

Lesson Plan: Learning to Look: History of Transportation

Topic/Theme: Learning to Look at the History of Transportation Public Art Mural

Class Level: Elementary

Duration: Two 45 minute sessions (90 minutes total)

Learning Experience: Brief Description of Unit:

Using the example of Helen Lundeberg's *History of Transportation*, students will learn about how art reflects when it was made and how transportation changed over time. They will also learn the how art is made to celebrate public places, and will learn a mixed media painting technique

Specific Learning Objectives:

- **Visual Descriptions:** Students learn about how artwork can teach them about history.
- **Process:** Students learn to look at details in a work of art, and practice drawing them as well.
- **Application:** Learning to look and create are foundational skills to be applied in many ways.
- **Public Art:** Students learn about seeing art in our public places

Resources:

Inglewood Public Art

The History of Transportation, Helen Lundeberg Location: Grevillea Art Park

Supplemental Materials:

Pamphlet *History of Transportation*:

http://Inglewoodpublicart.org/pdf/About_The_History_of_Transportation.pdf

Presentation (online powerpoint)

https://www.inglewoodpublicart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Inglewood-Story-of-A-Place_2019_FINAL_SM.pdf

Podcast Rosa Lowinger: http://inglewoodpublicart.org/History_of_Transportation.html

Artmaking materials (described in part two)

Background:

Artists are sometimes asked to contribute to a city by creating artworks in public places. Inglewood encourages new art in public spaces and to preserve public art made in earlier times. The City built on federal programs that hired professional artists to improve civic life. One program, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), was started in 1935 to improve our public buildings and roads and provide jobs for artists when jobs were scarce.

The WPA wanted an artist to celebrate southern California highways. Artist Helen Lundeberg won the opportunity to honor our roads by putting art on Centinela Boulevard. Her artwork, *History of Transportation*, was made for a long wall along Centinela. Over time, the boulevard had to be widened, so the entire 260 foot artwork was moved.

The mural is now in Grevillea Art Park, a place designed especially for Lundeberg's historic artwork. It is Inglewood's oldest and largest work of public art.

Information on site helps students learn about the artist, her process and the program.

Reading the Mural

Share the *History of Transportation* (on site or in classroom) artwork with students

Ask them to tell you the methods of transportation depicted, and to discuss the subject of history.

2. Share Artist Information

Share that this large artwork was created by Helen Lundeberg. She was asked to create this mural in 1935 and to use colorful crushed rock in a technique that employs many laborers.

At this time few women were considered professional artists; her Inglewood art is a rare treasure.

3. Read the Artwork's six sections *(right to left)*

First section (right side) of the mural shows Native peoples (before 1820s)

Who lived in this area a long time ago? Native peoples (Tongva tribe)

How did they travel? How did animals help them with this? Do you think they travelled far?

Second Section (second from right) depicts the Spanish hacienda inhabitants (1850s)

How did the early Spanish settlers travel? Is this similar to the Native Americans?

How is their style different?

How do they use their animals?

Third Section depicts railroad cars and early automobiles (1900)

Describe the style of clothes. Describe the luggage.

Do you think these people travelled more than the early Native Americans did? Why? What can you see that shows people on the move?

Describe the cars. How are they different than the cars of today?

Do you see a steam engine?

Fourth Section depicts the 1920's era.

Describe the modes of transportation here.

See the Roadsters and horse-drawn buggies. Does the buggy differs from horse-drawn carts?

Fifth Section depicts the early 1930's era.

How does the 1930's section differ from the 1920's section?

How did the cars change?

How did the railroad cars change? What about the style of people's clothes?

What are they moving? How is this compared to the time of the 1900s?

Sixth (final) Section of the mural was made in 1939.

What is here that is not in the other sections? Planes. Do they look different from today's planes?

Transportation includes luggage; is the luggage different than the luggage from the 1900s?

The mural ends with 1940s because that's when the artist finished this mural.

What does this mural say about the time? What does it say about California?

How is transportation different today? How is it similar? What was invented since 1940?

Who rides in cars? Who rides in busses?

Part Two: Artmaking to Explore the mural's visual style.

- a. Note the animals, railroad, cars, and airplanes have dimension with a dark outline with a single color in the interior. As time permits, have students draw a favorite mode of transportation from the options shown. Have each draw the outline first, and then color it with a single hue.

After 10 or 15 minutes of students working, share their works with the class.

- a. Ask for predictions on the next mode of transportation we haven't yet discovered.
- b. Ask for stories about the white dogs seen through the length of the mural.

Classroom Applications:

Students learn to look at art and talk about what they see.

Students learn to create work with a medium that is unusual.

Students learn to notice artwork in their community that may not have been noticed.

Students learn about art work engaging and educating the public.

Open Ended Questions for Educators:

What's going on in this mural?

Why is this mural near a school?

Overall Questions:

Do you prefer to see public art indoors or outdoors?

Do you think art helps boost morale in Inglewood?

Does adding visual art to public space help a city? How?



History of Transportation, Helen Lundeborg, section 1 (above) section 5 (below)

