

Introducing the concept of culture to our students was an interesting challenge. Our Rooftop culture is often described by the phrase, "Rooftop Spirit", but our community also illustrates many other different aspects of culture, such as ethnicity and gender. Personal artifacts can reveal clues about a specific culture. The characters in House on Mango Street are often defined by props, and actors even become objects like music boxes and trees.

Classroom Still Life

Ms. Callaway's 4th grade class chose objects from their classroom for their watercolor still life paintings — musical instruments, the California flag, a waterbottle, and pages from the latest chapter of Harry Potter — after studying paintings by Vermeer, Thiebaud and Warhol — artists very much of their time and place.



Paintings viewed and discussed by students as examples of self-portraits

Vincent van Gogh "La chambre de Van Gogh a Arles"

Wayne Thiebaud "Cakes"

Jan Vermeer "Young Woman with a Water Pitcher"

Andy Warhol "Campbell's Soup Can"

- **What do you see in these paintings?**
- **Describe the formal elements of the painting using line, color, shape, texture**
How are the objects depicted within the composition of the painting? (Up close, repeated)
How is scale and point of view important in each of these paintings?
- **Can you determine the time period of these paintings?**
- **Create a still life painting using objects from your classroom using watercolor and pencil, focusing on scale and composition.**

Julia Morgan at Rooftop Fall 2002

"House on Mango Street"

Line of Inquiry: How are cultural and family dynamics portrayed in the Word for Word production of Sandra Cisneros's "House on Mango Street"?

Guiding Questions:

- What is family?
(Naming and Nicknames)
- What is the importance of 'home' in these stories?
- What is culture?
- How do we bridge cultures?
- How do we bridge families?