



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2001 Volume IV: Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary Art and Literature

Expressions of Anti-Racism Through Painting: The Puerto Rican Community From West Side Story to Connecticut

Guide for Curriculum Unit 01.04.05

by Jon Moscartolo

This art unit introduces students to the Puerto Rican experience from *West Side Story* to present day Connecticut. This is explored through a series of painting lessons beginning with a graffiti wall and progressing through dream narratives that explore Surrealism. These move on to Expressionism in painting and look at the art work of Jackson Pollock who was exhibiting his innovative style in New York City in the 1950s. This connection between Pollock and *West Side Story* in the 1950s is used as a point of reference to understand the growth of the Puerto Rican community in Connecticut.

Dr. Ruth Glasser's *Aqui Me Quedo, Puerto Ricans in Connecticut* provides the historical background for the employment of Puerto Ricans in the shade tobacco farms of Connecticut. The economic and cultural aspects of the Puerto Rican experience are presented through further study of Puerto Rican artists via the Internet. The goal is to examine impressions of racism and seek a deeper understanding through artistic personal expression.

(Recommended for Art, grade 8, and Introduction to Art, grade 9.)

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