded Endangered Ideas in Oakland, to focus on stories of resilience.

In 2018, he directed the feature-length “ONE VOICE: The Story of the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir” which premiered at the Mill Valley Film Festival, was a “Best Movie of the East Bay” in 2019 and featured on PBS’ “Truly CA” 2020 season.

He is the director and producer of ALICE STREET which premiered in 2020. KQED Arts describes ALICE STREET as “set in just a few city blocks, it’s a story about intractable loss as well as collective refusal, depicting artists’ role in grassroots activism that builds power by bridging communities.” ALICE STREET won the Audience Choice Award for Feature Documentary at the Oakland International Film Festival.

Spencer’s films have presented at the Urbanworld Film Festival, Newport Beach, Mill Valley, Marda Loop, Oakland International, Milwaukee, Social Change, DOCUTAH, Brighton Rocks and London Rocks, ARTS x SDGS Festival and the San Francisco Latino Film Festival.



About the Curriculum

The themes and activities can be used in a variety of contexts but are primarily designed for a high school classroom setting. The key themes that are explored here include community change and development, the differences between development and gentrification, and the role of art in public discourse. These address many of the strands laid out by National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies. These include, but are not limited to: Culture; Time, Continuity, and Change; People, Places, and Environments; Power, Authority, and Governance; and Civic Ideals and Practices.

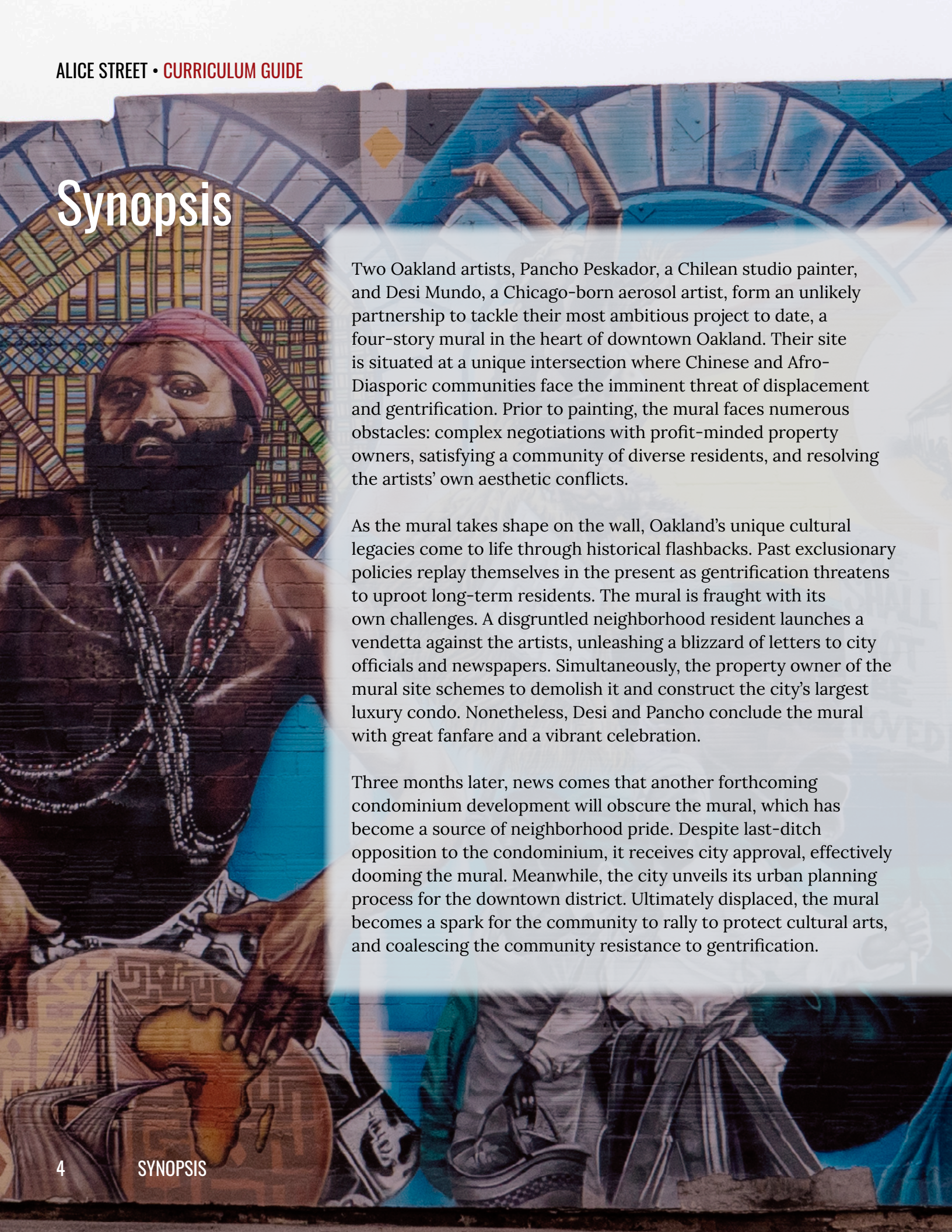
About the Curriculum Writer

Dr. Daniel D. Zarazua

Daniel has been a high school educator for two decades, primarily in East Oakland, California, but also in Michigan, Illinois, and Southern California. Additionally, he has taught at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Summer Institute and with the Next Level program in El Salvador, Central America. In addition to his work as an educator, he is a co-founder of Pochino Press, a publishing company that provides a platform for traditionally under-represented voices. He has an MA from the University of Michigan and a Doctorate from San Francisco State University, both in Education.



Synopsis



Two Oakland artists, Pancho Peskador, a Chilean studio painter, and Desi Mundo, a Chicago-born aerosol artist, form an unlikely partnership to tackle their most ambitious project to date, a four-story mural in the heart of downtown Oakland. Their site is situated at a unique intersection where Chinese and Afro-Diasporic communities face the imminent threat of displacement and gentrification. Prior to painting, the mural faces numerous obstacles: complex negotiations with profit-minded property owners, satisfying a community of diverse residents, and resolving the artists' own aesthetic conflicts.

As the mural takes shape on the wall, Oakland's unique cultural legacies come to life through historical flashbacks. Past exclusionary policies replay themselves in the present as gentrification threatens to uproot long-term residents. The mural is fraught with its own challenges. A disgruntled neighborhood resident launches a vendetta against the artists, unleashing a blizzard of letters to city officials and newspapers. Simultaneously, the property owner of the mural site schemes to demolish it and construct the city's largest luxury condo. Nonetheless, Desi and Pancho conclude the mural with great fanfare and a vibrant celebration.

Three months later, news comes that another forthcoming condominium development will obscure the mural, which has become a source of neighborhood pride. Despite last-ditch opposition to the condominium, it receives city approval, effectively dooming the mural. Meanwhile, the city unveils its urban planning process for the downtown district. Ultimately displaced, the mural becomes a spark for the community to rally to protect cultural arts, and coalescing the community resistance to gentrification.

About The Artists

Desi Mundo

Desi is an Oakland-based spray paint educator, hip-hop cultural diplomat and the founder of the Community Rejuvenation Project, a pavement to policy mural organization that has produced more than 300 murals, throughout the Bay Area as well as nationally and internationally. The “Universal Language” mural, his largest at that time, co-produced with by Peskador, galvanized the Oakland community in the struggle against gentrification resulting in \$20 million in community benefits, as depicted in the acclaimed documentary film “Alice Street.” In 2020, Desi completed his tallest mural to date, “AscenDance,” a 90’ tall piece on the Greenlining Institute. Desi’s legacy as an educator and youth worker in K-12 schools spans two decades. He received the “Rising Leaders” Fellowship from the Youth Leadership Institute in 2005 and has been awarded the Individual Artist grant from the City of Oakland eight times.



Pancho Peskador

Pancho Peskador is a visual artist and muralist from Chile. He attended Escuela de Bellas Artes in Valparaiso and Viña del Mar, where he was introduced to printmaking and other mediums. In 1995, he joined a cooperative of printmakers, Taller de Artes Visuales (TAV), in Santiago, Chile, where two senior artists, Carlos Donaire and Guillermo Frommer, invited him to participate in shows in Chile and abroad. In 1995, Peskador immigrated to the Bay Area where he developed a passion for street art. In 2003, Peskador and other Chilean artists and intellectuals founded the 9-11 Squared Collective, a group dedicated to raising awareness about the complex relationships between the United States, Chile and other Latin American countries. Through the collective, Peskador curates shows in the Bay Area. In 2010, Peskador became an active member of the Community Rejuvenation Project (CRP). Together the organization painted more than 200 murals in the Bay Area, Chicago, Seattle, New Mexico, Germany, Chile, and Thailand. In 2015 & 2016 he co-produced the masterpiece mural “The Universal Language”. He is also a founding member of “Los Pobres Artistas” a collective of primarily Chilean painters that organized the “Bay Area Mural Festival” for three years and painted several well known community murals. Peskador also has participated in several of the Attitudinal Healing Connection’s Oakland Superheroes murals in West Oakland under The 580 Freeway and will serve as a lead artist for the fifth and final mural of the series. In 2019, Peskador contributed to “Alto al fuego in la Mission” a mural against police violence and honoring Amilcar Lopez, a young migrant from Guatemala murdered by SFPD. Peskador’s work has been featured in The New York Times, Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, KQED, Chilean Media, and other independent media.



Key Words

Community Benefit Agreements

Agreements made by community organizations and the developers of construction projects to include benefits for the local community such as affordable housing units.

Community Development

A process where people come together to take action on what's important to them.

Condominium

Similar to an apartment complex, but units are individually owned, as opposed to one owner for the entire building or complex.

Diaspora

The spread of people beyond their homeland.

Gentrification

The deliberate process of community change that results in a change of the neighborhoods' character due to the influx of more affluent residents pushing out the less affluent.

Legacy

Something passed down from one generation to the next.

Public Art

Art that is available to be seen by the community in a publicly accessible space.

Urban Planning

The design of an urban space [including] the physical layout, services offered, and the social impact of these changes.





Discussion Prompts for Full Viewing

What Makes Community?

- Who and what makes a place “home?”
- Is our “home” and our “community” the same thing? If not, where do they differ and overlap? Which different communities are we part of?
- Change is inevitable, so what are the anchors of community? Art, the people, the institutions, the laws?

Consider these quotes from the film. How do they apply to your community?

“How is our city gonna’ grow and still embrace, elevate, (and) preserve our culture?”

— Theo Williams

“These immigrant communities come together to form these enclaves, because it’s about survival.”

— Lailan Huen

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THEME 1

This Place We Call Home



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THEME 2

Whose Voice Matters?

Deciding on Public Art

- How can art play a role in capturing people’s attention?
- What makes art valuable?
- Who is allowed to represent the local community in creating public art?
- Who are the stakeholders and decision makers in the process?

Consider these quotes from the film. How do they apply to your community?

“Money shouts. It doesn’t just talk, it shouts.”

— Ruth Beckford

“How do you balance the input of the community with the input of the artist?”

— Pancho Peskador



Development, Displacement, & Gentrification

- What makes a place a desirable to live in?
- What is the difference between development and gentrification?
- Who should make the final decisions on how communities change over time?
- Is displacement of people an unavoidable part of development?
- What does gentrification look like in your community? How is your community changing?

Consider these quotes from the film. How do they apply to your community?

“Yes, things will change. But in the way cities and neighborhoods change is deliberate. It’s called planning.”

— Ayodele Nzinga

“Is what’s coming worth more than what’s here?”

— Ayodele Nzinga

“People are not necessarily against development, per se, but we also are not looking to have our input diminished because you want some new people to move into the neighborhood.”

— Theo Williams

THEME 3

Is What’s Coming Better Than What’s Here?



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THEME 4

Art in Action

Moving from Awareness to Action

- Why can art be such a powerful tool in raising awareness and moving people to action?
- What are some issues that people of very different backgrounds can come together around?
- What are some ways to be proactive about addressing community needs, as opposed to reactive?
- What are some tangible changes that you would like to see happen in your community?

Consider these quotes from the film. How do they apply to your community?

“Sometimes people have said the art community is not organized, we’re not active, we don’t participate, we’re reactive.”

— Anyka Barber

“We can’t make something that pleases everybody. We don’t want to. We want to make something that has a little bit of a bite to it.”

— Desi Mundo

Modules

Modules are self-contained lessons designed to cover a specific theme within a 50 minute period. See below for our pre-prepared modules.

MODULE 1

What Makes Community?

Time: 50 Minutes

Tools: Chart paper, writing utensils, enclosed worksheets 1A, 1B, and 1C (optional).

Optional Discussion Prompts

Discuss:

1. Who and what makes a place “home?” Is our “home” and our “community” the same thing? If not, where do they differ and overlap?
2. Which different communities are we part of? Change is inevitable, so what are the anchors of community? Art, the people, the institutions, the laws?

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THEME 1

This Place We Call Home

Related Video Clips

1

Documentary Intro
0:15-4:30



2

Oakland Chinatown History
34:35- 35:53



Part A: Intro to Oakland

Worksheet 1A (Pg.13)

Watch the intro, asking participants to individually note what they see, including the people, what they're doing, the buildings, and other objects. Worksheet 1.

Watch the Intro again, but this time have participants individually focus on what they hear (or read on the subtitles). What words or phrases stood out?

Group Discussion

- Based on your notes, what are your impressions of Oakland?
- What were some things that stood out to you and why did they stand out?
- Why do you think the filmmaker decided to include these particular images or soundbites?

Part B: Localizing Community

Worksheet 1B (Pg.14)

Individually, have participants fill out Worksheet 1B on what represents community to them. Share with a partner.

Group Discussion

- Did you and your partner have anything in common? If so, what was it?
- What are some ways that your community has changed, for better and for worse?
- As communities are continually changing, how do we keep the parts that are good and get rid of the parts that are not so good?



Extended Activities

Worksheet 1A and/or Worksheet 1C (Pg.13 and/or Pg.15)

Individually, have participants fill out Worksheet 1B on what represents community to them. Share with a partner.

- Watch Oakland Chinatown clip and modify Part A to address this clip.
- Do a community walk. Have participants walk in their local community and fill out Worksheet 3.

Worksheet 1A: Video Clip Observations

WHO/WHAT	DETAILS/ACTIONS	WHY INCLUDED?

Worksheet 1B: What Makes Up My Community?

Using words or images, fill out each of the four quadrants according to the prompts. As we are part of many communities, ranging from our neighborhoods, family units, and religious beliefs, pick one that is central to you.

A sound or visual that represents your community.	A smell or taste that represents your community.
Something significant that has changed in your community that impacted you.	How one gains admission into your community.

Worksheet 1C: Community Walk

Using your five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, touch) identify people, places, and things that you think are representative of your community.

Person, Place, or Thing	Senses Used	Why is this person, place, or thing important?

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THEME 2

Whose Voice Matters?

MODULE 2

Deciding on Public Art

Time: 50 Minutes

Tools: Chart paper, writing utensils, enclosed worksheets 2A, magazines (optional), scissors (optional), glue or tape (optional), 8.5 x 11 paper (optional).

Optional Discussion Prompts

Discuss:

1. What's the purpose of art? Why can art play such a big role in capturing people's attention?
2. What makes art valuable? Who is allowed to represent the local community in creating public art? Who are the stakeholders and decision makers in the process?

Related Video Clips

1

Chinatown Talk

18:58 - 22:17



2

Disgruntled Neighbor

31:55-34:31



Part A: The Design Process

Worksheet 2A (Pg. 19)

Watch both clips, having participants respond to the questions on Worksheet 2A.

Group Discussion/Take a Stand Activity

If spacing allows, have participants stand and do the “take a stand” activity.” In this activity, the facilitator will read a series of prompts and participants will take a stand according to what they believe. On one side of the room, have a sign posted “strongly agree” and on the opposite side post a sign that says “strongly disagree.” After each prompt, ask various participants why they chose to stand where they did.

- Should public art only highlight the positive aspects of a community?
- Should one person or a small group be able to make a decision for the public?
- One of the lead artists states that his goal is not to please everyone. Do you agree or disagree with this approach?

Part B: Representation

Gallery Walk

Individually, have participants fill out Worksheet 2A on what represents community to them. Share with a partner.

Group Discussion

Prior to the session, post chart paper around the room with various prompts related to the topic. Suggested prompts:

- Most powerful individual scenes on the mural
- Something you would have liked to see added
- Questions about what is included

Give each participant a small stack of sticky notes on which they can write their responses to the prompts. They should walk around and attach their responses to the appropriate chart paper and observe what other people wrote.

After everyone is done, discuss each prompt as a group, as well as any feelings that come up from looking at the mural

Facilitators can capture the participants’ responses on large chart paper so the responses can be referred to in Part B.

Extended Activities

Magazine Collage Activity

Participants will use images from magazines to create their own collages to create a mockup of a mural that they would design to reflect their community.

Distribute old magazines that can be cut up, scissors, glue or tape, and paper to affix their images. Upon completion of their collage, participants should write a description of why they included the images they did and be prepared to share out with the group.



Worksheet 2A: The Design Process

Should public art only highlight the positive aspects of a community or also the negative aspects? What are the pros and cons of each approach?

Should one person or a small group be able to make a decision for the public? If so, whose voice should hold the most weight?

Worksheet 2A: The Design Process

One of the lead artists states that his goal is not to please everyone. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Do you agree that public art is a good use of tax money?

MODULE 3

Development, Displacement, & Gentrification**Time:** 50 Minutes**Tools:** Chart paper, writing paper, writing utensils, enclosed Worksheet 2A, magazines (optional), scissors (optional), glue or tape (optional), 8.5 x 11 paper (optional).**Optional Discussion Prompts****Discuss:**

- What makes a place a desirable one to live? What is the difference between development and gentrification? Who should make the final decisions on how communities change over time? Is displacement of people an unavoidable part of development?

Related Video Clips

1

Development

15:55 - 18:57



2

Historical Systematic Displacement

35:54 - 37:27



3

Gentrification/Development

46:16 - 48:36



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THEME 3

Is What's Coming Better Than What's Here?



Part A: Warm Up Activity

Individually, have participants write down 5-10 things they like about their community and 5-10 things that they would like to change. Who do they think is responsible for maintaining the good things and changing the bad ones? They should not share these out, although they can refer to these notes for Part B.

Part B: Development and Decision Making Discussion

Watch Clips 1 and 3 then divide participants into small groups numbering no more than four.

Each group gets a piece of chart paper that they should divide into four parts.

- What makes a place desirable to live in?
- In their local community, what's worth keeping? What's worth changing?
- As one interviewee states, change is inevitable, but how things change is a result of planning. Who should be part of the planning process and why?
- Should preventing displacement of people be a priority? If not, why not? If yes, how should planners prevent it?

Each Group Reports Out



Part C: Historical Factors

Watch Clip 2

Return to small groups and discuss the following prompts, taking notes on chart paper.

- How does this historical information change your answers, particularly around who is responsible for the changes in your community? Conversely, if it reinforced your response, how did it do so?
- Are there any similar policies or practices in your town that historically happened or are currently happening? If so, what are they?
- As a group, brainstorm changes that have happened in the past 5 years such as stores, cafes, street projects, traffic, or restaurants. Mark the positives with a plus sign and the negatives with a negative sign and tally them up.

Groups share out, time permitting.



Extended Activity

Independent Versus Corporate Business Neighborhood Analysis

Walk around your neighborhood and write down the first 20 businesses that you see. Of these, how many are chains and how many are independent and locally owned? Calculate the percentage of each. After reading the following blog post, how do you think the percentage of corporate owned businesses versus locally owned independent ones impacts the local community?

<https://www.shopkeep.com/blog/10-ways-small-businesses-benefit-the-local-community>

Additional Questions

- Given the advantages of smaller independent businesses, beyond price, what are some reasons that many people primarily patronize corporate businesses?
- What are your ideas on how to encourage people to support small independent businesses when possible?

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THEME 4

Art in Action

MODULE 4

Moving From Awareness to Action

Time: 50 Minutes

Tools: Printout discussion prompts for small groups, chart paper, writing paper, writing utensils, poster making materials (optional), sticky notes (optional)

Optional Discussion Prompts

Discuss:

- Why can art be such a powerful tool in raising awareness and moving people to action? What are some issues that people of very different backgrounds can come together around?
- What are some ways to be proactive about addressing community needs, as opposed to reactive? What are some tangible changes that you would like to see happen in your community?

Related Video Clips

1

History of Malonga
25:45 - 29:16



2

Oakland Chinatown Displacement – Coalition Building
48:39 - 53:49



3

Design Review Meeting – Alice Action
53:52 - 1:06:49



Part A: Potential Destruction of a Community

Watch Clip 2

Break up into groups of no more than four and choose from the following prompts to discuss

- What are some issues that people of very different backgrounds can come together around?
- What are the largest needs of the community? Housing? Crime? Health care?
- Who are society's most vulnerable populations and how do we prevent them from getting displaced? Explain why this is, or is not, a worthy goal.
- When is it time to resort to protest and direct action?

Each Group Shares out



Part B: Development and Decision Making Discussion

Watch Clip 3

Group Action Plan

Break participants into groups of no more than four. Using chart paper, they will develop a community benefits program agreement proposal that they are submitting to for a proposed 60 unit apartment complex that is being built in their community.

- At minimum this proposal should address the following issues:
- Minimizing displacement of existing residents
- Plan to include diverse voices
- Resources for public art
- Bettering quality of life for broader community, not just the residents

Each Group Reports Out

Extended Activities

Interview an artist or activist. Could be a family member, mentor, or someone else.

- Generate a list of 5-10 questions
- This website offers a list to select from: <https://storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/>
- Record on phone, tablet, etc.
- Transcribe using Otter or another transcription app (optional)
- Participants identify 5 quotes that stood out to them and why.



Watch Clip 1

Human history is filled with people fighting for their rights and are often led by people who have never become famous. Yet people often look to leaders as symbols of hope and inspiration. Thinking about your own life and community, who are some people that should be honored and why? What should be named after them?

In groups or as individuals, generate a list of existing buildings, monuments, or other things that are named after somebody. Feel free to do an online search, ask others, or walk around your community. Do research on these people. Are any that you believe should be renamed? If so, who are they and why?

Sign Making

Share examples of protest signs on a variety of issues:

- Have participants create their own signs that quickly capture people's attention and either inspire thought or action
- Post signs around the rooms and have participants do a gallery walk, using sticky notes that include positive and critical feedback (clarity of message, attractiveness, etc)

Additional Resources for Students and Teachers

Readings

Women Street Artists of Latin America: Art Without Fear

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/25074152-women-street-artists-of-latin-america>

High Rise Stories

<https://voiceofwitness.org/oral-history-book-series/High-Rise-Stories/>

Infinite Cities

<https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520262508/infinite-city>

Our Neighborhood: Asian American & Pacific Islander Anti-Displacement Strategies

<https://www.nationalcapacd.org/data-research/neighborhoods-asian-american-pacific-islander-anti-displacement-strategies>

Viewings

Tlacuilos

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/tlacuilosgraffitidoc>

The Danger of a Single Story

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en

Get Involved - Community Arts Organizations

The Community Rejuvenation Project (Oakland)

www.CRPBayArea.org

Precita Eyes Muralists (SF)

<http://www.precitaeyes.org/>

Groundswell Muralists (NYC)

<https://www.groundswell.nyc>

Alas de Agua (Santa Fe)

<https://alasdeagua.com>

Get Involved - Anti-Gentrification Initiatives and Organizations

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development

www.nationalcapacd.org

Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)

<https://www.acceaction.org>

Community Coalition for Equitable Development (CCED)

<https://www.ccedoakland.org>

