

## **Cultural Infusion: the Public Art of Philadelphia's Chinatown**

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### **Index**

Overview  
Rationale  
Objectives  
Strategies  
Classroom Activities  
Annotated Bibliography/Resources  
Appendices-Standards

### **Overview**

This unit will explore cultural infusion by noting how a community identifies itself and is perceived by others from the images exhibited in the community's environment. The topic will focus on interpreting selected outdoor imagery and sculpture of Philadelphia's Chinatown: The 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mural, The Chinatown Fire Dept. Dragon Mural, The Royal Inn Dragon Mural, and the Visions of Paradise Mural. It will also focus on The Friendship Gate or Paifang, and Chinatown's commemorative sculpture, China Wedge. The curriculum will cross art and social studies by incorporating the history of Chinese immigration to the United States, Chinese folklore and customs, and the urban planning of Philadelphia's Chinatown.

A summary display, suggested by this unit, demonstrates art and festivity in a community also generates its growth. Learning and valuing the Chinese New Year's custom of displaying good wishes for others' happiness will benefit students by teaching them to be less self-centered, by increasing their global awareness and by building their tolerance of diversity. Practicing optimism will also teach students to turn from dwelling on the negative occurrences in their lives to channeling their energies into positive feelings about themselves and their surroundings.

### **Rationale**

The curriculum is designed for 6<sup>th</sup> grade, middle school students to benefit from learning how the Chinatown Community has prospered because of its persistence in maintaining a

positive image. The students need to learn that it is youth's responsibility to realize their community's dream of good fortune and prosperity. The unit will help them to understand how Asian pride teaches survival, respect for family, responsibility to the environment and to those sharing the environment.

The schools and the community centers of Philadelphia's Chinatown are the ambassadors of the community's dream. They invite their surrounding communities to take part in their customs and learn of Asian history. The Asian immigration legacy teaches youth that the rewards of surviving oppression are greater when optimism and hope are practiced openly and actively. China is one of the oldest civilizations in the world. It faced many conflicts and yet its culture flourishes in Chinatowns of many countries. This unit looks at Philadelphia's Chinatown as a model for how to preserve own communities.

Art created in Chinatown commemorates immigration and co-existence. American traders traveled to China because they found profit from China's resources: silk, gunpowder, tea and porcelain. When the Chinese traveled to America, to find their own profit in the gold rush, they also found American hostility to Asian laborers in their community. The laborers formed community services to manage their conflicts and transitions. Sometimes, migration to a new city was the only solution. The murals on Chinatown's business walls commemorate the ways the Asians adapted their traditions and trade skills in the new locations.

Unfortunately, the murals are often misinterpreted because of cultural differences. This unit will explore the origins of these multiple interpretations. It will also provide an opportunity for students to learn how Chinatown's community organizations and businesses emerged to help to fuse American and Asian cultures.

The Chinatown Community sets an example for West Philadelphia students in a number of ways. It models peace by creating organizations to negotiate conflicts between members of community and the city. It values family, by supporting institutions as schools, churches and community centers. It displays Asian good fortune icons and calligraphy for the children to depict and to reproduce. Children of Chinatown are encouraged to use their creativity to share good wishes. They write and display poems of being happy, and participate in open public performances and parades to celebrate good fortune and prosperity. The entire community encourages everyone to help it stay clean. The members of the community respect their Asian heritage and bring it honor. They promote their self-image as Asian-American achievers.

Unlike Chinatown, many of the school communities in West Philadelphia are fragmented. Overcrowding creates division into smaller communities within the school. Although these smaller communities are well coordinated, it is difficult to unify activities that include the entire school population - administration, teachers, staff, students and

parents. Efforts to promote school spirit are restricted to annual events surrounding graduation-events that emphasize the personal importance of this rite of passage, but not its value to the community. Results are little exchange between the school and the surrounding neighborhood.

An example is in our middle school. The graduation year provides a variety of memory paraphernalia and experiences for the graduate, the graduate's family and the graduate's school but not the community outside the school. Trophies and awards are presented on a separate day before the graduation, in isolated ceremonies. The school population is too large for all grade levels to honor individual accomplishments.

The school has tried to correct the problem by installing murals of African-American history painted by the students and resident artists, by inviting neighbors to speak to the students in Career Day events, by giving seasonal performances and trips and by raising donations to charitable funds. However these efforts to create a positive climate are inwardly focused. Attention to the neighborhood community, value of adult praise and involvement with mentoring for the entire school is lacking. Because student achievement and community pride is not displayed to the neighborhood, self-esteem of the students becomes lower. Student apathy passes to the parents and rebounds back to newly admitted students

Currently the school is grooming its image. A mural is in the planning for the outside wall, which encompasses the student entrance, the handicap entrance, and gateways to the bus stops. Our students are starting to cast their eyes away from the dismantled basketball courts to distant buildings higher than the schoolyard walls. They are beginning to compare their school with new or renovated surrounding schools. Gradually, our students are developing a global perspective on the school and themselves.

Our school student body is 95 percent African American with a growing population of Caribbean and African immigrants. Many of our students have never been to Chinatown. Asian culture to them is fast food restaurants; nail salons, martial arts studios and laundries. Asian studies and diversity are taught on the middle school level. Interaction and cultural absorption with other races is not always practiced.

Our students do not view their neighborhood as multi-cultural. The students need to understand that, Philadelphia honors cultural diversity, and promotes modernization. It uses urban renewal planning as a means to accommodate the increasing population and expanding tourist industry. The neglect of a community's appearance and the lack of energetic involvement by community members could lead to its redefinition or dissolution. The consequences are displacement or loss of homes, houses of worship, schools and businesses for the residents of that community. Displaying civic pride as is an important lesson in a forever-refurbished world.

Travel through Chinatown is unavoidable, when visiting some of Philadelphia's nearby historic landmarks. Passing through Chinatown's crowded and narrow streets can be an overwhelming experience. There are business signs everywhere displaying a diversity of Asian cultures and languages. Businesses such as restaurants, laundries stores and nail salons are surrounded by theaters, churches, hospitals, community centers, train terminals and hotels. It is important for our students to understand Chinatown's appearance is multicultural. The Chinese Americans live by and enjoy modern American lifestyles too.

Chinatown was not always a condensed populated area. Many of the buildings were vacant and deteriorating. The city officials felt Chinatown was the first impression and the last impression given to visitors of our city. The aesthetic impression was not good. The streets were narrow and dirty; they discouraged visitors wanting to see the historic area. The unpopularity also discouraged business and trade. A city campaign began to revive Philadelphia.

From the 1960's to present date, the city's urban planning challenged Chinatown's existence. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 3) The Vine Street Expressway, redevelopment of Independence Hall, Gallery I and II shopping malls, an expressway ramp at 9th street, a proposed plan for a federal prison at 8th and Callowhill, plans for a new baseball stadium, plans for a new casino and finally, the construction of the new Convention Center, drastically decreased the size of the community. New development plans continually threaten to fragment Chinatown. In some cases, the community came together to prevent undesirable impositions that would have had negative effects on the residents. Political activity was not enough. The community leaders felt the need to educate outsiders in their values. Small outdoor protests captured attention on television by using posters and loud chants pleading, "Save Chinatown".

The community grew an understanding of an appealing image's power and Chinatown's impression of skid row was cleansed. Businesses changed over ownership and removed most windows announcing tattoo parlors and adult magazines. Restaurants and import shops emerged. The new entrepreneurs chose to perpetuate their cultural past by posting their business signs in Chinese and other Asian languages. This influenced the city to make the street signs and civic building signs bi-lingual, using English and Chinese. The telephone booths resemble pagodas. Private businesses added architectural edifices of ancient Chinese palaces and murals.

The success and good fortune of past dynasties are a recurring theme in Chinese iconography. China suffered through many periods of war, poverty, famine and oppression, but it rebounded by perseverance and looking for positive opportunities. It was trade, resourcefulness and adaptability that led the Chinese to find employment in America and brought the Chinese to settle in a warehouse neighborhood, now known as Philadelphia's Chinatown.

Therefore, Chinatown's residents also honor their social past of living in old factory buildings converted into apartments. Most storeowners kept the old brick constructions instead of building replacing structures with trendy sterile and streamline architectural facades. A small brick Chinese wall separates the Vine Street expressway from the community. Murals are set behind the wall, to advertise Chinatown's existence. The first impression, now, is the cleanliness of the streets. Removing trash and clutter is a part of a community effort to make the Chinatown safer and to increase the number of permanent family households.

The news of the community's efforts, to pronounce its existence as a residential district, reached global proportions. In 1982, the city accepted an authentic Chinese gate, "paifang" from its sister city Tianjin, China. The gate or the Chinese "Friendship Arch" stands proudly as at the heart of Chinatown's business district at 10th and Arch Streets. The four story tall structure is a beautiful piece of public art, more ornate than most North American paifangs. It stands to symbolize the boundaries of Chinatown connects across our planet to China. The bond honors the attempts to keep the Philadelphia Chinatown's existence strong.

The "Save Chinatown" movement is still relevant today. A sculpture in the new Pennsylvania Convention Center, *China Wedge* significantly marks one quarter of the regional area of Chinatown, taken by the city to build the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The sculpture is a mountain of empty China porcelain bowls, wedged under an escalator.

Its first impression is a misinterpretation by some, a reminder of overpopulation and hunger in China. A shock is realizing the statement is also about Chinatown's past. The Asian immigrants worked in undesirable jobs, for meager wages, forcing them to live in crowded quarters and in undesirable locations. The escalator possibly represents modern conveniences and moving upward to progress. It might also be seen as an oppressive force, overshadowing the traditional style rice bowls, loss of restaurants and businesses. Some of the bowls are shattered, possibly expressing the unhappy situation of their cramped and crowded existing space. The boundary battles of Chinatown and its notable landmarks show how community territory can shrink and grow drastically within a short amount of time. Community boundaries are not set permanently and are not always visible.

Four Chinatown murals also serve as landmarks to distinguish community territory. The messages of these murals and other monumental structures are not always apparent to the viewer who lacks knowledge of the traditions and myths of the Chinese culture. They are not fetishes to ward off outsiders, but testimonies to the past, present and future of Chinatown. They ask the public to understand the residents have suffered from displacement and disappointment. They state that the residents have found each

other and support each other's lives. They rejoice in their prosperity and good fortune and welcome others to celebrate and continue with interaction. They especially remind all to respect heritage. It is important for our students to understand they are a part of this community too.

In the same manner, a community can extend connections to origins of its past. Lily Yeh's tile mural, *Visions of Paradise*, (1988), at 9th and Race introduces simplified concepts of heritage, immigration and regeneration through the stories of the gold mountain, the tree of life and the birds of paradise.

The birds, in Lily Yeh's tree of life, symbolize those who journeyed from many locations to gather into a new community. One notices the birds are not all the same type. Two in the upper corners are transparent and spiritual; four are doves or messengers of peace from the four corners of the world. Peacock hens guard their silken nests at the bottom boughs, while young males begin to spread their wings to fly. The branches come together as two hands in prayer and protective containment. "We come, from many worlds, to stay together, as a community", (Lily Yeh, 1988).

Lily Yeh's mural is a reminder of the Asian immigration story, Gold Mountain. A Gold Mountain dominates the background of her mural and five ornate gold mountains appear at the bottom. The epic is told in Alison Behnke's, *Chinese In America*, copyrighted 2005, by Lerner Publications Company. The gold mountain story is of the Chinese laborers who came to America to fulfill dreams of prosperity. During the early 18th century many nations were trading with China. British traders began shipping opium from India. The Chinese doctors found use for Opium as medicine to ease pain, not realizing the power of its addiction. (Behnke, 11-14)

The Chinese government tried to stop the Opium importation by making it a capital crime. The government confiscated and destroyed the supplies. In response, Britain sent a military force to help the British traders. This started the Opium Wars in 1839. China had to surrender land to Britain for trade, allowing foreigners to settle in China. These areas were called Little Americas. (Behnke, 14-16)

Later, high taxes demanded by Manchu rulers created poverty conditions. In rebellion, the common people supported a secret society called the taipings; who attacked the Manchus and created a civil war. It was illegal for Chinese to emigrate. Many left illegally, to other Asian countries and to America. (Behnke, 16-19)

The immigrants faced danger in their journeys; kidnappings, forced labor, and heavy debts believing they would make a fortune. The journey took four months in crowded ships and cost six years to pay. When they arrived they needed help to adjust to the new land. Representatives of the Chinese Six Companies found mostly dormitories and bunkhouses for the immigrants to stay. Most stayed with people who spoke the same

dialect. (Behnke, 22-24)

Fongs were hospitality places; where people played cards, received mail, dined and slept. Fongs also had a banking system. Family associations of people with the same last name did translation work; help to pay for funerals and celebrations. The Fongs and family associations sent representatives to a civic organization called the benevolent association. The benevolent association helped represent the community to the city. (Behnke, 27-29)

Laws were passed to make life difficult for the Chinese in California. The Foreign Miners' Tax, 1852, charged foreign miners twenty dollars a month. Although many foreign miners could pass as Americans in appearance, the Chinese miners could not change their appearance. Chinese at that time wore long pigtailed queues. Cutting off the hair prevented their return to China. The Queue Ordinance, 1873, forced all Chinese prisoners to cut their hair to the length of one inch. (Behnke, 29-33)

The 1848 gold rush in California and higher wages attracted Chinese males who wanted to take the gold and return home. The increasing number of Chinese immigrants created a concern. The Exclusion Act of 1882 stopped most Chinese from bringing their families to the United States. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1-4)

In 1862, the gold fields in California were depleted, the Chinese helped lay the tracks for the Union Pacific Railroad. The Central Pacific Railroad used the Chinese Six Companies to help find ten thousand laborers. In 1869, the railroad was completed, leaving twenty-five thousand men competing for work. Many went back to China. Others labored for poor wages, on plantations and in factories, restaurants, hotels and shops. They also served as domestics. (Behnke, 33-36)

Many accused the Chinese of taking work away from the Americans. Riots broke out and mobs set fire to Chinese neighborhoods. The Chinese were not allowed to become citizens and had no rights. A law in California passed stating that "people of color"- Asians, African, African-Americans and Native Americans- could not testify against white people in court. (Behnke, 38.)

In response to the anti-Chinese hostility, 1869 San Francisco citizens formed the Chinese Protective Society. Finances prevented the society from lasting. Rioting in Californian Chinatowns became too difficult to defend against. The Chinese went to other large cities across the United States, eventually arriving in Philadelphia. (Behnke, 38-39)

Lily Yeh's peaceful, symbolic gold mountain portrayal compares and contrasts with the *125th Anniversary Mural* by Arturo Ho (1996, 10<sup>th</sup> and Winter Streets.)The anniversary mural pictorially explains struggle and perseverance to survive. Arturo Ho's

mural shows a smiling Chinese immigrant, wearing a queue to show pride of his ancestry and wringing out his sweat and tears to create waterways, on which ships sailed to America. Asian farmers watch as they toil in the fields. The waterway turns into a river. Across the river, there are representations of work, the Chinese found in America: the railroad, the laundries and the restaurants. The river on one side and a highway emerging from the distance become the barriers of the Vine Street Expressway. They separate an Asian neighborhood from the business district. On the road are bulldozers being kicked by Cecelia Moy Yep. Signs read better houses and no prisons in Chinatown. The road stretches over a book read by a child. It ends with children playing happily.

The mural expresses the ideas of respect and empathy. It shows how the Chinese workers changed their careers as they migrated across the United States. It also locates the transportation companies and businesses landmarks of Chinatown the Chinese Gate, the Delaware River, the Reading Railroad Terminal, the Convention Center, Vine Street, and Northern Chinatown. It displays number 913, the address of the birthplace of Chinatown, Fong's Laundry, now a restaurant. Most of the Chinese immigrants in Philadelphia were the male laborers who migrated from the west. They formed "bachelor societies" in impoverished neighborhoods. Chinese immigrants were also brought east to New Jersey from San Francisco to work in laundries. Many times factory owners hired the Chinese to work as strike breakers. From New Jersey they crossed to Philadelphia finding only unfavorable jobs in hand laundries, restaurants and small specialty shops. There were those who sent portions of their meager earnings to their family in China. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1-4)

The term Visions of Paradise also compares and contrasts to the founding of Philadelphia. William Penn received Pennsylvania from King Charles II in 1681. Around Philadelphia, was already established, by the Swedes, trappers and traders. Penn envisioned Philadelphia to be a place where everyone could live together peacefully. He made a peace treaty with the Native Americans. By the 1700's, the government honored William Penn's vision of Paradise by outlawing slavery. (USEN, 11)

Philadelphia was a major port, from the 1700's to the 1800's, when trade with China was at its height. From 1790 to 1800, Philadelphia was the capital of the United States. Tea parlors and silk became the fashion. In 1800, Philadelphia was the largest city in the United States. Immigration, migration, and the industrial revolution created an overcrowded and dirty city. Penn's design for a garden society began to disappear. (USEN, 11)

In 1892, the streetcars, called trolleys, became electrified enabling the population to move to the suburbs. (USEN, 15) The buildings in Philadelphia's Chinatown, from 1870 to 1890, were deteriorating factories converted into burlesque theaters, hotels and rooming houses. Although Chinese settlement in the area can be traced to 1845, the birth of Chinatown is revered with Lee Fong opening the first laundry in 1870. As immigration



to the neighborhood increased, the Chinese opened more laundries, restaurants and grocery stores. They also built temples for worship. By 1890, the area was inhabited by approximately 700 Chinese. Most of the residents were males from Canton. (Asian Arts Initiative, 2 - 3)

In 1930 Japan's attacks against China, and the American involvement in World War I began to change the image of the Chinese population in the U.S. Job opportunities opened and federal policies began to modify. On December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor was attacked. The Chinese Americans served in the war and some white Americans brought back "war-brides" after 1943. The end of the Chinese Exclusion act in 1943 brought a new wave of Chinese immigrants into Philadelphia. Organizations like the Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church and school helped in their settlement. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1- 4)

From 1943 until 1965 a total of 105 Chinese a year were allowed to immigrate. In 1965 the quota was lifted and the rights to citizenship were granted. Within the last century, Philadelphia's Chinatown population has increased to 4000 residents. (Asian Arts Initiative, 2)

At this time in Philadelphia Urban Planning began to threaten Chinatown. In 1960 the Market East, the Vine Street Expressway and the Convention Center created the demolition and lost of many homes and institutions. In 1966 the Holy Redeemer Church and School was targeted by a plan to build an expressway on the northern edge of Chinatown. The Chinese Benevolent Union did not intervene. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 3)

The younger American - born Chinese began a media campaign. Cecelia Moy Yep encouraged organizations of Chinatown to form the Committee for the Advance Preservation of the Chinese Community. It later became the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation. Their visual campaigns, demonstrations, and petitions opened the gate for city negotiations. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 3) The Chinese Community began to embrace the concepts of power in advertising and mass media. The campaign took 20 years, which resulted in saving the church and school. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 3)

Displaying pride in community and pride in ethnicity to surrounding cultures creates the revered energy that attracts trade and prosperity. It is reminiscent of ancestral China's periods of good fortune. The Chinese New Year occurs between January 21<sup>st</sup> and February 19<sup>th</sup>, on a date that aligns the first new moon of the year with the Chinese calendar. It lasts for fifteen days. During this time the Chinese contemplate on their ancestral past. (Jango-Cohen,8) Phases of the festivities are displayed in Judith Jango-Cohen's *Chinese New Year*. (The first public celebration of the Chinese New Year, in Philadelphia, was in 1960. The Chinatown YMCA, wishing to share heritage of piety and

respect for elders with the community, initiated it. (Balch Institute, 1)

In 1962, the Evening Bulletin noted the tradition of cleaning up the community was not in affect. The city stated if it were possible to keep the community clean, the character of Philadelphia's Chinatown would not be altered. Mr. T.T. Chang requested help from the sanitation department. The help was denied. Mr. Chang then promoted the Chinese New Year encouraging the community to participate in cleansing for an appealing image. All dirt is removed from the house to invite good luck. The celebration of the Chinese New Year spurred an annual clean-up tradition in Chinatown. The cleansing in years advanced to renovations and new beginnings of businesses. (Balch Institute, 1)

A popular icon from the Chinese New Year custom is the dragon. The dragon's appearance is a composite of other animals. The dragon is from Chinese mythology it represents strength and brings good luck. "It has the eyes of a rabbit, the mouth of a camel, the antlers of a deer, the scales of a carp, the whiskers of a catfish, the talons of an eagle, the legs of a tiger, the ears of a cow, and the body of a serpent. The dragon is always at the end of the New Year parade, accompanied by firecrackers. (Hoyt, 28)

"Dragons are shy but powerful spirits of the waters. They control rains, floods, clouds currents- all the movement of water. They bring life giving water to those who honor them, but if annoyed they can unleash hurricanes, storms, and all manners of disturbances." Dragons come in many shapes and sizes. A pearl is found under the chin. Dragons are vain. They are a force for good and have many admirable qualities; strength, and ability to bring peace and prosperity.  
(Nunes-authors note page)

Fay Robinson's explanation of the dragon possibly explains why the Dragon Mural, 1985, by Hedy Melvin, is on the wall of the Royal Inn at 10<sup>th</sup> and Cherry Streets. Hedy Melvin, friend of the owners Thomas and Teresa Lee, is not Chinese herself. Hedy was requested by the owners to paint a mural, making the area surrounding Philadelphia's Paifang more festive. She was asked to use dragons resembling those in Philadelphia's Paifang.

The mural shows the dragon rising from the waters entranced by a floating pearl of wisdom. The dragon rising from water possibly represents the emergence of Philadelphia's Chinatown during the 1800's. The pearl symbolizes ideals of Philadelphia, the capital of the United States, a trade center, fashion center, and a vision of peace. Three carps the symbols of luck are at the mural bottom. (Melvin, 2006)

Miho Nunes last page tribute best explains why the dragon appears on the Philadelphia's Fire Department Engine Company 20 Mural at 10th and Cherry Streets. The fire department is called upon to rescue residents from floods caused by storms.

Firemen use the power of water to control unruly crowds. They are respected for the peace and prosperity that they bring. The image of the dragon educates the public to have cultural reverence for the fire department. Without this knowledge of Asian mythology, the dragon, with its flame-filled mouth, seems a fearful rather than peaceful image.

All firehouses in Philadelphia have an emblem for representation. Engine 20 not only has a dragon mural on its building, but also uses the dragon as its emblem. (O'Malley, 2006)

Chinatown's public art pieces have many common bonds that unify the community's appearance. They are in a close proximity to each other, because the Chinatown community is small. Each art form is friendly. Each has an optimistic and beneficial reference to China and Chinatown's past. Each exemplifies bonding in a community, helping each other, and seeking knowledge to obtain the finest standards of life. The young Asian-American culture enjoys sharing the community virtues that are passed down. They smile when they talk of Chinatown.

These are the virtues West Philadelphia students need to reinforce. The success of a community is in keeping harmony. A community is not kept intact by a governing oppressing force. Leaders are chosen by the willingness to serve the community, especially through spoken or written language. Many young West Philadelphians are fixed on external beauty and physical strength. However, the admiration of West Philadelphia from the outside communities would be greater, if more students visualized themselves as activists to make West Philadelphia a paradise.

Chinatown's public art yields messages of Chinese immigration to America. Maps verify the historical events. By looking at 19<sup>th</sup> century paintings of Chinatown, the students will learn how a community is changed by time and economy. Learning to reproduce some of the images may teach students preservation is not an easy task, especially when the advanced technology of today is lacking. Exhibition of learning is an important part of the learning process, especially when students at this age are critical of themselves. Communication with others provides rewards for a student's successful efforts. Displaying art in a public space changes the ownership from the student to the community.

## **Objectives**

1. By studying the four site-selected murals, and two site-selected sculptures of Chinatown, the Chinese Dragon Mural, by Hedy Melvin, The Engine Company 20, Fire Department Mural, the 125th Anniversary Mural by Arturo Ho, Giz N. Phung, H. Tran and the Paradise Mural by Lily Yeh. The public sculptures are The Friendship Gate and China Wedge, students will learn about the symbolism employed and how it relates to Chinese immigrant history.

2. Students will learn the significance of the site selection, for the art pieces, by investigating community components on a 2006 Chinatown street map, for instance, landmarks of Chinatown, geographic features, main roads and highways, schools and government buildings, churches and community centers.
3. Students will learn evolution of Chinatown's neighborhood community using an 1876 ward map of Chinatown.
4. Students will learn the role of leadership by praising the positive and guiding a community's bonding in the creation of a display.

### **Strategies**

Visual references are extremely important to comprehend culture. Observing works of art demonstrates styles, themes, and points of view. A great variety of visual references is suggested; displays, graphic organizers, slide shows, films, teacher demonstrations and maps. The class meets once a week for seventy – two minutes, the impact must be strong to carry understanding between lessons. Written notations and drawings, inspired by writing prompts and discussions, will be stored in student sketch journals. Transferring ideas to festivity displays is transitioned by clean-up campaigns, and written kudos from the students. Students sometimes are shy about displaying their art. Assessments and encouragement notes written by their peers will help student esteem. A community festival helps students to understand art communicates. A summary survey assesses and rewards student efforts.

### **Classroom Activities**

Lesson #1 Chinatown as a multi-cultural community

*Grade Instructional Level 6*

*Standards Addressed:* Pennsylvania State Standard 9.2 A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H

*Goals:*

1. Students will identify the appropriateness and use of Asian commercial art and Asian fine art.
2. Students will learn how communities use art to create a distinctive appearance, and how this appearance demonstrates social and cultural values.

*Vocabulary:*

1. community - an interacting population of various kinds of individuals living in a common location
2. landmark - a visible object that marks a location, often used as a point of reference
3. location - a position or site sometimes marked by a distinguishing feature
4. public art - art located in public places, experienced and seen by the public during the course of daily existence. This can be sculpture, murals, mosaics, fountains, etc.
5. sculpture - a three dimensional piece of work
6. site - specific – an artwork created specifically for a particular place.
7. symbol - something that represents or suggests something else.
8. values – a measure of qualities that determines worth, desirability, usefulness or importance.
9. calligraphy - the art or skill of producing beautiful handwriting.
10. logo-a design used by an organization on its letterhead, advertising material, and signs as an emblem by which the organization can be easily recognized.

*Activities:*

1. Students will sketch motifs of Asian products from their community.
2. Students will speculate origins and meanings of illustrations.
3. Students record motifs onto a timeline.
4. Students will record Calligraphy and its translation.
5. Students will view, discuss and analyze slides of Chinatown's Commercial art
6. Students will view, discuss and analyze slides of Chinatown's Fine art
7. Students will diagram learned differences of cultural infusion
8. Students will draw an interpretation of a cultural icon

The introduction of the unit will begin with photographs of Asian businesses and their products within the community of the school. Students will sketch and write in journals the social references of the businesses and identify each business by name and then describe its services and products. They will also write the cultural references, for example, pictures of pandas, bamboo, calligraphy, Asian people, anime, pagodas, etc. Finally, students will write a conclusion if the business advertisement is Asian, Asian American, or American and explain why the business advertising appears friendly, or not friendly, to someone who is a stranger to the business.

Students will share their responses by reading them out loud and receive agreement from the class. Students will learn what are logos are different from the Asian calligraphy associated with the store name.

Students will participate in a Bingo Slide Show while learning of the public art in Chinatown.

Students will discuss the dragon mural of the Chinatown Fire Station pertaining to the importance of its friendly image to the success of the community's fire safety.

Students will discuss the dragon mural by Hedy Melvin pertaining to meaning and Asian painting style and if it expresses good fortune and happiness.

*Conclusion:*

Ask students to draw a dragon. Remind the students Asian dragons are of mist and water. They are friendly. Remind them fire-breathing dragons are western civilization. Reinforce by providing a description of a dragon and a composite of pictures of different animals for students to enhance their pictures.

It has the eyes of a rabbit, the mouth of a camel, the antlers of a deer, the scales of a carp, the whiskers of a catfish, the talons of an eagle, the legs of a tiger, the ears of a cow, and the body of a serpent.”

*Assessment:*

Using a quality work display, students are to evaluate if dragons are Asian, American, or Asian American. Do the dragons have special features not mentioned in the composite descriptions? Have students write good wishes and thanks for the artists who shared their work.

Lesson #2 History of Chinatown

*State Standards Addressed:* 9.2 A, B, D, E, F, G

*Goals:*

1. Students will be introduced to urban planning by studying the save Chinatown movement: The studies will empower students with an understanding why maps change and boundary lines are not permanent markers of a community.
2. Students will learn commercial landmarks are also displays of public art and public art is a form of communication

*Objectives:*

1. Students will familiarize themselves with the location of Chinatown, by reading current maps, by identifying the appearance and location of boundary landmarks, and by noting a few cultural landmarks.

2. Students will reaffirm history of Chinatown by relocating landmarks on an 1875 ward map.
3. Students will discuss and analyze the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mural of Chinatown as a pictorial map
4. Students will discuss and analyze China Wedge as a population map.
5. Students will discuss and analyze Visions of Paradise as a map of the future

*Presentation/demonstration*

Pictures of early Chinatown can be found on Pennsylvania's Historic Society Website to be displayed.

Current pictures of Chinatown should also be displayed

.

*Vocabulary:*

1. ward- an administrative or electoral division of an area such as a city, town, or country
2. scale- a ratio representing the size of an illustration, especially a map or a model in relation to the object it represents
3. lot –a small area of land that has fixed boundaries
4. square -an open, usually, four sided area in a city or town where two or more streets often containing trees, grass, and benches for recreational use.
5. dry goods-goods such as fabrics, clothing, and notions, as distinct from hardware, food, and other products.
6. livery stables- where horses and carriages are kept for rent
7. brewery- a company that brews beer or a building where beer or a similar drink is brewed
8. armory – a place where weapons are stored.
9. Farmer's Market- a place where produce and livestock is sold.
10. Homeopathic- treatment of a disease by giving drugs
11. burlesque- theater involving striptease
12. immigrant- a person who moves to another country to permanently live.
13. gim sa-Gold Mountain

*Materials:*

Journal books, maps of Philadelphia, picture of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary mural, picture of China Wedge, picture of Visions of Paradise and historic profiles of Philadelphia and of the United States Asian Immigration

*Activities - Mapping:*

1. Examine a map from William Penn. William Penn's plan for Philadelphia. It was a community where everyone lived together in peace. His draft of the city contained

four common squares, and a center square. Penn believed in a garden society. Chinatown evolves from Franklin Square. What are the other three? Name other parks within the city boundaries.

2. On a 2006 map of Philadelphia's Chinatown section, students will map locations of the Friendship- Gate (Paifang) 10<sup>th</sup> and Arch, Trocadero, 1003 Arch Street, 11<sup>th</sup> and Arch, the Independence Branch of the Free Library (formally the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 18 S. 7<sup>th</sup> St., the Vision of Paradise Mural, 9<sup>th</sup> and Race Sts. the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Chinatown Mural 10<sup>th</sup> and Winter Sts., the House of Dragons Firehouse, 10<sup>th</sup> and Cherry Sts. Fong's Laundry 913 Race St., the Royal Inn Dragon Mural, 10<sup>th</sup> and Cherry, the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, Race and Vine Sts., merging at 5<sup>th</sup> st to the Delaware River, the Philadelphia Convention Center Arch between 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, the Holy Redeemer Church and School, Vine street, the Chinese Cultural and Community Center 125 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street, the Chinese Y.M.C.A. 225 N.10<sup>th</sup> st., Joy Tsin Lau Restaurant, 1026 Race St., Mei Hsian Lou,, the Asian Arts Initiative ,1315 Cherry St. and the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation 301-305 N. 9<sup>th</sup> street,

3. Students will research and describe the community of Chinatown in 1875 by examining businesses. In general, the Chinatown community existed near the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, Arch Street in the south, 8<sup>th</sup> Street in the east, and 13<sup>th</sup> street in the west

3a. Market Street: the Farmer's Market, Bulls Head Hotel, Brush Factory,

3b. Filbert Street: Homeopathic Hospital, Brewery and Malt House, stables, Immanuel Presbyterian Church, stables and Dry Goods, stables, a public school, foundry and a machine shop, Adelphia Opera House,

3c. Arch Street: Arch Street Presbyterian Church, Arch Street Opera House, City National Bank, carriage factory, frame manufacturing company, notions, the Arch Street Theater, the St. Cloud Hotel,

3d. Cherry Street; Philadelphia and Reading Railroad and Company, Printers Ink Factory, bookbinderies, Agnew School, African Church, Friends School, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, perfume factory, liveries and gas fixture manufacturers, Central Presbyterian Church, trunk factory,

3e. Race Street: Head Quarters Philadelphia Fire Department, slate works, bazaar, iron foundry,

3f. Vine Street: Central M.E. Church, marble yard,

3g. Franklin Square: between Race and Vine Sts.

*Analyze:*

1. What types of business are close to 14<sup>th</sup> or Broad Street? Why is it important to mention Arch Street in the Names of the businesses? How does pride reflect in the location and name of a business?



2. Describe 3 theater houses in Chinatown.
3. Journal entry prompt: Why is Chinatown an exciting place to visit? Create a Chinese scroll advertising the historical and cultural changes of a main street in Chinatown.

*Conclusion:*

Guided classroom discussion:

Examine China Wedge. Explain why are a mountain of broken Chinese bowls are under an escalator in the Civic Center?

Examine the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mural. Does it portray the businesses in Chinatown or is it stating more?

Examine Visions of Paradise. Describe William Penn's Vision of Paradise. What steps did he take to achieve it? Did his dreams stay true? Explain why or why not? Explain the Chinese Vision of Paradise in America. What is the meaning of Gold Mountain? Did the dreams of the Chinese Immigrants come true? Explain why or why not? What are the paradise dreams of Philadelphia's Chinatown in 1966? Did the dreams come true? Explain why or why not.

*Assessment:*

Create a scroll of Chinatown, by drawing a street scene. Represent a few of the businesses of the past and of the present in the drawing. What historical events were taking place? Write an explanation why Chinatown is a great place to visit.

*Follow-up:*

Draw an Immigration Paifang with 8 horizontal rails.

Assign each rail to a community organization listed.

On the rail, write the name and definition of the community organizations created by the Chinese Immigrants, by date and purpose

1. taipings
2. Fong
3. Chinese Six Companies
4. Chinese Protective Society
5. Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church and School
6. Chinatown's W.M.C.A
7. Committee for Advance Preservation of the Chinese Community
8. Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation

Lesson # 3 Lessons of Optimism from Chinatown

*Standards Addressed:* 9.1 A, B

*Goals:*

Students will learn the existence of a community is reaffirmed and bonded in friendship. Students will learn methods of display can invite and build community participation.

*Objectives:*

Students will review the Chinese New Year Customs. Students will participate in a school clean up campaign, create happiness wishes for their achievers and hang an outdoor clothesline art show. Students will create a dragon clothesline.

*Presentation/demonstration:*

Display images of the Chinese Zodiac  
Display popular Asian floral paintings, bamboo, peony, and magnolia  
Display calligraphy and Chinese symbols of luck

*Vocabulary:*

1. pearl-something highly valued or esteemed
2. scroll-a roll of paper or parchment for a writing document
3. paifang- Chinese gate
4. beautify- to make something pleasing and impressive to look at.
5. exposition -the act of showing or displaying something for respect
6. critique- a written or broadcast assessment of something, usually a creative work, with comments on its good and bad qualities.
7. I Ching Coin, token of prosperity

*Strategies:*

Preparing for a festival display.

Students will discuss how various media; techniques and processes can be used to communicate ideas in different ways.

Students will discuss how extended community members can participate in the presentation and festivities.

Students will display pride to outside communities by creating other forms of visuals, announcement flyers, secret pal letters, posters of achievers of the month,

Students will create the wave movement of a dragon by varying height and angles of the display. Parts of a dragon body are placed between pictures and pearls of wisdom.

Students can also hang Scroll Murals and Paifangs, which convey community efforts.

Students can conduct verbal or written interviews of their projects.

*Conclusion:*

Create a survey listing the messages interpreted by the pictorial representations and by the written pearls of wisdom. Ask members of the community to first view the display and then write a reactionary summary of their strongest impressions, include specific references. Compare responses to the list to note accuracy and misinterpretations.

*Assessment:*

What was your favorite piece of artwork in the exhibit? Explain why.

What is the most important thing you learned from this piece?

What was your least favorite piece of artwork in the exhibit? Explain why.

What would you do to improve this piece?

What did you hope to see in that we didn't do?

Enrichment Ideas Follow – up Lesson #3 Dragon Mural preparation of festival component

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Annotated List of Materials for Classroom Use:

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## **Appendix-Standards**

### 9.1 Production, Performance and Exhibition of Visual Arts

- 9.1 A Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the humanities. Elements: color, form/shape, line, space, texture and value. Principles: balance, contrast, emphasis/focal point, movement/rhythm, proportion/scale, repetition, unity/harmony.
- 9.1 B Recognize, know, use and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts elements and principles to produce, review, and revise original works of art; paint, draw, craft, sculpt, print, design for environment, communication, multi-media.
- 9.1 D Demonstrate knowledge of at least two styles within visual art through the exhibition of unique works.

9.1 E Communicate a unifying theme or point of view through production of works of visual art.

9.1 F Explain works of others within visual art through exhibition

## 9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts:

9.2 A Explain the historical, cultural and social context of an individual work in the arts.

9.2 B Relate works in the arts chronologically to historical events, e.g., 10,000 B.C.E. to the present

9.2 C Relate works in the arts to varying styles and genre and to the periods in which they

9.2 D Analyze a work of art from its historical and cultural perspective

9.2 E Analyze how historical events and culture impacts forms, techniques and purposes of works of art

9.2 F Know and use appropriate vocabulary used between social studies and the arts and humanities.

9.2 G Relate works of art to geographical regions: Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North, South, and Central America

9.2 H Identify, describe and analyze the work of Pennsylvania artists in the visual arts.

## Lesson #1 Performance Content Descriptors:

- Identify one significant work of art and recognize its historical, cultural, and social context
- Identify artwork and artifacts from diverse historical periods
- Identify the chronology of artwork as related to historical events.
- View and discuss a variety of artwork created throughout history representing various styles and genre
- Identify the style and genre of specific artworks and artifacts as belonging to particular historical periods.

## Lesson#2 Performance and Content Descriptors:

- Identify one significant work of art and recognize its historical, cultural, and social context.
- Identify artwork and artifacts from divers historical periods.
- Identify the chronology of artwork as related to historical events
- View and discuss a variety of artwork created throughout history representing various styles and genre.

- Identify the style and genre of specific artworks and artifacts as belonging to particular historical periods.
- Recognize the significance of a work, may be determined by its historical and cultural perspective.
- Discuss how historical and cultural work view and experiences influence artists and their work
- Identify characteristics of art and artifacts in order to determine function or purpose
- Identify a variety of artwork and artifacts from diverse cultures and historical periods.

#### Lesson#3 Performance and Content Descriptors:

- Evaluate the characteristics of the elements and principles of visual art. Arrange the elements of art according to the principles of art to create visual compositions. Demonstrate use of color and color relationships. Use the elements and principles of art to create the illusion of depth. Evaluate characteristics of the elements and principles of art.
- Identify and experiment with drawing/painting media, techniques, and processes. Identify and experiment with printmaking media, techniques and processes.

#### Lesson #3 Enrichment Performance and Content Descriptors:

- Use appropriate art vocabulary to describe, demonstrate, classify, and evaluate works of Art.
- Create works of art that reflect specific styles (i.e. Classicism, Impressionism, Cubism or Surrealism).
- Identify and discuss unifying themes or point of view in the form of subject matter, symbols and/ or ideas.
- Create artwork that communicates a theme or point of view
- Exhibit work in such a way that demonstrates appreciation of the contribution of peers