

Sonoma County Museum

*Nosotras:*  
Portraits of Latinas

July 10 - September 12, 2010



Educator Guide

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[SonomaCountyMuseum.org](http://SonomaCountyMuseum.org)

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## Overview

## Exhibition Description

As a Mexican-American born on the border and raised in middle America, exhibition organizer Virginia Dodier—photography historian, curator, and director of the Carlsbad Museum and Art Center in New Mexico—has, like many other Hispanic women and girls, experienced the feeling of living in two worlds. She organized *Nosotras: Portraits of Latinas* to present positive images of women’s lives lived “between here and the homeland.”

*Nosotras* (Spanish for the feminine “us” or “we”) features 50 photographs, both black-and-white and color, from eight emerging photographers documenting the lives and culture of Latinas, most first- or second-generation immigrants to the United States. These striking images convey dignity and strength in the faces, families, and traditions of multiple generations. For instance, in the series “*From Inside the Home: A Portrait of Mexican Immigrant Women*,” Lupita Murillo Tinnen documents how women and their homes reflect the blending of cultures, while Karen Bucher’s “*Growing Up in the Southwest*” examines life in the booming city of Las Cruces, New Mexico, and Patricia Gomez explores her “*Family Connections*” on both sides of the border in Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexico.

The exhibition also features selections from five additional photographers: Angela Cappetta’s “*Glendalis*” series follows the activities of one young woman and her friends and family; Nereida García-Ferraz’s “*Habana Vieja/Old Havana*” merges old snapshot negatives with new digital techniques to create a sense of memory and displacement that transcends barriers of time and space; Mary Teresa Giancoli’s “*Mexican Lives, Mexican Rituals, Stories from New York City*” depicts the experience of immigration and the preservation of cultural traditions uprooted from a distant homeland; Scott Nava’s “*Following the Harvest*” reaffirms the pride and resilience of the Latin American community in Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood; and Tone Stockenström’s “*Just Because I Live in America*” follows one Mexican-American immigrant family in a visual contemplation of the impact of immigration upon the social structures of family and home.

Although diverse personal, familial, and cultural influences resonate through each photographer’s images, Scott Nava summarizes the exhibition’s powerful impact and universal appeal with a poignant recollection from his childhood: “As a boy ... I lived in a world that was part Mexican and part American,” says Nava. “The smell of tamales on the stovetop dominated the house, but we would be called to dinner in English. I was a part of both worlds, but not a member of either, and so I couldn’t — and now cannot — ignore the differences. Memories from two cultures shape who I am today.”

## Reference Materials

## Text Panels

*These panels hang in the gallery alongside the photographs in Nosotras. They introduce visitors to the exhibition, and discuss themes of identity, homeland, and rites and celebrations.*

*NB: All these panels are also in Spanish in the exhibition, and a Spanish-language version of the text is available to educators. Contact the Sonoma County Museum Education Curator for assistance.*

### **Nosotras: Portraits of Latinas Introduction Panel**

The word “nosotras” is the feminine form of “we” or “us” in Spanish. It can mean “us girls,” having fun, sharing stories. Alternatively, it can be translated as “we women,” an expression of strength in numbers with a political emphasis. Those using “nosotras” as a group identity include Latina feminist groups, student associations, community action groups, healthcare and education reformers, and anti-domestic violence activists.

This exhibition presents positive images of Latina girls and women that reflect both connotations of *nosotras*. They counteract and supplement the stereotypes provided by the mainstream American media. These are portraits of individuals who uphold their cultures and traditions. And even though this exhibition represents the work of eight photographers of diverse backgrounds, the images themselves address shared issues and themes: the difficulty of maintaining family cohesion across borders; the challenge of bicultural identity; and the struggle to preserve homeland cultures. A sense of pride in self also marks each face memorialized in the photographs.

The exhibit features eight photographers engaged in long-term, in-depth photographic studies of Latinas: Karen Bucher (“*Growing Up in the Southwest*”); Angela Cappetta (“*Glendalis*”); Nereida García-Ferraz (“*Habana vieja / Old Havana*”); Mary Teresa Giancoli (“*Mexican Lives, Mexican Rituals, Stories from New York City*”); Patricia Gomez (“*Family Connections*”); Scott Nava (“*Following the Harvest*”); Tone Stockenström (“*Just Because I Live in America*”) and Lupita Murillo Tinnen (“*From Inside the Home: A Portrait of Mexican Immigrant Women*”). In addition to the consistently high level of photographic achievement and the sheer beauty of the images, I am impressed by the idealism, energy, focus, and generosity of spirit demonstrated by each contributor. I hope they are as proud of our joint project as I am.

Virginia Dodier, Director  
Carlsbad Museum and Art Center, New Mexico

### **Between Here and the Homeland Panel**

In a nation created by and for immigrants, notions of home and homeland have always figured prominently in both the public and private spheres of life. These notions

have been shaped and complicated by the passage of time, the distancing of space, and the repercussions of politics—regional, national, and international. Preserving a sense of connection or belonging to another place and its culture may be emotionally challenging. The psychological distance between here and the homeland may be greater than the physical.

When the homeland is Puerto Rico, the passage to a new home is relatively easy in terms of geography and legalities. All persons born in Puerto Rico are American citizens, which helps to explain why there are more people of Puerto Rican birth or ancestry living on the mainland than on the island. Consequently, the emotional, familial, and cultural ties to the “Old Country” can be relatively easy to maintain, as witnessed in Angela Cappetta’s chronicle of Glendalis Sotomayor, a Puerto Rican girl growing up in New York.

On the other hand, politics and legal status can make traveling what is geographically a short distance between home and homeland a rare and/or risky venture. As a homeland, Cuba is a mere 90 miles off the coast of Florida, but out of easy reach due to this country’s embargo on travel there. Photographs play a critical role in preserving and enriching connections to the homeland, as witnessed in Nereida García-Ferraz’s series “*Habana vieja / Old Havana*.” She encapsulated her experience of the Cuban diaspora through digital images she printed from photographs taken 20 years earlier when she first returned to Cuba after fleeing in 1970. The scratched, dusty condition of the original negatives gives the resulting images the character of memories in the midst of forming.

An estimated 40 percent of Latinos in the United States today are immigrants. Another 30 percent are children of immigrants. The fallout from the polarized dispute over immigration in this country, particularly cross-border immigration from Mexico, has impacted traffic between Mexico and the United States. For Patricia Gomez and her family, Mexico is a short drive away from their home in Arizona and a destination for family vacations. When the Gomezes head for the beach, they go to Puerto Peñasco, a popular spring break destination. Gomez routinely leaves the tourist strip to reconnect with her heritage by photographing women in the *barrios* (neighborhoods).

For some, returning home is a rare event, fraught with mixed emotions. Over the years that Tone Stockenström photographed the Castañeda-Torres family, they went back to Mexico only once. Their yearnings for a better connection with their homeland, however, have been a constant preoccupation for each of them, as demonstrated in the texts they contributed to the “*Just Because I Live in America*” photographs and in the keepsakes—photographs and mementoes—carefully preserved by Otilia Torres. Like other Latino immigrants they found that returning home heightened their awareness of the differences between old and new, and increased their concerns about retaining their Mexican heritage.

### **The Complexity of Identity Panel**

When explaining their identity, most people prefer the inquiry “*Who* are you?” over “*What* are you?”—meaning race and/or ethnicity. For Latinas, the answers to both questions are fluid and complex—in diametric opposition to the simplistic criteria feeding stereotypes and prejudices.

In today’s world, physical appearances weigh heavily as indicators of identity and as crucial factors in success, both professional and social. Pondering one’s identity, whether by peering into the mirror or scrutinizing the faces in old family photographs, is a universal experience. For a Latina, such scrutiny can lead to a sense of disconnect from the self if the sum total of physical features does not add up to the homogenized American ideal. Having a vexed relationship with the mirror can spark questions such as, “Who’s that? Are there more of you?” Among the most challenging circumstances to negotiate, however, is acculturation. Will it be assimilation into the new culture or retrenchment into old ways? Will it be a chronic sense of alienation or an individualized bicultural or multicultural sensibility?

As seen in Mary Teresa Giancoli’s “*Mexican Lives, Mexican Rituals, Stories from New York City*,” Latinas anchor their identities in homeland rituals adapted to their new environments and preserved through formal organizations. Giancoli documents young women preparing to perform “La Danza de los viejitos,” for the Tepeyac Association’s annual competition in New York City. Exclusively a male domain in Mexico, the dance has been reinvented in this country with women as principals. The immigrant women of Lupita Murillo Tinnen’s “*From Inside the Home*” sustain their heritage by integrating Mexican decorative and utilitarian objects—such as clay pots used for cooking beans—with American counterparts. Tone Stockenström’s “*Just Because I Live in America*” captures the desires and challenges of bicultural existence reflected in the images of adolescent Latinas and their mothers.

### **Rites and Celebrations Panel**

Latino cultures are steeped in centuries-old traditions sustained by observing formalities and prescribed behaviors. Rites and celebrations preserve group identity by unifying individuals with their families, communities, and heritage, and by fostering the cultural essentials: tradition, dignity, and pride. In turn, the individual’s personal image and identity assume larger implications when linked to the reputation of the whole family and, by extension, a whole culture through such rites and celebrations, public and private.

One key female-centered example of such rituals is the *quinceañera*, which literally translated means “fifteen-year-old female”. Numerous photographs in the exhibition memorialize a girl’s passage into adulthood, which is formally recognized on her fifteenth birthday with a *quinceañera*. The celebration may include a religious service (analogous to the Jewish bat mitzvah), a presentation ceremony with male and female escorts (like a debutante ball), and a dinner-dance (like a Sweet Sixteen party). Or it may

just be a big family gathering. Whatever the scope of the event, it is an opportunity for the birthday girl to be treated, literally, like a princess (*princesa*) or queen (*reina*) – as epitomized in Scott Nava’s photograph *Rosa Reyna*.

Latino culture has a continuing romance with the notion of aristocracy, as witnessed in events centered on queens or princesses. Being crowned *reina* can be the event of a lifetime for a Latina, as suggested by the reverence with which Otilia Torres holds her “Queen of Spring” tiara in Tone Stockenström’s photograph. Karen Bucher photographed Ester as “Mrs. New Mexico” making an appearance in her crown and formal gown at a homecoming parade. This title is but one aspect of her identity. Along with being a mother, Ester is also a high school mathematics teacher with a degree in engineering. In another of Bucher’s photographs, young Tabitha and Ashley show off scaled-down versions of evening gowns as fiesta princesses for the Mesilla, New Mexico celebration of Mexican Independence Day. Although they are participating in a traditional event held in the old plaza of a Mexican-American village dating from the mid-nineteenth century, the girls are not dressed in traditional costumes like those worn by the performers in Mary Teresa Giancoli’s photographs from the Festival of Mexican Artistic Expression in Queens, New York. Perhaps the parents or event organizers in both instances chose what the girls wore—and perhaps the differences reflect different levels of comfort with the dominant culture.

In the hands of several photographers in this exhibition, life passages assume the appearance of rites. Many images in the exhibition present girls and women poised on the thresholds of their homes. They record informal but symbolically charged occasions. An interface between public and private domains, the exterior doorway serves as a metaphor for a woman’s readiness to pass from one life stage to another. As seen in Nereida García-Ferraz’s photograph, a girl stands in her doorway with her father hovering protectively behind her. Other photographs, notably those of Patricia Gomez, pair young girls with older women to suggest the universal transition from youth to old age and from innocence to knowledge.

**Teacher/Docent Resources**

**Artist Statements**

**Karen Bucher: “*Growing Up in the Southwest*”**

This project is about growing up in a particular place and time -- in the small developing desert city of Las Cruces in the southwest border region of the United States at the end of the 20th century. Las Cruces was named in the 1800s for the crossing at the Rio Grande or for the crosses on the graves of those who went no further on their passages west or north. Spanish was the main language spoken until the late 1800s when large numbers of Anglo settlers began arriving. In the early part of the 20th century, children who spoke Spanish were not allowed to speak it in some schools, but were punished by their parents for speaking English at home. Similarly, children growing up now are the ones most caught between traditions and a contemporary world. Both the new and the traditional can enrich life, but the new can be frightening and the traditional constricting or associated with grim aspects of the past. Traditions are also called into question when ethnicities are blended through marriage.

Las Cruces continues to grow year by year. Just as many families that I photograph have moved here in the last decade or two from other states, from Mexico and other countries, as have lived in New Mexico for generations. Newly transplanted families like my own find a familiar American mass culture as well as a rich ethnic culture. I continue to be interested in how children grow up and photograph children I have met through friends and through my work as an artist in the schools. Among the scenes I look for are those that show daily activities and special yearly events, neighborhood streets, play and sports, families.

**Angela Cappetta: “*Glendalis*”**

Glendalis Sotomayor is the protagonist of this work, with her friends and family present as supporting cast members. These pictures attempt to evaluate the life and world of a young Latina, by examining her and pieces of her world. I strive to determine if it is possible to truly know who one person is, or who they are becoming, by photographing them. The project’s value lies in this achievement: to witness how a photographer can rise to examine one person, and pieces of her life.

**Nereida García-Ferraz: “*Habana Vieja / Old Havana*”**

I took these photographs a long time ago, in 1981. I was an art student at the School of the Art Institute, Chicago, and all of a sudden an opportunity came to travel to Cuba. I was born there and left with all my family in 1970. To tell the truth I never thought that I was going to be able to go back because of the travel restrictions. So with great courage and an open mind I went back.

I was walking around Old Havana at night, looking for the same streets I had walked with my father many years before. My grandmother had stayed behind so I had an opportunity

to see her again. There I was in Cuba, walking the same streets, seeing my grandma, being there was almost surreal. I was young, a dreamer, I photographed many things so I would not forget where I came from. In time those images became my second memory of my country.

My father is no longer with us and these images are more memory than a place itself. In 2001 I selected some of the images and did some manipulations to make them almost like my lost memories. Like a dream of going back. They are not only removed from place and time but also from one photographic process to another -- from conventional to digital form. Like a dream that we can no longer perceive if only by a feeling of light, this is a final triumph over the darkness of forgetting and detachment.

Today I live in Miami, and I know that this is my second country. But those images will remain as a moment in time. As an eternal return.

**Mary Teresa Giancoli: “*Mexican Lives, Mexican Rituals, Stories from New York City*”**

Growing up in California, I felt the Mexican presence in daily life. I savored the tamales my aunts made, and celebrated Cinco de Mayo with children of migrant workers and growers in Cucamonga, and listened to the passionate ballads sung by *norteño* bands.

Since moving to New York City in 1987, I have seen a wave of immigration from Mexico fill the city. On the Virgin of Guadalupe’s feast day, December 12th, the most celebrated holiday, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans and Latinos who have come to this country for a new life give thanks to a dark-skinned goddess. She is a symbol of hope and identity for a people who pray silently all night.

On September 16th, a *grito* (cry), accompanied by the music is a cathartic release, in remembrance of Mexico’s independence from Spain. Dancers fill the streets presenting traditional folkloric dances from Mexico. I also followed dance events and preparations for the Mexican Artistic Festival held in neighborhoods in New York City to see how people show pride in folkloric dance and music originating in Mexico.

The Mexican girls and women I photograph in the States cherish family, places left behind and rich cultural traditions celebrated in the old ways in a Mexico that is far beyond the border of the United States.

**Patricia Gomez: “*Family Connections*”**

Through photography, and in my body of work “*Family Connections*,” I have begun to strengthen my bond with my roots and my Hispanic family, as well as with my Hispanic heritage. I was born to a Mexican-American father and an Anglo mother in central California. Growing up during the 1950s discrimination was more apparent, and therefore I wasn’t able to take pride in my heritage. Now as an adult with three children and

married to a Mexican-American, I have a strong yearning to connect with my Hispanic culture here in the United States and along the Mexican-American border.

This series started with my immediate family and has grown into new directions connecting to my Hispanic culture. Many of these images are of close relatives and some are of people I have connected with through my desire to strengthen my bond with my people. It has been my intent to create interesting images of my people in my home state of Arizona and along the Mexican-American border.

**Scott Nava: “*Following the Harvest*”**

My father and his eleven siblings grew up on the back of a truck following the harvest from California to Michigan to Texas. He was a laborer picking what was in season. Years passed and by the time he and my mother settled in Indiana they decided to raise us differently. As a boy living in Hammond, Indiana, and then on the south side of Chicago, I lived in a world that was part Mexican and part American. The smell of tamales on the stovetop dominated the house, but we would be called to dinner in English. I was a part of both worlds, but not a member of either, and so I couldn't—and now cannot—ignore the differences. Memories from two cultures shape who I am today. The “*Following the Harvest*” project is not only a means to affirm the pride, honesty, and resilience that exists in Chicago's Latino neighborhoods, but is also to reaffirm my life, within the context of the Latin American community.

**Tone Stockenström: “*Just Because I Live in America*”**

This is an intimate journal of the members of the Castañeda-Torres family: Otilia and her three children, Lisette, Diana and German. This body of work seeks to understand their experiences of living between two cultures, of being caught in a limbo between the past and the present. As a Swedish immigrant I am drawn to the Castañeda-Torres family's similar experiences of divorce and immigration that in many ways mirror my own family's experiences in America.

This project also seeks to describe how profoundly issues of immigration effects change within traditional social structures of family, home, childhood experiences, and community dynamics while examining larger contextual issues of photographic documentary traditions. Instead of emphasizing the difference between photographer and subject or subject and audience this project seeks to minimize the difference between photographer and subject. By incorporating the family's input in the process (through their writings and making their own pictures) which is central to my working process, the work becomes a collaborative series of vignettes about one Mexican-American immigrant family's experience of immigration, divorce and issues of bicultural identity. This project has mirrored the complex and interesting evolution of my relationship to the family from teacher-student to friend to photographer-subject and now part family member.

**Lupita Murillo Tinnen: “*From Inside the Home: A Portrait of Mexican Immigrant Women*”**

The focus of my artwork is on the cultural issues of a Mexican immigrant community in Fort Worth, Texas. The primary focus is women of that community and their stories. They are strong Mexican immigrant women who are creating a new life in the United States and who are bringing traditions and customs with them in order to feel more at home. While they each came to the United States at different times, they are all trying to adjust to the new culture. The women are not necessarily trying to assimilate, but they are doing their best in order to accommodate. Many of these women spend countless hours inside their home, due to their inability to speak English or drive. Yet, they are not prisoners, instead they provide a foundation for the family and the home becomes their haven. I photograph the women in the kitchen, which is traditionally the center of their home, a place where family gathers and a place for nourishment. Some work outside the home, some work inside, but they all work. I chose to photograph these women in their best clothes to show that they are not victims, but strong women who have a place in this new world. Whether it's raising their family or working outside the home, they are proud powerful women.

## Teacher Resources

## Artist Biographies

### **Karen Bucher**

Karen Bucher lives in Las Cruces, New Mexico. She is working on photographic projects about families in Las Cruces (“*Growing Up in the Southwest*”) and her own family in rural Pennsylvania. *Sunnydell Farm*, a book of her photographs and writings from the Pennsylvania project, was published by Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York, in 2004. Her photographs have been published in *DoubleTake* and *Photo Review* and are included in the collections of the Corcoran Gallery, the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, the Denver Art Museum, the Portland Museum of Art and others. She has received grants from the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund for Women and from the Maine Photographic Workshops. Her work has been exhibited in numerous exhibitions nationally including, in 2006, at Blue Sky Gallery in Portland, Oregon.

### **Angela Cappetta**

Angela Cappetta works as a high-end commercial photographer in New York. Among her clients are *Marie Claire*, *The New Yorker*, *Vogue*, Saatchi and Saatchi, Euro RSCG and McCann. A perennial student of contemporary culture, her current works-in-progress include a series of unflinching self-portraits, an archive of relatives and intimate friends, and, most recently, a spectrum of rural landscape heavily inspired by the poems of William Carlos Williams. She has been a MacDowell Fellow and a New York Foundation for the Arts award recipient. In 2002 her work was featured in the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., alongside Robert Frank’s in the exhibition *The Other Side of the Street*.

### **Nereida García-Ferraz**

Nereida García-Ferraz lives in Miami. Her work as a photographer and as a painter originates from a continuous investigation into her own personal history as a Cuban-American. She is considered one of this country’s most significant Cuban-American artists and has exhibited nationwide. García-Ferraz has received fellowships from, among others, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Richard Diebenkorn Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, and has been teaching and exhibiting since 1977. She received a B.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1976. She contributed a memoir “Not the Golden Age” to *By Heart/De Memoria: Cuban Women’s Journeys In and Out of Exile* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003). In 2004 she had a one-person exhibition, *Beyond Havana: Intersecting Time and Place*, at the Bettcher Gallery, Miami.

### **Mary Teresa Giancoli**

Mary Teresa Giancoli is based in Queens, New York. She documents the recent wave of immigration from central Mexico to New York by photographing daily life and enduring traditions in both places. Recent exhibition venues include the Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla, Mexico; Flushing Town Hall, Queens, New York; and the National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago. She has taught photography at the City University of New York. She has received funding for her projects from the Queens Council on the Arts and the Daniele Agostino Foundation.

**Patricia Gomez**

Patricia Gomez lives in Tempe, Arizona. Through photography she explores her dual heritage as daughter of an Anglo mother and a Mexican-American father, stating her work has “become a product of my journey to connect with my Latino heritage.” Using a medium format camera, she began documenting her family and friends to create the series “*Family Connections*.” The project has since expanded to reach Latinos in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. A former commercial airline pilot, she studied photography at Mesa Community College and Arizona State University. In 2004 her one-person exhibition of the “*Family Connections*” photographs was shown by En Foco at the New York Public Library Edenwald Branch, Bronx, New York.

**Scott Nava**

Scott Nava lives in Chicago and earned his M.F.A. in photography at Columbia College, Chicago. His work has been exhibited nationally and published in national and international publications, including *Mexican Chicago* and *Photo Review*. He also participated in the creation of an Emmy Award-winning documentary, *Chicago Matters: Inside the Pilsen Community*. Nava is the recipient of the Weisman Memorial Scholarship and the Stuart and Iris Baum Completion Grant. In 2003 his one-person exhibition *Single Room Occupancy* was shown at the A.R.C. Gallery, Chicago.

**Tone Stockenström**

Tone Stockenström lives in Chicago. A Swedish immigrant, she is interested in the ways that immigration can impact the social structures of family and community. She earned her B.A. in Latin American-Iberian Studies and Spanish from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1993 and her M.F.A. in photography from Columbia College, Chicago in 2002. She has received numerous grants, among them an Illinois Arts Council Fellowship, a Light Work Residency Grant, the American Scandinavian Foundation Grant, a Polaroid Foundation Artist Support Grant, a Canon Emerging Professional Award, and is a three-time winner of the Albert P. Weisman Grant. Her work has been published in *DoubleTake*, *Document*, *Gravity Magazine*, *Chicago Tribune*, *River Oaks Press*, *CameraArts*, *Contact Sheet* and *American Photo*, among other publications. Her series *Just Because I Live in America* and *The Picolino Circus Project* have been exhibited at venues including Blue Sky Gallery, Portland, Oregon; the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; City Gallery in the Historic Water Tower, Chicago; Gallery 37 Center of the Arts, Chicago; and the Swedish American Museum Center, Chicago.

**Lupita Murillo Tinnen**

Lupita Murillo Tinnen was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas. She received a B.A. in photography from Texas A&M University-Commerce and a M.F.A. in photography from the University of North Texas. The focus of her artwork is on the cultural issues of the Mexican immigrant community. Her work has been exhibited in numerous exhibitions both at the regional and national level. She currently resides in Plano, Texas and is professor of photography at Collin College, Spring Creek Campus, Plano.

### **Educational Objectives**

This exhibit will expose students to narrative photography, and an array of themes pertinent to Latino and American immigrant life. They will gain knowledge of the basics of portrait photography and narrative photography, and will develop skills for analyzing photography as an art. In addition, students will also be exposed to universal themes of identity, cultural ritual, and immigration and borders. The projects suggested here allow students to make connections across the curriculum by integrating the Visual Arts, History-Social Science, and Language Arts.

## **Lesson Plan I: Family Traditions**

(Adapted from Instructional Resources Unit, Curriculum and Instruction Branch  
Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment  
<http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/elemsoc/g1u21ess.html>)

**Grade Level:** K-6

**CA Curriculum content:** Visual Arts, History/Social Sciences, Language Arts

**Time Required:** One class period (50 minutes)

### **Materials Needed:**

- Paper
- Markers, Crayons, Colored Pencils or any other art materials you may have
- Family Pictures by Carmen Lomas Garza (available from the Sonoma County Museum or Sonoma County Library)

### **Objectives:**

By the end of this lesson, students will have:

- Learned about and reflected on rituals and their importance in family life
- Reflected on their own family traditions
- Created a piece of narrative artwork based on his/her own experiences

### **Introduction:**

Using examples of traditions that would be practiced by your students, ask them how they learn these traditions. Emphasize that traditions and rituals are some of the ways cultural knowledge is passed down within the family.

**Warm Up:**

Ask students how they celebrate:

- birthdays
- special events like weddings and holidays
- Mother's Day, Father's Day

Use a resource such as Family Pictures by Carmen Lomas Garza as an example of children learning about their culture from their parents and by participating in the customs. Read the book for enjoyment.

**Direct Instruction:**

Have students draw pictures of their family having a special time together. Have them write a sentence (or paragraph) to go with the picture. Share the picture with the class and describe the special time.

**Closure:**

Discuss how children learn about customs from parents and grandparents and by taking part in the celebration. Talk about ways the children help to prepare for celebration. Ask students to describe ways they can help get ready for celebrations in their homes. Identify and diagram similarities and differences in celebrations.

## **Lesson Plan II: Personal Identity Drawing**

(Adapted from “Where’s Waldo’ About Me Drawing” by Donna Rodeghiero, <http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/high/Donna-drawing.htm>)

**Grade Level:** High School

**CA Curriculum content:** Visual Arts, option for Language Arts

**Time Required:** One or two class periods (50-100 minutes)

**Materials Needed:**

• Digital images from *Nosotras: Portraits of Latinas*, including *Girl in Doorway on 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago* by Scott Nava, *Aunt Dora and Mariachis, Arizona* by Patricia Gomez, and *Diana Castañeda* from the series “*Just Because I Live in America*” by Tone Stockenström. (See Appendix)

- Magazines
- Drawing paper
- Pencils, erasers, fine point markers, colored pencils, markers or watercolors

**Objectives:**

By the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify the cultural clues found within narrative artwork
- Explore and critique narrative works of art

- Create a piece of narrative artwork based on his/her own experiences
- Use elements and principles of design effectively

**Introduction:**

Students will look at three different pictures from *Nosotras: Portraits of Latinas*. By the end of the lesson, students will have a thorough understanding of the use of storytelling in artwork as they will be creating their own narrative through a personal identity drawing.

**Warm-up:**

Show students a picture of *Girl in Doorway on 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago* by Scott Nava.

Ask:

- What figures do you see in the picture?
- What do you think they are doing?
- What story do you think they are trying to tell?

Explain to the class that storytelling is an important and long-standing art form in all cultures. In Latin American cultures, popular storytelling methods include murals and paintings, the Mexican *corridos* (folk ballads) and Brazilian *literatura de cordel* (illustrated chapbooks).

Photographer Scott Nava explains about his photograph: “*I noticed a young woman leaning in the doorway of a tenement apartment. As I approached I realized that this was no young woman, but rather a girl no older than eight. This alarmed me because of the way that she carried herself. I feel that she was, like many Hispanic girls, faced with a multitude of barriers and forced into adulthood much too soon.*”

*Optional:* When discussing *Girl in Doorway on 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago*, also focus on the artist’s use of color and dramatic shadows which make the figure in the photograph seem more strained and determined. How do the students feel when viewing the picture?

Repeat this activity with *Aunt Dora and Mariachis, Arizona* by Patricia Gomez and *Diana Castañeda* from the series “*Just Because I Live in America*” by Tone Stockenström.

- Patricia Gomez — Her work is connected to her Hispanic culture, focusing on her intent to create interesting images of her people in her home state of Arizona and along the Mexican-American border.
- Tone Stockenström — Her work is a collaborative series of vignettes about one Mexican-American immigrant family’s experience of immigration, divorce, and issues of bicultural identity.

**Direct Instruction:**

Students will create a piece of narrative artwork based on his/her own experiences.

Ask students to brainstorm a list of 20 things about themselves (they can relate to family, memorable events, likes and dislikes).

Then tell each student to complete the following steps:

1. Ask them to choose 16 things from their list
2. Fold a 12" x 18" paper into sections to create 16 areas
3. Illustrate items from list in each section or find items in magazines
4. Cut out each individual element (such as around the apple, around the car, etc.)
5. Use the cutouts to make a collage
6. Make a collage of the cutouts (individual photos could be photocopied larger or smaller if needed)
7. Fill in negative spaces with patterns and shapes to unify

**Small Group or Pair Work:**

Encourage students to share their work in a small group or in pairs. Students might take turns critiquing each other's work, or sharing their narratives with each other. Another option is to have students write a reflection about their finished work.

**Closure:**

Review the components of narrative artwork. What is it? What purpose does it serve? Explain to students that as they visit the exhibition *Nosotras: Portraits of Latinas*, they will see many examples of storytelling in art. Ask them as they view the artwork, to again ask the question: "What story do I think the artist is trying to tell?"

## **Lesson Plan III: Framing the Image**

(Adapted from the Center for Creative Photography's educator's guide, *Reframing America: Photography Through the Eyes of Immigrants*.)

**Grade Level:** 4-12 (adaptable)

**CA Curriculum content:** Visual Arts, Language Arts

**Time Required:** One class period (50 minutes)

**Overview:**

The *Nosotras: Portraits of Latinas* exhibition offers portraits of Latina women, their life, and culture as seen through the eyes of eight different photographers. Photographers have to make decisions about composition and content when creating a photograph. Students will use a viewfinder template to create an opening through which they will see subjects in the same way a photographer does when looking through a viewfinder of a camera.

**Materials Needed:**

- Digital images of photographs from *Nosotras: Portraits of Latinas* (See Appendix)
- Artist biographies
- Template of viewfinder: a rectangular 'frame' cut from sturdy cardstock or cardboard
- Scissors

**Objectives:**

In this lesson plan, students will learn to:

- Apply previously learned inquiry in looking at photographs
- Explore ways in which artists use angle and framing to control a photograph's appearance
- Explore ways in which artists are able to control what a photograph communicates
- Understand the language of photography

**Part I: Angle and Framing**

**Step One:**

Introduce to the students the concept of angle and framing. Explain that angle is the direction from which the artist photographs the subject. Framing is another technique that affects the composition and content of the photograph. The photographer frames the subject by determining what the edges of the photograph will be. Looking through the viewfinder of the camera helps the photographer decide what to include and what not to include within the picture's frame (boundaries).

**Step Two:**

- 1) Have the students look through their viewfinders at a person or object at eye level. Have them then view the same subject or object from a variety of different angles.
- 2) Have students look through their viewfinders to frame a person or object as if they were taking a photograph. Have them look at their subjects from a distance, then have them move the viewfinders closer to their subjects until part(s) are cut off or cropped from their view. Next, have them move in very close to their subjects until they can see only a small part.
- 3) Have the students answer the following questions while doing this activity:

- How does your subject change when you look at it from a different angle?
- What happens when you choose a bird's-eye view, from above your subject?
- What happens when you choose a worm's-eye view, from below your subject?
- How does changing the frame affect what you see?
- What did you observe about your subject as you moved closer to it?
- What composition did you like better? Why?

**Step Three:**

Choose an image from the exhibition for discussion. Have the students answer the following questions:

- From what angle did the photographer take this picture?
- How do you know?
- What effect does the angle have on the way you view the subject?

- How would the photograph have changed if it was taken from a different angle? A bird's-eye view or a worm's-eye view?
- What do you think might be outside the frame of this photograph?
- How would the photograph change if the frame were shifted?

### **Part II: Putting it Together in Writing**

Select a few images from the exhibition for discussion. Have the students write a short paragraph that describes how the photographer used angle and framing in the image. Ask the students to compare their work and discuss how they came to their conclusions.

## **Lesson IV: Examining Art Closely**

**Grades:** Adaptable for grades 3-12

**Time Required:** 20-30 minutes

### **Materials needed:**

- Digital image of photograph below, either projected or photocopied

The following is a model for extended discussion of an artwork, which could be used in whole or in part as a classroom exercise, either before or after the museum visit.



*Patricia Gomez, Standing Outside the Church at a Quinceañera, from the series Family Connections. 2000. Gelatin silver print.*

**Basic Questions:**

- What's going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

**Art Techniques:**

- What do you think the artist intended to be the focus of the piece? Why?
- What do you think the artist intended to be the background of the piece? Why?
- How is this work similar to other portraits that you may have seen? How is it different?
- Are there elements of this picture that surprise you in any way?

**Narrative Themes:**

- What indications of traditions do you see in this scene? What do you think the artist intended to say about the importance of traditions?
- What does this work say about being a girl or a woman? What elements in the scene make you say that?
- What does this work say about family life? What do you think the artist intended to say about the importance of family?

## Teacher Resources

## Other Curriculum-Based Activities

### History-Social Science:

- **Family/Immigration Map:** On a large **map of the world**, have students mark where their families came from before living in the United States. **Discuss** immigration, migration, or family histories.
- Use this exhibit as an extension of the **History/Social Science Curriculum** for **grades 1-3**, focusing on cultural diversity, family identity, traditions, and “Ordinary and Extraordinary People” in local and national history.
- Use this exhibit as an extension of the **History/Social Science Curriculum** for **4th grade**, “California: A Changing State,” in particular the subsection “Modern California: Immigration, Technology, and Cities,” discussing the close relationship between Mexico and California, or the history of immigration in the state.
- Use this exhibit as an extension of the **California History/Social Science Curriculum** for **grades 9-12**, discussing relations between Mexico and California for “Our State in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries,” and immigration as a topic for “The United States in Recent Times.”

### Language Arts:

- **Photos and Stories:** Photographs often are telling a visual ‘story’ about the subject they are depicting. Have students choose a work in the exhibit and examine it in detail. Have them **describe in writing** all the different parts. Then have them **create a narrative** about what is going on in the photograph.

Option two: Have students bring in their own photograph, family snapshot, etc. Have them **describe in writing** what is going on in the photo.

- **Poems about a Photograph:** Have students choose a work in the exhibit to write a poem about. The poem can take many different formats depending on grade level and language concepts being taught.

## Teacher Resources

## Educational Materials Available at SCM

Several support materials are traveling with the exhibition. If you would like to consult or utilize any of these materials for your lessons, contact the Sonoma County Museum.

### **Books for Adults**

Debroise, Olivier. *Mexican Suite: A History of Photography in Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.

Denner, Jill, and Bianca Guzman. *Latina Girls: Voices of Adolescent Strength in the United States*. New York: New York University Press, 2006.

Garza, Hedda. *Latinas: Hispanic Women in the United States*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001

Rosales, F. Arturo. *Chicano! The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1997.

### **Books for Children**

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *Family Pictures/Cuadros de familia*. Translated by Rosalina Zubizarreta. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1990.

Menard, Valerie. *The Latino Holiday Book: From Cinco de Mayo to Día de los Muertos: The Celebrations and Traditions of Hispanic-Americans*. Tucson, AZ: Treasure Chest Books, 2004.

The New York Public Library and George Ochoa. *The New York Public Library Amazing Hispanic American History: A Book of Answers for Kids*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Perez, Amada Irma. *My Diary from Here to There/Mi diario de aquí hasta allá*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 2002.

Turck, Mary C. *Mexico and Central America: A Fiesta of Cultures, Crafts, and Activities for Ages 8-12*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2004.

### **Video/DVD/CD-Rom**

Broyles-González, Yolanda. *Lydia Mendoza's Life in Music/La Historia de Lydia Mendoza-Book with audio CD*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

## Teacher Resources

## Web Sites for Reference

### Latin American History and Culture

#### **Alegría -- Folklórico Mexicana**

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

Web site supported by Los Danzantes de Alegría, a California organization whose mission is “to share with people of all backgrounds, the culture and beauty of México through its dance and music.” The web site provides many links to related organizations and events.

#### **Asociación Tepeyac de New York/Tepeyac Association of New York**

<http://www.tepeyac.org.ns50.alentus.com/intro.asp>

Bilingual (English and Spanish) gateway to the Asociación Tepeyac de New York (featured in Mary Teresa Giancoli’s photographs). The association’s mission is “twofold: to promote the social welfare and human rights of Latino immigrants, specifically the undocumented in New York City ... and to inform, organize, and educate Mexican immigrants and their families about rights, resources, and processes to develop leaders, organizations, and communities, to build a great Mexican community, integrated to all races and cultures in New York.”

#### **Hijas Americanas**

<http://hijasamericanas.wordpress.com/>

Web site hosted by publisher of Rosie Molinary’s book *Hijas Americanas: Beauty, Body Image, and Growing Up Latina*. Features the author’s blogs. Of special interest is the “A M’ija to Meet” blog (“m’ija,” a contraction for “mi hija” (“my daughter”), is a term of endearment for girls and women). Contributors are identified by name and ethnicity (e.g., “Maria, Half Puerto Rican, Quarter Irish / Quarter Italian,” and write on “What I Love About Being Latina” and “What I Love About Being Americana.”

#### **Inside Mexico**

<http://www.inside-mexico.com/>

Described as “a comprehensive source of articles and news about Mexico as well as cultural videos about Mexico in English and in Spanish, and traditional Mexican music CDs available for use in the classroom and at home.” Includes information about Mexican holidays.

#### **Latina Magazine**

<http://www.latina.com/latina/homepage.jsp>

Web site of *Latina* magazine.

#### **Latino Book and Family Festival**

<http://www.lbff.us/>

The Latino Book and Family Festival has been “promoting literacy in the Latino community since 1997.” Spokesperson Edward James Olmos states: “Our cause is

promoting reading as a means of improving lives, both professionally and personally. Our goal is improved literacy throughout the Latino community.”

**National Geographic’s “Once Upon a Time in Laredo”**

<http://www7.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0611/feature3/>

*National Geographic* interactive online edition featuring “Once Upon a Time in Laredo,” focusing on the annual Washington’s Birthday celebration and its Society of Martha Washington debutante ball. “They’re having a ball in this South Texas town. But as the border between the U.S. and Mexico tightens, life will never be the same.” Includes an “On Assignment” story about the photographer, Penny De Los Santos, a South Texas native. Published in *National Geographic* magazine in November 2006.

**California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives**

<http://cemaweb.library.ucsb.edu>

The California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, (CEMA) houses unique collections that document the lives and activities of African Americans, Asian/Pacific Americans, Chicanos/Latinos, and Native Americans in California. The collections represent the cultural, artistic, ethnic, and racial diversity that characterizes the state’s population.

**Digital History: Mexican American Voices**

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/mexican\\_voices/mexican\\_voices.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/mexican_voices/mexican_voices.cfm)

Features an online 12-part series on the history of Mexican American people, including native voices, original documents, lessons plans, learning modules, and resource guides.

**Archivos Virtuales**

[www.aaa.si.edu/guides/site-archivos/](http://www.aaa.si.edu/guides/site-archivos/)

Archivos Virtuales focuses on access to information about the Smithsonian’s Archives of American Art’s extensive holdings of papers of and about Latino and Latin American artists.

**Smithsonian Latino Center**

<http://latino.si.edu/>

The Smithsonian’s Latino Center celebrates Latino culture, spirit, and achievement in America, and facilitates the development of exhibitions, research, collections, and educational programs at the Smithsonian and its affiliated organizations.

**Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños/Center for Puerto Rican Studies**

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

The Centro is a research center dedicated to the study and interpretation of the Puerto Rican experience in the United States.

**Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC)**

<http://lanic.utexas.edu>

LANIC facilitates access to Internet-based information to, from, or on Latin America. While many of their resources are designed to facilitate research and academic

endeavors, the site is also an important gateway to Latin America for primary and secondary schoolteachers and students.

**National Latino Communications Center**

<http://cnet.ucla.edu/community/nlcc/>

The National Latino Communications Center is a media arts production resource center that supports, produces and syndicates Latino programming for public television. Its purpose is to empower Latinos in the United States throughout the broadcast communications media.

**Latin American Art**

**ArtNexus Magazine**

<http://www.artnexus.com/index2.html>

The leading Latin American art magazine in English.

**The Association for Latin American Art**

[www.smith.edu/alaa](http://www.smith.edu/alaa)

The Association for Latin American Art is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of the study of Latin American art, and is an affiliated society of the College Art Association.

**Chicano**

[www.chicano-art-life.com/index.html](http://www.chicano-art-life.com/index.html)

This is the Web site of a recent major survey exhibition of Chicano art, and includes a teacher's guide.

**El Museo del Barrio**

[www.elmuseo.org](http://www.elmuseo.org)

El Museo del Barrio was founded in 1969 by a group of Puerto Rican educators, artists, parents and community activists in East Harlem's Spanish-speaking El Barrio. Since then, El Museo del Barrio has evolved into New York's leading Latino cultural institution, having expanded its mission to represent the diversity of art and culture in all of the Caribbean and Latin America.

**METRO-MoMA Survey of Archives of Latino and Latin American Art**

[www.moma.org/research/library/latinosurvey/index.html](http://www.moma.org/research/library/latinosurvey/index.html)

This is the Museum of Modern Art Library's Survey of Archives of Latino and Latin American Art, documenting the archives of New York Latino institutions.

## **Photography**

### **Zone Zero**

[www.zonezero.com](http://www.zonezero.com)

Major photography Web site founded by Pedro Meyer, a leading Mexican photographer. Site contains essays and editorials, and numerous portfolios of work by photographers from Mexico, Latin America, and around the world.

### **Enfoco**

[www.enfoco.org](http://www.enfoco.org)

Web site of a non-profit dedicated to cultural diversity in photography

### **Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University**

<http://cds.aas.duke.edu/>

The Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University is a leading academic program in social documentary photography.

### **Literacy Through Photography**

<http://cds.aas.duke.edu/ltp/>

The Literacy Through Photography Web page at the Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University. Overview: "In 1989 the Center for Documentary Studies (CDS) invited photographer Wendy Ewald to Durham, North Carolina, to offer a two-week workshop for local schoolchildren. A year later, with encouragement from Durham school administrators and support from CDS, Ewald started the Literacy Through Photography (LTP) program, working in the Durham Public Schools to make photographs the basis for a variety of learning experiences across the curriculum. Since then, LTP has worked with numerous elementary- and middle-school teachers and with hundreds of children of varying ages and backgrounds."

### **Houston FotoFest Literacy Through Photography**

<http://literacythroughphotography.fotofest.org/>

Houston FotoFest Literacy Through Photography program. Summary: "Literacy Through Photography (LTP), the educational component of FotoFest International, is a writing program designed to help classroom students achieve better communication skills through the use of digital or film-based photography ... Teachers are provided with carefully designed lesson plans that offer new writing techniques, basic photography skills, and effective teaching strategies that transform the classroom into a stimulating environment to give students the confidence to express themselves through writing, and believe what they write."

## **Individual artists**

**Note:** Some of these are Web sites maintained by individual artists; others are galleries, or contain essays and exhibitions about selected artists.

**Karen Bucher**

[www.karenbucher.com](http://www.karenbucher.com)

Official Web site for Karen Bucher. Features her book *Sunnydell Farm* and includes a link to images from her series “Young Southwest.”

**Angela Cappetta**

[www.angelacappetta.com](http://www.angelacappetta.com)

Official Web site for Angela Cappetta. Includes a link to images from her series on Glendalis Sotomayor, “Glendy.”

<http://thevisualmovement.com/?s=cappetta&x=0&y=0>

The Visual Movement Web site features images of Angela Cappetta’s recent work with an interview with the photographer.

**Mary Teresa Giancoli**

<http://www.biddingtons.com/content/creativegiancoli.html>

Biddington’s Creative Process Web site features an interview with photographer Mary Teresa Giancoli and images of her work from Mexico and New York City.

<http://nyremezcla.com/nymosaic/article.jsp?art=169>

NYRemezcla is the only bilingual Web site showcasing groundbreaking Latin American and Latino cultures in New York City. This Web page features the photography exhibition *Propia Visión (Our Vision): Mexican Photographers in New York* organized by Mexican cultural organization *Mano A Mano: Culture Without Borders*, Mary Teresa Giancoli’s work is included in the exhibition.

**Nereida García-Ferraz**

<http://www.bettchergallery.com/artists/ferraz/index.html>

Bettcher Gallery, Miami Web page features the work of Nereida García-Ferraz.

<http://www.cubaartny.org/pages/artists/NereidaGarciaFerraz/index.html>

Web site of Cuba Art New York, an organization working to advance and preserve the work of contemporary Cuban artists living outside of Cuba, features an article on Nereida García-Ferraz’s exhibition *Here and There: Deterritorializing Miami and Havana* held at Cushing Martin Gallery, Stonehill College, Easton, Massachusetts, spring 2005.

**Patricia Gomez**

<http://www.pgomezphotos.com/photo5.swf>

Official Web site for Patricia Gomez.

[http://www.enfoco.org/index.php/programs/exhibit/patricia\\_gomez/](http://www.enfoco.org/index.php/programs/exhibit/patricia_gomez/)

The Web page for Patricia Gomez’s 2004 En Foco Gallery, New York exhibition.

**Scott Nava**

[http://www.chicagopublicradio.org/audio\\_library/848\\_ranov03.asp](http://www.chicagopublicradio.org/audio_library/848_ranov03.asp)

Chicago Public Radio *Eight Forty-Eight* program Web site links to an interview with photographer Scott Nava about his exhibition *Single Room Occupancy* (November 26, 2003).

**Tone Stockenström**

<http://tonephoto.com>

Official Web site for Tone Stockenström.

<http://cda.aas.duke.edu/exhibits/stockenstroem.html>

Web page for the 2005 Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University exhibition *Tone Stockenström: Collaborative Projects*. Features a gallery project and images from two of Stockenström's series, including "Just Because I Live in America" and "The Picolino Circus Project."

[http://www.wbez.org/audio\\_library/848\\_radec03.asp](http://www.wbez.org/audio_library/848_radec03.asp)

Chicago Public Radio *Eight Forty-Eight* program Web site links to an interview with photographer Tone Stockenström and her collaborators Otilia Castañeda-Torres, and Lissette, Diana, and German Torres about the exhibition *Portrait of a Family* (December 18, 2003).

**Lupita Murillo Tinnen**

<http://www.utdallas.edu/news/2007/09/28-001.html>

The University of Texas at Dallas's online description of *local/e*, a 2007 exhibition in the Main Gallery of the University's Visual Arts Building that included the photography of Lupita Murillo Tinnen.

**Appendix**

**Select Images from *Nosotras***



*Standing Outside the Church at a Quinceañera, Polomas, Mexico* from the series  
“*Family Connections*”  
By Patricia Gomez



***Aunt Dora and Mariachis, Arizona*** from the series ***“Family Connections”***  
**By Patricia Gomez**



*Girl in Doorway on 17th Street, Chicago* from the series *“Following the Harvest”*  
By Scott Nava



*Diana Castañeda* from the series *“Just Because I Live in America”*  
By Tone Stockenström