

Language through Art: An ESL Enrichment Curriculum (Beginning) Information for Teaching

Amadeo Sandoval's Kitchen and Bedroom, Río Lucío, New Mexico

Alex Harris (American, born 1949)
Negative, June 1985; print, 1994
Chromogenic print
17 9/16 x 22 3/8 in.
98.XM.214.3
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Gift of Nancy and Bruce Berman



Background Information

No church or temple or sanctuary had ever captivated me like Amadeo's home. He sanctified his rooms with icons of apostles, saints, and family photographs. Stars, flowers, and hearts celebrated the many colored and carved crosses. In a rainbow of hues on walls, furniture, appliances, and chairs, Amadeo depicted a loving and merciful God.
—Alex Harris

Alex Harris portrays the carpenter Amadeo Sandoval by photographing his home. In photographing Sandoval's modest kitchen and bedroom, Harris also provided an intimate glimpse into the life of his adopted community in northern New Mexico. This image conveys the dignity Harris found not only in Sandoval's home but also among all the residents of the region.

About the Artist

Alex Harris (American, born 1949)

In 1972, one year after completing his undergraduate degree at Yale, where he studied with the photographer Walker Evans, Harris moved to New Mexico to photograph the *ancianos*, the elders in the Hispanic communities. These images were subsequently published in *The Old Ones of New Mexico* (1973), the first of several collaborations with the psychiatrist and writer Robert Coles.

Admiring Evans's skill at "revealing mystery in what seemed so ordinary," Harris portrays a rich human presence in his photographs taken of his subjects' homes, gardens, and roads, as well as in images taken from the back seats of their cars—while the subjects of the portraits themselves are rarely directly present. The lived-in spaces bear the traces of their inhabitants—evidence of what Harris describes as the "human devotion to home."

Initially working in black and white, Harris switched to color film and a view camera in 1980. His rich and varied career has included photographing in North Carolina, New Mexico, and Alaska. Harris memorialized the vivid color schemes of his neighbors' homes and the high desert landscapes of northern New Mexico in his 1992 series *Red White Blue and God Bless You*, which was named after an inscription on the wall of Amadeo Sandoval's kitchen.