

## Lesson Plan Quick Look

**Title of Lesson:** Inspired by Patssi Valdez

**Photo/Image:** “Made in Tijuana” Patssi Valdez, 2000. Image courtesy of NHCC Art Museum.

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**Content Area(s):** Visual Arts, Speaking and Listening

**Grade/Age level:** all ages

**Duration:** 1-3 class periods

**Materials/Cost, if any:** Page 2

**Standards:** Page 2

**Bloom’s Taxonomy/Depth of Knowledge:** Page 2

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**Essential Question(s):** Page 3

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Inspired by Patssi Valdez

**Photo/Image:**

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**Duration:**

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**Materials Needed/Cost:**

Activity 1: paper and pencil, found objects, binding materials (glue, wire, duct tape etc.) Optional materials: art supplies, measuring tape, camera/tablet for documenting the creative process

Activity 2: paper and pencil, art supplies of your choice (paint, colored pencils, pastels, crayons, collage materials etc.)

Activity 3: pencil and paper, camera (tablet); Optional materials: costumes, props

**Handouts:**

See/Think/Wonder graphic organizer, Personality Traits and Elements of Art graphic organizer

**Standard Addressed:**

Activity 1: [Visual Arts](#): Anchor standards 1, 2

Activity 2: [Visual Arts](#): Anchor standards 3, 8

Activity 3: [Visual Arts](#): Anchor standard 7, 11

[Speaking & Listening](#): Comprehension and Collaboration

**Depth of Knowledge/Bloom’s Taxonomy:**

create, analyze, apply





### **Background:**

Patssi Valdez was born in 1951 in Los Angeles, California. She grew up immersed in the culture and politics that defined East Los Angeles in the 1960s and 70s. In 1972 Valdez, along with fellow politically charged friends and artists Harry Gamboa, Jr., Willie Herrón, and Gronk (Glugio Nicandro), founded the Chicano/a art group 'Asco' in response to the lack of positive Latinx representation in popular culture. Asco, which means 'disgust' or 'nausea' in Spanish, was interdisciplinary, experimental, and often political, engaging in protest art and tackling issues of racial discrimination, representation, and police brutality to name a few. Valdez created art with Asco until the group disbanded in 1987, after which time she struck out on her own taking her art in a more personal direction. In the early 90s Valdez began to paint interiors as a way to express her inner most feelings and self-realizations. So much of Valdez's work throughout her career has been about representation and self-expression, she explores these topics from multiple perspectives through the use of various mediums including performance and conceptual art, fashion design, photography, painting, and installations. Valdez remains an important and influential artist to this day.

### **Skill(s):**

creative thinking, reflection, group work

### **Essential Question(s):**

1. How did you use found objects and recyclable materials to create a new work of art? Where you able to transform and/or elevate the materials you used? How?
2. What can you learn by documenting your artistic process as you create art?
3. In what ways does Patssi Valdez express mood and emotion in her paintings of interiors? How did you use your materials to do the same? What colors, shapes, and lines did you use in your interior and why? How does your interior make you feel?
4. Why is representation important and how did Patssi Valdez and the other members of Asco use art as a way to critique societal assumptions and make space for themselves and their communities?
5. Patssi Valdez has used many different mediums throughout her career, how do you think experimenting with different materials and artforms helps her to express herself and share her messages? What is your favorite material to work with and why?

### **Objectives:**

Students will...

- Learn about the life and career of Patssi Valdez and her involvement with Chicano/a artist group Asco
- Create a piece of fashion from found objects and document their artistic processes
- Create an interior in the style of Patssi Valdez that reflects their personalities
- Work as a group to make an Asco inspired No Movie and explore the importance of representation



### **Academic Vocabulary/Word Wall:**

*Asco*: 'disgust' or 'nausea' in Spanish, also the conceptual and performance group based in East Los Angeles, active from 1972-1987

*conceptual art*: art that prioritizes the concept or idea behind a piece rather than a final product

### **A Note About the Chicano Movement**

The Chicano Movement (1965 – 1975), also known as El Movimiento, was a civil rights movement advocating for Mexican American (or people of Mexican-descent) social and political empowerment on a variety of issues ranging from land reclamation, labor rights, education reform, and cultural identity.

Due to anti-Chicano propaganda through the mainstream media at the time, Asco created an artistic response that contradicted the numerous negative images filling the news about the Chicano movement.<sup>1</sup>

### **Brain Drain or Warm Up Activity:**

Standard: [Speaking & Listening](#): Comprehension and Collaboration

Choose one (or more) of the artworks featured in this lesson plan to share with your students. Show the piece to your students and ask them what they see (details, composition, color etc.), what they think about the piece, and what the piece makes them wonder. Ask students to fill out the See/Think/Wonder graphic organizer included in this lesson plan to keep their thoughts in order. It is always a good idea to look at art before making it. Looking at art is a skill that needs practice, help your students get started by asking a few guiding questions.

Suggested questions: What/who is the subject of the artwork? What is the medium? What colors are used? How does the artwork make you feel? Why do you think the artist made the work? What do you think the piece is titled and why? What do you wonder about the piece?

Give students five minutes (adjust time for age/experience) to look at the work and fill out their graphic organizers. Then share with them the title of the piece, the NHCC wall label, and the background information on Patssi Valdez provided below. Ask your students to revisit and revise their graphic organizers armed with more context. How has learning more information changed the way they think about the piece?

### **Basic Lesson Description and Procedure:**

Activity 1: *Made in Tijuana* (all ages)

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<sup>1</sup> Jackson, Carlos F. *Chicana and Chicano Art: ProtestArte*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009.



Patssi Valdez has been interested in fashion since she was a child growing up in East Los Angeles. Because her family could not afford to buy her the type of expensive clothing she saw in popular media, Valdez began to make her own pieces with more accessible materials and found objects. Modeling her own clothes made her think about how glamor and fashion is constructed and for whom. Because she rarely saw herself reflected in the women that graced the covers of fashion magazines, Valdez became the example she never had as a child and used her art to comment on the lack of Chicano/a representation in the fashion world. In preparation for this activity, ask students to collect objects (found objects, recyclables, older works of art etc.) to repurpose into new pieces of fashion.

1. Examine your objects. Spread your objects out in front of you in your workspace for careful examination. What do you see? How are your objects alike? How are they different? How many different ways can you think of to combine/transform your objects? How can you create something that will elevate your objects? Experiment with different combinations and document your creative process (take pictures, create quick sketches, take notes etc.)
2. Design your piece. Make a fashion sketch of you piece from various angles.
3. Create your piece. Take your measurements or the measurements of your model and make your piece using your objects. (Depending on what your objects are and the size of your piece, you might consider using large pieces of paper or cardboard as a base)
4. Name your piece. Valdez named her piece *Made in Tijuana*, just by referencing where she acquired her raw materials (paper flowers), Valdez recognizes and honors a group of artists that usually go unrecognized. How can naming your piece add additional meaning to it? What do you want to say with your piece?
5. Put on a fashion show. Put on a fashion show with your fellow artists (in the classroom, library, outdoors). Talk about how and why you made your piece and what you named it. Don't forget to document your process.

### Activity 2: *House of Spirits* (all ages)

After Asco disbanded in 1987, Valdez continued to make art on her own. Although using her art to make cultural, political, and social commentary remained important to her, Valdez shifted her focus to exploring more intimate experiences and feelings through painting. Valdez uses color, movement, and perspective to capture the energy of the interiors she paints. She has said of her painted interiors "My goal is to keep the paintings alive, to give them a sense of movement. I want to evoke a feeling that people just left the room." Valdez's domestic interiors can be read as self-portraits, an intimate look into Valdez' thoughts and feeling.

1. Look closely at Patssi Valdez's art. Complete the See/Think/Wonder warm up activity for *House of Spirits* focusing on the shapes, colors, and line values Valdez uses in her art and the mood and emotions they communicate (or revisit the activity if you've already completed it).
2. Look inward. Write a list of words that describe who you are and how you feel; then,



choose a different color, shape, and/or line value (ex. smooth and straight, curvy, jagged etc.) to represent each word. Use the chart provided in this lesson plan to keep your thoughts organized.

3. Choose an interior. Choose a room you are familiar with that evokes strong memories or feelings (this room can be in your house, your school, somewhere you visited that left a strong impression etc.) Create a sketch of your chosen room using the colors, shapes, and line values from your chart.
4. Reflect on your sketch. Before completing your artwork, reflect on your interior or discuss it with a group or partner. Does your sketch reflect your personality? What does it say about you? Is there anything you would change about it?
5. Revise your work. Make changes to your piece based on your own self-assessment or peers' critiques. Complete your interior.
6. Name your piece. Think about what you want to convey to others with your artwork. Does your chosen title reflect your personality/emotions?

### Activity 3: *À La Mode* (grades 6-12)

Patssi Valdez, Harry Gamboa, Jr., Willie Herrón, and Gronk (Glugio Nicandro) founded the art group 'Asco' in 1972 fresh out of high school. Asco created art in response to the social and political injustices they saw and experienced in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 70s. Asco pushed back against negative stereotypes of Chicano/a and Latinx representation in mass media and made space for themselves as conceptual artists in a landscape that cast all Chicano/a artists as muralists. The group created art across various mediums and confronted and criticized societal assumptions through public performance, protest art, and media interventions such as the No Movie (an art form that promoted a counter-vision of popular culture).

\* Note to teachers: Consider assigning research prior to class. The resources provided in this lesson plan are just a few examples of articles and videos available on the topic.

1. Conduct research. Learn about Asco and their 'no movies' (see resources below). Why do you think they made them? What were they trying to say with their art? How does the concept of 'no movies' relate to your own life and experiences?
2. Brainstorm. Divide into groups of four. Have a discussion about representation in popular culture and the importance of access (to equipment, to an audience, to a platform) in getting your message out as an artist. Brainstorm ideas for your own 'No Movie'. What story do you want to tell?
3. Make a plan. Sketch out ideas for a scene from a movie you wish you could make.
4. Make a No Movie. Stage your scene and take a photograph. Use costumes and props to help tell your story and consider your setting, Asco often shot their No Movies in locations that meant something to their communities. What does it mean to claim a space with your art?
5. Edit your No Movie. Experiment with filters and effects as you edit your image. How can you manipulate your image to help you tell your story?
6. Give your movie a title. Adding a title to your No Movie will help you tell your story.



### **Assessment/Observation Activity:**

Activity 1: Written/oral response: write a short paragraph or tell a peer/teacher about your creative process. Why did you choose the materials you used? How did you use your materials? Did you transform them? Did you elevate them? What did you name your piece and why? How does your piece make you feel?

Activity 2: Write an artist statement to accompany your piece.

### **[How to Write an Artist Statement](#)**

Activity 3: Written response: write a plot synopsis for your No Movie. What is your No Movie about? Why is it important and to whom? What are you trying to say with your No Movie? How do you feel about your No Movie?

### **Lesson Conclusion/Potential Practice at Home:**

Activities 1 and 3—Ask students to look for representation of their communities in popular media. What can they find? Do they believe it is accurate to their experience? Why or why not? What would they change about it to make it more accurately reflect how they see their own community and experiences?

Activity 2—Ask students to draw or paint a room in their home based on how it makes them feel, remind them of Valdez's use of color and movement to help shape establish a mood for their interiors.

### **Accommodations & Modifications:**

Activity 1—materials, time, and/or circumstance do not allow for a full fashion show, ask student to use their found objects to create a fashion collage. Use a large piece of cardboard as the base of a fashion mood board and have students present on what they've included and why.

Not all students will have equal access to materials, consider collecting recyclables as a class and dividing them up equally among students.

Activity 3—For younger students, focus the lesson on claiming space. Take you students outside of the classroom (to the playground, the library, gym, cafeteria etc.) and ask them to act out scenes as characters that are important to them using costumes and props to tell their stories, take pictures as they preform to make No Movies.

### **Culturally Responsive Instruction and Modifications:**

So much of Patssi Valdez's work is commentary on social and political issues, representation, and economic inequities. Encourage thoughtful discussion but be sure to remind students to listen to each other with respect as their opinions and experiences may vary.

### **Relevance to families and communities:**

Lead a discussion with your students about (self) representation and recognition. Patssi Valdez, along with the other members of Asco, used their art to question the representation and



treatment of their community in East Los Angeles in the 1960s and 70s. How do student's see their own families and communities? How do they think others view them and why? What can they do to help write their own narratives about the communities they belong to?

### **Cross-Curricular Connections:**

art, social studies/history

### **Additional Resources:**

1. [Paper Fashions. An Evening with Patssi Valdez](#)—YouTube video
2. [Paper Fashions Show Patssi Valdez](#)—YouTube video
3. [Q&A: Painter Patssi Valdez on capturing energy, an L.A. fashion installation](#)—Los Angeles Times
4. [Asco art collective](#)—YouTube video
5. [Fleeting Inscriptions: Asco, Ephemera, and Intergroup Exchange in LA](#)—walkerart.org

### **Extension:**

Activity 1: Made in Tijuana

[Visual Arts](#): VA:Cr2.1.PKa-IIIa

- Create a sculpture using found objects. Experiment with materials and tools to transform found and recyclable objects into new works of art. Work in small groups and document your process as you go.

[Visual Arts](#): VA:Cr1.2.PKa-IIIa

- Design a magazine cover featuring a self-portrait that shows how you want to be represented. What is the title of your magazine? What is the topic? What are the titles of some of the articles included in your magazine? What do your magazine cover image, title, and articles say about who you are? Consider using a variety of materials and techniques to design your magazine cover (including digital resources) or work together in a group to come up with a magazine that is representative of your class/school/community. Compare your cover to the cover of other magazines of the same genre (fashion, science, news etc.) How are they different? How are they the same?

Activity 2: House of Spirits

[Visual Arts](#): VA:Cn10.1.Pka-5a

- For younger learners: Create an interior that tells a story about an experience or an event from your home, school, or community life. Use a large piece of cardboard or paper as a base and paint your interior in the style of Patssi Valdez, focusing on movement, color, and composition. How does your piece reflect your experience? How





does it make you feel?

### Activity 3: *À la Mode*

Visual Arts: VA:Cr1.1.6a-IIIa

Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- Using your phone, tablet, or video recording equipment, create a short movie about the scene you depicted in your No Movie (keep it under 5 minutes). Does your short movie put your No Movie into context? Are you able to convey your message better through video? Has having access to a phone/tablet capable of recording video (or other video recording equipment) change the way you present your message? Why or Why not? Think about all the ways you can share your short movie and No Movie with other people, how does that compare to the access (or lack thereof) of the Asco members when they were just starting out in the 1970s?
- Create a presentation (oral, visual, PowerPoint, google slides etc.) with your group about what you learned about Asco. Include in your presentation a brief history of the art group (use proper references), an overview of your thoughts and interpretations on Asco's work, and how you used what you learned to create your own No Movie. Why is it important to learn about artists like those in Asco? Do their ideas and artworks still resonate with you today? Why or why not?

### **Feedback:**

[Take this survey to share your feedback on this lesson plan.](#)



**Personality Traits and Elements of Art**

**Name:**

**Date:**

Personality Trait/Emotion	Color/Shape/Line



**See/Think/Wonder**  
**Name:**

**Date:**

**Title of Piece:**

See

Think

Wonder

See	Think	Wonder

## Made in Tijuana

(Interpretation by NHCC Art Museum staff)



Patssi Valdez  
born 1951 Los Angeles, California  
lives Los Angeles, California

*Made in Tijuana*  
2000  
crepe paper and wire

Patssi Valdez is a co-founder of the conceptual and performance group Asco (with Harry Gamboa Jr., Gronk, and Willie Herrón) and internationally renowned as a painter. Valdez has been interested in fashion design since she was a child and has created clothing from diverse and often unexpected materials.

For this piece, she purchased paper flowers from the artists in Tijuana, México and reconfigured them into a garden-like dress. By titling the work 'Made in Tijuana', Valdez pays tribute to the usually unrecognized artistry and creativity of unidentified artists.

This dress is one of the artworks that helped open the NHCC Art Museum and was exhibited in La Luz: Contemporary Latino Art in the U.S. (October 2000 – May 2001).

Gift from the collection of Jovita Z. Martínez  
2001.5

## House of Spirits

(Interpretation by NHCC Art Museum staff)



Patssi Valdez

born 1951 Los Angeles, California

lives Los Angeles, California

*House of Spirits*

1991

acrylic on canvas

Patssi Valdez has been committed to the Chicano Movement since her teenage years and was a founding member of the ground-breaking performance art collective Asco ("nausea" in Spanish). Today Valdez is a leading Chicana artist who has worked in photography, performance art, installation, film and theatre set design, and painting. She has been particularly concerned with examining glamour, beauty, and femininity in relationship to her Hispanic heritage. Domestic interior spaces have also been the subject of Valdez' paintings from the

late 1980s onward. Her interior spaces are saturated with color and infused with a tangible spirit. Usually empty of people, and filled with animated, everyday objects and religious iconography, Valdez's paintings provoke the viewers imagination.

House of Spirits resembles a stage set or a structure swept up in a tornado, which conveys a sense of theatrical drama. Its pulsing walls contain furniture that levitates, ghost-like shadows, an ominous mask, and a painting of the "all powerful hand of God." House of Spirits also resonates with Isabel Allende's best-selling novel of a similar title. The novel centers on a young woman named Clara who is able to move objects with her telepathic powers and whose husband builds her a grandiose house, a place for spiritualist meetings.

## À La Mode

(Interpretation by NHCC Art Museum staff)



Harry Gamboa Jr.  
born 1951 Los Angeles, California  
lives Los Angeles, California

*À La Mode*  
20<sup>th</sup> century  
gelatin silver print

Harry Gamboa Jr. is considered an educator, a muralist, a performer, photographer and more. However, he notes that “to document” feels like his duty. Whether it be the Chicano Moratorium in the 1970s or a staged scene performed by Asco— Gamboa is there equipped with his camera.

This photo is one of many from a series titled, “No Movie”. Gamboa worked on this series with Asco, an art collective that he cofounded in 1972. The collective was dedicated to making art concerning socio-economic and political issues in the Chicano community and was composed of four artists, three

of whom are in this scene (Gronk, Patssi Valdez, and Willie Herron). The series consisted of photos that appeared to be stills from a moving image or an excerpt from a longer plot. The group could not afford the equipment for film and therefore rejected it. In this photo, Patssi Valdez is seated on top of a diner table and in several interviews, Gronk revealed that there is a piece of pie underneath the table outside the photographed scene. Each year, Asco would present one of the “No Movies” with a “No Oscar” (a plastic cobra spray painted gold) and in 1982 *A La Mode* received the award.

Promised gift of the artist