

Who We Are and Who They Say We Are

Inspired by the project **The Wall**, featured on the 7th edition of The FENCE, exhibited in public parks and downtowns across 8 cities in North America.

Students will identify and interrupt dominant narratives in the media by creating visual projects that tell a counter-narrative about themselves and/or their community.

Students will be able to:

- Analyze and critique documentary photographs
- Identify and discuss dominant narratives about the Wall and immigration
- Explore identity of self, or others and community
- Create counter-narrative visual projects that address and interrupt the dominant/mainstream narrative.

Session 1: Intro

1. Begin with a discussion about what is a wall. Ask your students:
 - What do you think of when you hear the word “wall”?
 - What images do you notice when you search the word “wall”?
2. Select a few images that picture the dominant narrative, focusing on the structural and political forces. You may pull images from CNN Politics: This is what the US/Mexico border looks like, USA Today: The Wall, or source from the images your students found previously when searching the word “wall.” Conduct a gallery analysis to break down these images. Ask your students:
 - What is the perspective from which the image is taken? (From above, from below etc.) Describe how this makes you feel about the image.
 - What is the composition of the image? What is the focus? What is in the foreground and background of the picture? What is outside the frame? Describe how this makes you feel about the image.
 - What is included in the caption of the image? What

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Featuring photography by
Griselda San Martin

Grade Level: 6th - 12th grade,
Adults

Subjects: Photography, Social
Studies, Humanities

Time Required: 2-3 sessions

Key Images:

- [The Wall Image Bank](#)

Materials Needed:

- Phone or camera
- Sample Identity Maps
- [Visual Plan Brainstorm worksheet](#)

Additional Resources:

photoville.com/edu

Standards Addressed:

Writing 8.2

Speaking & Listening 8.1

Reading Informational 8.1

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additional information would you like to know?

3. Repeat the gallery analysis with 1 to 2 additional images.
4. Have your students free write about their understanding of the border wall based on the images you viewed.
 - What is the purpose of the wall?
 - Who are the groups of people involved with the wall? And what is your perception of each group?
 - What questions do you have about the wall after seeing these images?
5. Show your students a few of Griselda's photos from The Wall Image Bank, and conduct a gallery analysis.
 - What is the perspective from which the image is taken? (From above, from below etc.) Describe how this makes you feel about the image.
 - What is the composition of the image? What is the focus? What is in the foreground and background of the picture? What is outside the frame? Describe how this makes you feel about the image.
 - What is included in the caption of the image? What additional information would you like to know?
 - How do Griselda's images differ from the first set of images we viewed? What additional information do her images provide?

Session 2: Identity Map & Narrative Plan

1. Explain to your students that they will be creating a photo series about their identity, focused on breaking down the dominant/stereotypical narratives and depicting their authentic experience.
2. Students will brainstorm this project by first creating an identity map. If students are not prepared to explore personal identity, offer them the option of exploring communal/group identity (i.e their class, teenagers, Brooklyn residents etc.)
3. Show your students a few sample Identity Maps. Consider all the factors of your identity. Here are just a few:
 - Age
 - Citizenship status
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Gender
 - Socioeconomic Status
 - Religion
 - Location/Geography

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- Many more!
4. Have students to select 1 to 2 factors of identity that they want to focus on for this project. Ask them to consider:
 - What are some of the biggest misconceptions people have about you or your community?
 - What are common themes about your identity and how do you want to disrupt that?
 - What does the outside world see or say. What do I see or say?
 5. Optional: Have students research online and select one image portraying the dominant narrative of their identity that they want to respond to with their project.
 6. Have students break their ideas down on the [Visual Plan Brainstorm Worksheet](#).
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Session 3 - 4: Photography & Production

1. Depending on the focus and resources available in your classroom, decide on the technology students will use to capture images. (Film, digital, cell phone or working in groups) Review photography basics with your students, including basic camera skills and composition.
 - Refer to THE FENCE 2018 Guide for an intro to photography styles and The Photoville Passport for helpful vocabulary.
 - Send students out to capture at least 20 photos based on their visual plan.
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Session 5: Writing

1. Have each student write an artist statement about their project and process. Ask them to consider the following questions:
 - What was the dominant narrative you were dismantling? What was the authentic experience you wanted to portray?
 - What visual strategies did you use to depict your narrative?
 - How do borders exist within your own life?
 - How do we navigate space/physical borders?
2. Extension: Students could also record a short audio piece about their artist statement to accompany their project.

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Session 6: Culminating Event + Reflection

1. Provide space for students to share their work through a culminating event such as a gallery walk or final presentation. If students recorded audio pieces, you may include them as a QR code or within the final presentation.
2. Have students display the dominant narrative image they were responding to next to their work to compare and contrast.
3. After the gallery walk or presentation, have students share as a group.
 - What did they learn about themselves through this project?
 - What did they learn about their classmates through this project?