Piazza d’Italia: Public Design Debate

NEW ORLEANS CULTURAL STUDIO | LESSON 74 | GRADES 9–12 | CULTURE & SOURCES

Context before technique

Piazza d’Italia in New Orleans commemorates Italian American contributions through postmodern public design.

Whose story is being told?

Teach this lesson through identified New Orleans institutions and, where possible, community-authored testimony. Name the people, places, and historical context in your examples. Explain what remains unknown or contested.

Responsible artistic engagement

Represent the Italian American community accurately while also asking who can use the space today.

Visual permissions

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Starter research sources

Cultural Landscape Foundation: Piazza d’Italia

https://www.tclf.org/landscapes/piazza-ditalia

New Orleans Italian cultural history

https://www.neworleans.com/things-to-do/multicultural/cultures/italians/

Louisiana Visual Arts Benchmarks

Louisiana Department of Education arts standards (official PDF)

Discussion prompts

- Who created or maintains this tradition, space, or object?
- What do outsiders often overlook?
- Which images would require permission, and whose voices are missing?

Teaching note

These starter sources support inquiry, not a complete ethnography. Prioritize up-to-date local perspectives and appropriately compensated cultural partnerships when possible.