

## MAPPING THE JOURNEY TO A NEW HOME



### Objective

- To encourage examination and active engagement with a work of art displayed in this exhibition.
- To investigate the expressive and historical meaning of an individual work of art.
- To learn more about the migration experiences of individuals living in Orange County.
- To encourage students to investigate the diverse ways they observe, feel, and reflect on their neighborhoods.

### Introduction

Locate the large map at the rear of this exhibition. This map is a work of art titled *The Stars will Tell Us*, created by the artist Trinh Mai, who remade an actual travel map belonging to a man named Trần Văn Dũng. In 1981, Mr. Trần was a captain of a vessel that carried 80 refugees away from Saigon to Thailand in search of safety and used this map to help him navigate the waters. During this journey, the boat was attacked four times by pirates! These pirates took many of the people's possessions, including Mr. Trần's compass. Before leaving with the compass, one of the pirates wrote on the map "You go to Songkhla - 250 degrees," to point the refugees to land. Navigating his boat without a compass was no easy task for Mr. Trần, so he had to follow the constellations of stars in the sky to plot his course. In this work of art, artist Trinh Mai has superimposed images of Mr. Trần, his brother, and some of the people who traveled this journey with him, and also painted some fishing boats upon the map in order to help tell the stories of those who journeyed these dangerous escapes by sea, eventually making their way to Orange County.

### Directions

After spending time viewing *The Stars will Tell Us*, pick one of the prompts to get started.

- Imagine that you have 5 minutes to pack only 5 belongings before you must leave your home. Describe each item that you would take with you, and why. For additional information take a moment to examine the exhibition cases which include special items brought by families who left Vietnam.
- Using the 4 panels to the right of this map, write a newspaper article about the boat people refugees' journey. For additional information, review the other personal stories along the wall.
- Create a short story or poem inspired by Mr. Tran's journey. Use the information provided on this sheet and the details featured in artist Trinh Mai's piece *The Stars will Tell Us*.