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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2013 Volume IV: Invisible Cities: The Arts and Renewable Community

Discovering the Invisible Bay Street: Uncovering Emeryville's History and Understanding Our Own

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.04.10, published September 2013
by Sara Stillman

Beneath Bay Street at the corner of Shellmound Street and Ohlone Way lays a story of our nation's growth, decline, and rebirth. When examined closely, the Bay Street site tells the story of the Ohlone people, Gold Rush settlers, and the industrialization of our of a city and subsequent contamination of the land. This history is rich in beauty and uncomfortable truths that my students will explore as they question what they will leave behind to tell their story and how our society will be viewed by those who come after us. As they fill in the gaps of our historical narrative through an Art Based Research approach: students will create a timeline to visualize the scope of our investigation, map each period of history to track the city's evolution, visit locations that existed in the past to uncover what they have become, examine primary and secondary historical documents, and create a public art installation that gives voice to Emeryville's past, present, and future.

(Developed for Advanced Art, grades 11-12; recommended for High School Visual Arts/Social Studies, grades 10-12)

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