resilience



TEACHING GUIDE


1 KC Adams


2 Kenojuak Ashevak

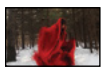

3 Shuvinai Ashoona


4 Rebecca Gloria-Jean Baird


5 Mary Anne Barkhouse


6 Christi Belcourt


7 Rebecca Belmore


8 Jaime Black


9 Lori Blondeau

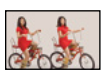

10 Heather Campbell


11 Joane Cardinal-Schubert

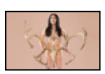


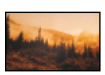
12 Lianne Marie Leda Charlie


13 Hannah Claus


14 Dana Claxton

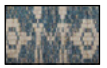

15 Ruth Cuthand


16 Dayna Danger


17 Patricia Deadman


18 Bonnie Devine


19 Rosalie Favell


20 Vanessa Dion Fletcher



21 Lita Fontaine


22 Melissa General


23 Tanya Harnett


24 Maria Hupfield


25 Ursula Johnson

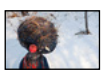

26 Bev Koski


27 Nadya Kwandibens


28 Mary Longman


29 Amy Malbeuf


30 Teresa Marshall


31 Meryl McMaster


32 Caroline Monnet


33 Lisa Myers


34 Nadia Myre


35 Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter


36 Marianne Nicolson


37 Shelley Niro


38 Jeneen Frei Njootli


39 Nigit'stil Norbert


40 Daphne Odjig

41 Jane Ash Poitras

42 Annie Pootoogook

43 Sherry Farrell Racette

44 Sonia Robertson

45 Pitaloosie Saila

46 Jessie Short

47 Skawennati

48 Jackie Traverse

49 Jennie Williams

50 Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson

Visit **resilienceproject.ca/en/artists** to access ***Resilience*** artworks and artist statements.

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MAWA is located on the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Ithiniwak, Denesuline, Anishininiwak, Inuit, Dakota and Nakota Peoples, and the Homeland of the Red River Métis Nation. MAWA is supplied with water from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, and electricity generated by hydroelectric plants on the traditional lands of First Nations along the Nelson River.

MAWA is committed to redressing the harms of the past and present through education and the transformative power of visual art.

Cover: Daphne Odjig - *The Indian in Transition,* 1978

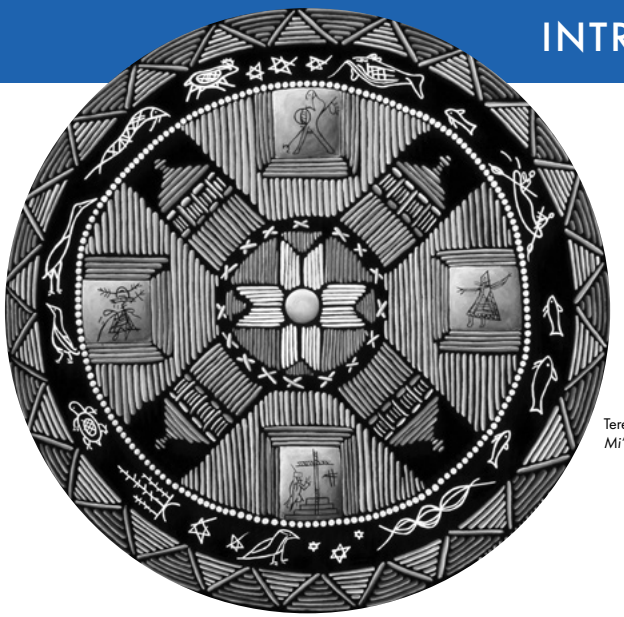

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PURPOSE OF THE TEACHING GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to assist teachers, from kindergarten to grade 12, in integrating Indigenous themes, knowledge, history and contemporary realities into the classroom. The ***Resilience*** art cards can be used to spark dialogue, questioning, critical thinking, research and understanding. They can also be used to help students create their own original artworks and develop an awareness and connection with contemporary Indigenous visual art. The suggested discussion points and activities are meant to engage learners with the artwork, introduce ideas that the artwork expresses, and develop an understanding of how art reflects culture and diverse identities.

The ***Resilience*** art cards introduce students to artworks by Indigenous women visual artists in Canada who work in a variety of forms and mediums. For too long, our artistic role models have been colonial, historical and predominantly male. The ***Resilience*** art card images can be used to expose students to a wide range of time-honoured and contemporary art practices, create pride in artists who create in this time and place, and celebrate Indigenous cultural producers.

This guide supports Call to Action #62 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which calls upon "federal, provincial and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Indigenous Peoples and educators, to make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties and Indigenous peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada mandatory from kindergarten to Grade 12."[1, 2]



Teresa Marshall - *Mi'kmaq Universe*

CONTEXT OF THE ARTWORKS

The artworks reflect the perspectives of diverse Indigenous women artists. They were created over a period of 50 years in response to the artists' life circumstances. Each artist in this set of art cards is identified by her specific Indigenous Nation: Look at a map of pre-contact Indigenous language territories.[3] When engaging with the artwork, consider the artist's place of origin. How do her place of origin and her culture impact the artwork? Also consider what was happening in social and political spheres at the time of creation, such as the expansion of the human rights movement, important amendments to the Indian Act, the Meech Lake Accord, the Idle No More campaign and calls for a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

To gain more insight into the artworks and the artists, teachers are encouraged to watch the video *Lee-Ann Martin Curator's Talk:* ***Resilience*** *National Billboard Exhibition*[4] and read the curatorial essay *The Resilient Body*[5] and these two art magazine articles, *Nationwide Public Art Project to Feature 50 Indigenous Women*[6] and *Taking Back the Territory.*[7]

[1] "For most Canadians, the intergenerational understanding of Indigenous histories and cultures has been influenced by Hollywood movies of the 1950-60s. Known as 'Westerns,' these movies presented the Indian Wars of the Central Plains and Indigenous resistance to colonization as negative. This narrow, racist view has resulted in the stereotyping of Indigenous Peoples. It has also given rise to pan-Indigenous Plains teachings, art and ceremonial practice. In geographic areas where Indigenous Peoples experienced significant cultural loss, teachings and practices may be borrowed from other Indigenous groups. For example, the Plains version of the pow wow dance is now found across North America." Elder Albert McLeod, 2019

[2] *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2015).

[3] Reconciliation Education, Turtle Island Map (Pre-Contact Linguistic Groups), 4 Seasons of Reconciliation.

[4] MAWA Programs, "Lee-Ann Martin Curator's Talk: *Resilience* National Billboard Exhibition," vimeo.com/mawawpg (2018).

[5] Lee-Ann Martin, "The Resilient Body," resilienceproject.ca (2018).

[6] Leah Sandals, "Nationwide Public Art Project to Feature 50 Indigenous Women," canadianart.ca/news (Mar. 16, 2018).

[7] Borderviews, "Taking Back the Territory," bordercrossingsmag.com (June 2018).

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT OF THE TEACHING GUIDE

Since this guide was developed in Manitoba, home to many Plains cultures, it reflects a Prairie Indigenous cultural perspective and is therefore not an exhaustive resource. Facilitators are encouraged to tailor the activities and content to align with the specific Indigenous perspectives of their own regions, integrating this guide with other local pedagogical materials.

Educators should also note that certain terms in this guide, such as the "Medicine Wheel," "Mother Earth" and "sacred," are modern frameworks. Despite the devastating impact of colonization on traditional knowledge systems, significant wisdom has been safeguarded through the efforts of community members and Knowledge Keepers and is now frequently shared via 21st-century English.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Students can engage with the ***Resilience*** art cards in numerous ways, gaining valuable insights into each artist's cultural perspectives and individual self-expression while finding inspiration for their own creative projects. These cards are intended to promote cross-disciplinary dialogue in subjects such as geography, history, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. While this guide covers various themes, it is not exhaustive; educators are encouraged to adapt the artworks to their specific curriculum objectives and local settings. To facilitate lesson planning, teachers can refer to Indigenous education resource hubs such as the NCCIE Teaching Resource Centre,[8] the NCTR Education Resources,[9] Indigenous STEAM,[10] Can Geo Education's Indigenous Resources[11] and *The Canadian Encyclopedia* Education Guides.[12] Additionally, teachers can enhance their knowledge of Indigenous perspectives through the *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*[13] or by taking free, self-paced online courses offered by some Canadian universities, such as *Indigenous Canada,*[14] *Aboriginal Worldviews and Education*[15] and *Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education.*[16]

The strategies and adaptable lesson plans included in this guide are not meant to be followed in a rigid, linear fashion. Instead, they offer themed project suggestions that educators can customize based on curriculum needs, student age, prior knowledge and the relevance of specific topics. These lessons are designed to evolve in complexity as students' understanding of the subject matter grows over time.

Both teachers and students can find this guide, along with images and artist statements for all 50 ***Resilience*** artworks, at ***resilienceproject.ca***. **The site features a downloadable PDF version of the teaching guide, which includes links to references, resources and templates.** While external links are provided for convenience, please verify their functionality and suitability for the classroom before using them. Inactive or older sites can sometimes be recovered through the Wayback Machine website archive at *archive.org*.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Some forms of appropriation (not cultural) are generally accepted in contemporary art, particularly when an everyday object or image from popular culture is recontextualized by an artist to make a point.[17] Rosalie Favell's *I awoke to find my spirit had returned* [Card 19] is an example of appropriation in art. But cultural appropriation is not acceptable.

"Cultural appropriation is the act of taking from someone else's culture without their consent. This can include using aspects of traditional knowledge or cultural expressions, as well as music, dances, regalia, cuisine, symbols, ceremonies, artistic expressions and so on. Cultural appropriation often reflects a racialized power imbalance between two cultures, the taking

[8] National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education, "Teaching Resource Centre," nccie.ca/teaching-resource-centre/.
[9] National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, "Education Resources," nctr.ca/education/education-resources/.
[10] indigenoussteam.org.
[11] Canadian Geographic Education, "Can Geo Education's Indigenous Resources," cangeoeducation.ca/en/resources/can-geo-educations-indigenous-resources/.
[12] Historica Canada, *Education Guides - Indigenous Peoples,* The Canadian Encyclopedia, thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/studyguide?topic=indigenous-peoples&page=1.
[13] Canadian Geographic, *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada,* indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca.
[14] University of Alberta, *Indigenous Canada,* coursera.org/courses.
[15] University of Toronto, *Aboriginal Worldviews and Education,* coursera.org/courses.
[16] University of British Columbia, *Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education,* opl.educ.ubc.ca.
[17] "Appropriation (art)", en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.

of culture — rather than the consensual sharing of it — which often, in turn, involves exploitation of one group over another. Cultural appropriation disregards the sacred meanings and stories associated with those practices or items that are being taken. In Canada, the appropriation of Indigenous culture by white, non-Indigenous peoples is rooted in colonization. Critics of cultural appropriation note that, in many cases, it has been used in ways that either perpetuate negative attitudes about Indigenous peoples or romanticize them. Moreover, appropriation separates people, their history and lived experience, from cultural symbols, literatures and objects, many of which hold sacred meaning."[18]

Be respectful towards Indigenous art forms and artists. Talk about cultural appropriation in the classroom. *Cultural Appropriation*[19] (grades 4-7), *Indigenous Arts Protocols*[20] and *Indigenous Protocols for the Visual Arts*[21] are good resources. Teach students to learn from, be inspired by and respond to an artwork without taking from the artist by imitating their work. Guide students to create something from their own hearts and experiences.

Encourage them to be authentic in their creative choices by asking questions such as: *Why is that colour important to you? How do you connect with that particular symbol? How can you choose a symbol that represents you?*[22] When exploring artistic mediums or techniques that represent the style of a particular artist or culture, acknowledge its source by referencing the artist and their Nation or community of origin. For example, students could use Heather Campbell's *Nuliajuk in Mourning* [Card 10] to inspire their own wet on wet watercolour artworks depicting the effects of pollution. When titling and displaying their artworks, it would be respectful to mention the source of their inspiration (for example, *[title] after Inuit artist Heather Campbell).*

INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES IN THE CLASSROOM

Classroom discussions about Indigenous histories, cultures or contemporary realities can sometimes be complex to navigate. Because colonization has impacted everyone, certain subjects may evoke powerful emotional responses in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. These discussions can be especially taxing for many Indigenous educators and students who may have personal or familial connections to the topics being explored. The teacher's role is to guide a constructive learning process by validating these emotions and prompting students to contribute solely on the basis of their own lived experiences.

When incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum, it is highly recommended to collaborate with an Indigenous guest speaker. While some school divisions provide access to Indigenous Elders or Knowledge Keepers, teachers can also reach out to local community members, Elders or Knowledge Keepers to address specific subjects, engage in dialogue or answer student questions. Learning from those with first-hand, lived experience offers students a profound educational impact. However, it is vital to keep in mind that the burden of educating peers or the teacher should never be placed upon Indigenous students.

When engaging with an Indigenous guest, it is essential to observe regional protocols,[23, 24] for both the initial approach and the hosting process. In Prairie cultures, for instance, it is customary to present a tobacco tie[25] as an offering, following established tobacco offering protocols.[26] In addition to traditional offerings made in exchange for shared teachings and knowledge, a monetary honorarium should be provided, consistent with the treatment of any professional guest speaker.

[18] Jennifer Brant, Canadian Encyclopedia, "Cultural Appropriation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada," thecanadianencyclopedia.ca (2018; last edited 2020).
[19] Simon Rose, *Cultural Appropriation*, Indigenous Life in Canada: Past, Present, Future Series, Beech Street Books (2018).
[20] Ontario Arts Council, "Indigenous Arts Protocols," youtube.com/@OntarioArts (2006).
[21] Canadian Artists' Representation / Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC), *Indigenous Protocols for the Visual Arts,* indigenousprotocols.art/resource-guide (2021).
[22] Janet Taylor, "Considering Cultural Appropriation in the Art Classroom," theartofeducation.edu (2020).
[23] Alberta Teachers' Association, *Stepping Stones; Elder Protocols,* Indigenous education resources, teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/indigenous-education-and-walking-together/indigenous-education-resources.
[24] The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund, "Protocols for Engaging with Indigenous Peoples & Community," downiewenjack.ca/our-work/protocols/.
[25] The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund, "The Four Sacred Medicines: Tobacco, East," youtube.com/@DownieWenjack (2025).
[26] Carleton University Indigenous Gathering Site, "Tobacco Offering Protocol," carleton.ca/indigenous/policies-procedures.

WAYS OF LOOKING

To spark curiosity and discussion, teachers can use these looking activities to help students interpret artwork. The exercises can introduce visual arts lessons, inspire creativity in other disciplines, or support research and writing in other subjects. Using one art card each month also offers meaningful exposure to the diverse mediums and ideas explored by Indigenous women artists throughout the school year. Find more Ways of Looking on MAWA's *Art Alive* website.[27]

SIMPLE OBSERVATION

- Look at this artwork closely and write down 5 things you see. What is the first thing you notice in the artwork? What else do you observe? What interests you most about this artwork?
- Allow students 5 minutes to look at the image of an artwork. Ask them to try memorizing what they see. Together, students list everything they can collectively remember to reconstruct the artwork. Which details or aspects were overlooked?

PUZZLES

Have students examine a small portion of a detailed artwork before seeing the whole image. Print one of the ***Resilience*** artworks available online,[28] cut it into pieces, each with key features, and distribute them to small groups or pairs. Ask students to describe their piece to the class, assemble the full puzzle together, and discuss the complete artwork.[29]

JUMPING IN

To help students look at an artwork, invite them to study an image. "Then ask them to imagine jumping right into it! Where would they like to land? Why? What else would they see once they got into the picture? Ask them to think about all of their senses."[30] What would they hear and smell? What could they taste? What could they touch and how would it feel?

VISUAL THINKING STRATEGIES[31,32,33]

At any grade level, teachers can use Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to inspire discussion about any of the artworks. This method requires no prior knowledge of art, the artwork or the artist. It is a simple but effective way to initiate meaning-making. The VTS method encourages careful examination of the artwork and purposeful description. It gives ownership of the artwork description to the students and develops their ability to describe verbally what they notice. In combination with the teaching of new art vocabulary, including the elements and principles of art, it allows them to examine the work in detail. With VTS, students begin to access their prior knowledge and experience, become more confident in looking at and talking about unfamiliar artworks, and develop their ability to "read" artworks. Their observations will become more and more complex and sophisticated.

The teacher asks three questions while viewing an image:

- ***What's going on in this picture?*** After each student's response, paraphrase what the student has said to validate their thinking, confirm that they are understood, or help clarify their comments. As students mention particular areas of the artwork, help to direct the students' attention by pointing to the areas being discussed.
- To prompt elaboration, the teacher asks ***What do you see that makes you say that?***
- If the comments on that particular student's "noticing" wind down, the teacher asks: ***What else can we find?***

Teachers should act as neutral facilitators rather than "experts" during this activity and remain open to new ideas and observations. As the discussion progresses, paraphrase each student's input and connect their observations to those of other students.

[27] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Ways of Looking," artalive.mawa.ca/activities/ways-of-looking.
[28] MAWA, *Resilience - Artists*, resilienceproject.ca/en/artists.
[29] Amanda Heyn, "Slow Looking and 5 Other Simple Activities to Enhance Your Students' Ability to Analyze Art," theartofeducation.edu (2015).
[30] Amanda Heyn, "Slow Looking and 5 Other Simple Activities to Enhance Your Students' Ability to Analyze Art," theartofeducation.edu (2015).

[31] VTS is an inquiry-based teaching method developed by Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine.
[32] VTS, "Visual Thinking Strategies," vimeo.com/vtsvimeo.
[33] Milwaukee Art Museum Teacher Resources, "Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)," teachers.mam.org/resource/visual-thinking-strategies-vts/.

SHARING CIRCLES FOR ARTWORK DISCUSSION

Sharing Circles[34] are a traditional Indigenous way for people to gather, talk and listen respectfully. In the classroom, a teacher and students can sit together in a circle to explore and respond to artworks. The teacher asks open-ended questions about what students notice, feel, wonder about and connect with. When examining multiple pieces, students can identify commonalities and differences to see how each artist communicates ideas uniquely.

Holding a talking object (such as a feather, stick or stone), the teacher shares first, then passes it to a student. Only the person holding the object speaks, while others listen without interrupting or judging. Students may choose to speak or pass the object if they are not ready or do not wish to share. The object circulates until all have had a chance to participate, and it may be passed a second time for final thoughts.

The circle promotes attentive observation and thoughtful sharing while ensuring that every student has an equal chance to participate. It also helps students see that many valid interpretations of an artwork exist, and that hearing different perspectives can broaden everyone's understanding.

For additional guidance, the video *Learning about the Circle*[35] offers an introduction to implementing classroom sharing circles, and Empowering the Spirit provides talking/sharing circle protocols posters[36] for elementary, middle and high school classrooms. Theresa "Corky" Larsen-Jonasson has also written a series of children's books that introduce sharing circles to elementary students, including *Our Little Sharing Circle*,[37] *The Sharing Circle*[38] (teaching guide[39]) and *The Circle of Caring and Sharing*.[40]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the first thing you notice in this artwork and why? What do you see now that you did not see when we first started looking at this piece? What made you notice it now?
- What do you see? Look at this detail or section of the artwork. What things do you recognize in this artwork? What things seem new to you? What does this artwork remind you of?
- What do you think is happening in this artwork? Who are the people and what are they doing? What is the setting (time and place)?
- What would it be like to live in this artwork and why?
- What words would you use to describe this artwork and why?
- How do you think the artist made this artwork? What materials did they use? How would you describe the lines in this picture? The shapes? The colours? The textures? Which objects seem closer to you? Further away?
- What do you think this artwork is about? What is the main idea? Why do you think the artist might have made this artwork? What did the artist want to communicate?
- What title would you give this artwork and why? When you learned the actual title, did it seem to fit or were you surprised?
- What questions do you have about what you see? What would you ask the artist about this artwork, if they were here?
- What do you think is worth remembering about this artwork?
- If this artwork tells a story, who or what is the main character? When and where do you think the story takes place? Tell the story of what you see. If we could hear one thought from someone or something in this artwork, what might that thought be?

[34] Sharing Circles (or Talking Circles) are traditional Indigenous practices used for community building, decision-making and healing. Adapted here for classroom discussion, they do not replace community-led cultural practices or ceremonial Healing Circles. Protocols vary by Nation, so educators should approach them respectfully and learn from local Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous communities.
[35] Indigenous Education - School District 71 (Comox Valley), "Learning about the Circle," youtube.com/@AbEdSD71 (2022).
[36] Empowering the Spirit, *Teaching Tools for the Classroom*, "Talking and Sharing Circles as a Tool for Learning," empoweringthespirit.ca/orange-shirt-day-and-beyond/teaching-tools/.
[37] Theresa "Corky" Larsen-Jonasson, *Our Little Sharing Circle*, Medicine Wheel Publishing (2025).
[38] Theresa "Corky" Larsen-Jonasson, *The Sharing Circle*, Medicine Wheel Publishing (2016).
[39] Medicine Wheel Education, *The Sharing Circle: Teacher Lesson Plans and Resources* (2018).
[40] Theresa "Corky" Larsen-Jonasson, *The Circle of Caring and Sharing*, Medicine Wheel Publishing (2019).

ART DESCRIPTION AND DRAWING[41]

Have students work in pairs. One student describes an artwork using only words and visual art vocabulary, while their partner draws based on the description. Give students a set amount of time, then reveal the original artwork for comparison. Have students switch roles and repeat.

WRITING + ART

The Milwaukee Art Museum's book *Look, Write, See: Activities for Teaching Writing and Looking at Art* [42] contains adaptable writing activities to get students engaged in writing inspired by art. The book can be downloaded[43] and the writing activities[44] are available on the museum's website.

KINETIC TRANSLATIONS

Use your body to explore an artwork. Recreate the figures, poses and shapes as a living composition. Create a soundscape that reflects the artwork's mood, setting or ideas. Use dance, gesture or facial expression to represent it. Try moving around as if you were walking through it. Document your response with a photo or video, compare it to the original, and reflect on experiencing the artwork physically rather than visually.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Make comparative observations to discover how different artists express their ideas. Analyze the similarities and differences across *theme, medium, design* and *context* (defined in the note).

- Group the artworks into the Four Directions (North, East, South, West) based on the artist's place of origin, and think about how the place they come from influences the themes and types of artwork they make, or compare how artworks relate to land, geography and ecosystems.
- Arrange several artworks chronologically, or on a timeline, to see how style, theme or approach changes over time.



Jackie Traverse - *Harvesting the Hair of Mother Earth* (detail)

- Compare two or more artworks using a Venn diagram,[45] T-chart or comparative matrix to track similarities and differences. The following are several recommended pairings: (40-41), (3-42), (6-34), (8-9), (10-48), (14-37), (27-43), (19-46), (22-31), (24-35), (16-28), and (23-33).
- Make a cross-cultural comparison between the artwork of an Indigenous artist and that of another artist of colour, to explore shared or distinct ideas, influences, perspectives or meanings.
- Present your comparisons as a multimedia presentation or comparative text. Describe the artworks, then explain their similarities and differences in ideas, techniques and context.

NOTE:

Theme refers to the central concept or idea of an artwork, encompassing its subject matter, messages, stories, or the emotions it expresses.

Media refers to the materials and techniques used to create an artwork, whether traditional methods such as painting and weaving or contemporary ways of making[46] such as interactive art and sound art.

Design encompasses traditional elements and principles of design,[47] contemporary elements of art,[48] and postmodern principles.[49]

Context is the "backstory" of an artwork, including the artist, time, place, and coinciding historical events or social, political or environmental issues.

[41] Cindy Ingram, "Super Fun Art Description and Drawing Activity for Developing Language Skills," (2017), artclasscurator.com.
[42] Milwaukee Art Museum, *Look, Write, See: Activities for Teaching Writing and Looking at Art* (2018).
[43] Milwaukee Art Museum, *Look, Write, See: Activities for Teaching Writing and Looking at Art*, teachers.mam.org/wp-content/media/201803_LookWriteSee_D22.pdf (2018).
[44] Milwaukee Art Museum Teacher Resources, "Resources: Writing + Art," teachers.mam.org/activity.

[45] MAWA, Resilience Project, Venn Diagram Template, resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Venn_Diagram_Template.pdf.
[46] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Contemporary Ways of Making," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/contemporary-approaches-to-art#contemporary-ways-of-making.
[47] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Elements & Principles of Design," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/elements-principles-of-design.
[48] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Contemporary Approaches to Art," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/contemporary-approaches-to-art#contemporary-elements-of-art.
[49] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Contemporary Approaches to Art," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/contemporary-approaches-to-art#postmodern-principles.

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will explore the five senses to understand and appreciate the abundance of gifts from the Land and develop respect for the planet.

LOOK

Card 48. Jackie Traverse, *Harvesting the Hair of Mother Earth,* acrylic on canvas, 60.96 cm x 91.44 cm (2019)

What are the women in this painting doing? What are they harvesting? [Sweetgrass] What could they use it for? [Ceremony, purification, connection, medicine, art] Where is the sweetgrass growing from in the painting? [The roots originate in the hair of Mother Earth]

What colours and shapes did the artist use? Why? [Flowing organic shapes and colours that reflect the texture of hair and the Prairie landscape]

Look at the size of some of the elements in this painting. What is big? What is small? What is taking up most of the room in the painting? Why might the artist have decided on this composition?

KNOW

- **Jackie Traverse**[50] is an Ojibway[51] artist from Winnipeg (Manitoba).
- Traverse is a featured artist on MAWA's *Art Alive*[52] website. She has also released a series of colouring books.[53]
- As a living being, Mother Earth offers teachings and gifts to humans, who serve as her caregivers and protectors. Stewardship and caring for the Earth are core values shared across all Indigenous Nations.[54]
- Books about gratitude for nature include *Chi Miigwech, Big Thank You;*[55] *Lessons from Mother Earth;*[56] *Poems to Honour Mother Earth;*[57] *Sila and the Land*[58] and *Braiding Sweetgrass* for *Young Adults.*[59]

[50] jackietraverse.com.
[51] The Ojibwe (also Ojibwa, Ojibway, Chippewa) are an Indigenous people in Canada and the United States who are part of a larger cultural and linguistic group known as the Anishinaabeg (plural form of Anishinaabe). This group also includes the Odawa, Potawatomi, Algonquin, Saulteaux, Nipissing and Mississauga First Nations. (Source: thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en.)
[52] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Jackie Traverse," artalive.mawa.ca/artists/jackie-traverse.
[53] Jackie Traverse, "Colouring Books by Jackie Traverse," fernwoodpublishing.ca/books/series/colouring-books-by-jackie-traverse.
[54] Pamela Rose Toulouse, *Truth and Reconciliation in Canadian Schools,* Portage & Main Press (2018).
[55] Astra Márta, *Chi Miigwech, Big Thank You,* Orca Book Publishers (2026).
[56] Elaine McLeod, *Lessons from Mother Earth,* Groundwood Books Ltd (2010).
[57] Leah Marie Dorion, *Poems to Honour Mother Earth,* Strong Stories, Métis series, Strong Nations Publishing (2018).
[58] Shelby Angalik, Ariana Roundpoint, Lindsay Dupré, *Sila and the Land,* TakingITGlobal (2022).
[59] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants,* Adapted by Monique Gray Smith, Lerner Publishing Group (2022).

- The Anishinaabeg consider sweetgrass a sacred medicine used in ceremonies to clear negative energy and invite positive energy. Learn more by inviting an Elder into the classroom for a teaching or by watching *Sweetgrass Teachings with Elder Phillip Gladue.*[60]
- Books about sweetgrass include *The Sweetgrass Story,*[61] *Mitzy's First Time Picking Sweetgrass,*[62] and *The First Blade of Sweetgrass.*[63]
- Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22.

WONDER

- Take the students outdoors to observe the four elements (air, water, fire, earth), the weather, the plants and the animals. Talk about: What is living? What do you see, hear, smell, taste and feel? How does Mother Earth nourish and provide for us? How can we be stewards of the Land?

RESPOND

- Create an artwork to represent Mother Earth. What do you imagine she looks like? Depict her gifts to us, especially your favourite ones. Represent yourself and others enjoying these gifts or taking care of Mother Earth. Use colours and/or shapes found in nature.
- Write a letter or poem as an offering to Mother Earth, giving thanks for the gifts she provides.
- Make an artwork created entirely out of gifts from the Land (rocks, twigs, flowers, etc.). When collecting items for the project, be respectful of the environment. Be careful not to damage anything. Use only the parts of plants that have already fallen or are about to fall. Take a photo of the artwork, then return the materials to the Land.

[60] Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), "Sweetgrass Teachings with Elder Phillip Gladue, Métis Nation," youtube.com/@JusticeInstitute (2020).
[61] Jem Maracle, *The Sweetgrass Story,* Independently published (2025).
[62] Emily Johnson, *Mitzy's First Time Picking Sweetgrass,* Monster House Publishing (2023).
[63] Suzanne Greenlaw and Gabriel Frey, *The First Blade of Sweetgrass: A Native American Story,* Tilbury House Publishers (2021).

CYCLICAL PATTERNS AND THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will observe and discuss the Four Directions as they relate to the four seasons, other cyclical patterns and interconnectedness.

LOOK

Card 2. Kenojuak Ashevak, *Nunavut - Our Land,*
hand-coloured lithograph on paper, 230 x 370.5 cm (1992)

Which location is depicted in this artwork? [Nunavut, North] What animals do you see? [Caribou, raven, dog, fox, fish, goose, owl, polar bear, Arctic hare, seal, whale] In what activities are the Inuit engaged? [Ice fishing, kayaking, sledding] What changes as you look around the circle? [Animal type, shelter type, sky, water, land, mountains, colours] Which colours did the artist use? Why? [Mostly blue to represent the cold, the water, the sky] Why did the artist choose to make it round? Why do you think the sun, moon and stars are located in the centre of the circle?

KNOW

- **Kenojuak Ashevak** (1927-2013) was an Inuit artist from Kinngait (Nunavut), born on southern Baffin Island.
- Ashevak's work and the history of Kinngait Studios are featured in the short documentary *Kenojuak Ashevak, The Enchanted Owl*.[64]
- "This work depicts 365 days of the year in Nunavut and dozens of tiny vignettes showing traditional activities on the land; it even references Ashevak herself in the little owl at the top left of the circle and the border of hills. (Ashevak famously loved owls, and the name of her community, Kinngait, means "where the hills are," in Inuktitut.)"[65] "Each season brings different challenges and gifts."[66] "They lived in large iglu villages on the sea ice and hunted seals during the winter months before returning to the land in smaller groups to fish and hunt caribou in the spring and summer. These groups were amongst the most nomadic people in the North American Arctic, and they travelled extensively in their seasonal cycle as they sought the best hunting and fishing grounds in the region."[67]

[64] TVO Today Docs, "Kenojuak Ashevak, *The Enchanted Owl* | TVO Arts," youtube.com/@tvo (2021).
[65] Jessica MacDonald, "The History Behind *Nunavut (Our Land)*," inuitartfoundation.org/inuit-art-quarterly/iaq-online/ (July 8, 2022).
[66] Nunavut Department of Education, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Education Framework*, gov.nu.ca (2007).
[67] Peter Kikkert, "Nunavut," thecanadianencyclopedia.ca (2007; last edited 2023).



Kenojuak Ashevak -
Nunavut – Our Land

- Many Indigenous Peoples observe the cycles of the Moon to mark time and use the turtle's shell to represent the lunar cycles of the year, as presented in the children's books by Bruchac and London[68] or Samatte and Anderson[69] (free downloadable book to cut out and create your own calendar[70]). Because moon names vary among Nations, see also *Mi'kmaw Moons*,[71] *When the Trees Crackle with Cold*[72] (book reading[73]) and *Taan's Moons*.[74]

[68] Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London, *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back: A Native American Year of Moons*, Penguin Young Readers Group, Penguin Random House Canada (1997).
[69] Sandra Samatte and David Anderson, *13 Moons on Turtle's Back*, Indigenous Reflections (2026).
[70] "Free Resource 13 Moons on Turtle's Back (Info and Cut-Outs Books)," GoodMinds.com, (2021).
[71] Cathy LeBlanc and David Chapman, *Mi'kmaw Moons: The Seasons in Mi'kma'ki*, Formac Publishing Company (2022).
[72] Bernice Johnson-Laxdal and Miriam Körner, *When the Trees Crackle with Cold:* A Cree Calendar - Pisimwasinahikan, Your Nickel's Worth Publishing (2017).
[73] Saskatchewan Literacy Network,"Bernice & Miriam share their book *When the Trees Crackle with Cold* for Family Literacy Day." youtube.com/@SaskLiteracy (2022).
[74] Alison Gear, *Taan's Moons: A Haida Moon Story*, McKellar & Martin Publishing Group (2014).

- Children's books that explore Indigenous perspectives on the seasons Include *Seasons by the Lake*;[75] the series *An Indigenous Celebration of Nature*;[76] *Changes in the Seasons*;[77] *Majagalee*;[78] *A Dance Through the Seasons*;[79] and *This Is How I Know*.[80]
- Circles represent important principles in the Indigenous worldview: interconnectedness, balance, equality and continuity. They reflect relationships that have no beginning and no end. The precise symbolism of circles varies from nation to nation.
- In the Anishinaabeg Sacred Hoop (also known as the Medicine Wheel) there are four quadrants, each representing one of the four cardinal directions (east, south, west, north). Lilian Pitawanakwat teaches that "East represents the springtime and the beginning of all life, changing from spirit to human; the journey starts there. The journey continues to the South, the summer stage, to the West, the death stage, and then to the North, the rebirth stage. This cycle continues in a clockwise motion around the Medicine Wheel, following the rising and setting of the sun."[81] There are three other directions: down (Earth), up (Spirit World) and the circle of humans. These are the directions of the Ceremonial Pipe. Invoking the directions acknowledges them and the winds between them. (Knowledge Keeper Roger Roulette, 2018)

WONDER

Think about where your school is located. Brainstorm and chart what changes with the seasons. [Activities, clothing, shelter, food, plants, animals, weather, landscape] What else moves in cycles? [The Indigenous Reflections poster set[82] highlights the various aspects of the Medicine Wheel].

RESPOND

- Create a circular artwork inspired by Ashevak's *Nunavut - Our Land*, to represent a cyclical pattern. Print the template[83] provided or trace round objects onto a large piece of paper. Find the centre of the circle and map out the four directions with a ruler. Trace your drawing's outlines in black ink or marker and fill them in with pencil crayon. Examples of cycles that could be represented include:
  - The four seasons of a location that is important to you (such as where you live, where your relatives live or where you have visited). Depict Spring in the East, Summer in the South, Fall in the West and Winter in the North. Include changes in weather, water, land and sky. Add figures engaged in activities related to seasonal patterns.
  - The stages of life [birth, youth, adulthood, elderhood]
  - The aspects of life [spiritual (soul), emotional (heart), intellectual (mind), physical (body)]
  - The elements of nature [fire, air, water, earth]
  - The life cycle of a plant or an animal
  - A daily, monthly or yearly routine
  - Behavioural patterns
- Try safe and easy Kitchen Lithography[84] to understand the stone lithography process.

[75] Naja Lund Aparico, *Seasons by the Lake: Adventures in Greenland*, Dial Books (2026).
[76] Kaitlin Curtice, An Indigenous Celebration of Nature (series), Penguin Random House, sites.prh.com/an-indigenous-celebration-of-nature-kaitlin-curtice.
[77] Lucy Palituq, *Changes in the Seasons*, Arvaaq Press (2022).
[78] Shawna Davis, *Majagalee: The Language of Seasons*, McKellar & Martin Publishing Group (2022).
[79] Leona Prince, *A Dance Through the Seasons*, WaveMaker Press (2021).
[80] Brittany Luby, *Mii maanda ezhi-gkendmaanh / This Is How I Know*, Groundwood Books (2021).
[81] Four Directions Teachings, "Lillian Pitawanakwat Lesson Plan" in *Four Directions Learning Activities*, fourdirectionsteachings.com/ojibwe_intermediate.pdf (2006).
[82] Indigenous Reflections, *Medicine Wheel*, indigenousreflections.ca/collections/popular-products/products/wh-01.
[83] Circular Artwork Template, resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Circular_Artwork_Template.pdf.
[84] Emilie Brouard, "Émilion - Lithographie maison-Kitchen Lithographie-Lithography," youtube.com/@emilieaizier-emilion (2011).

NULIAJUK IN MOURNING

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will examine the environmental impact of human actions on the Land and water and consider their own agency in making better choices for the earth.

LOOK

Card 10. Heather Campbell, *Nuliajuk in Mourning,*
ink on mineral paper, 71.1 x 50.8 cm (2017)

What does the word mourning mean? [To feel or express great sadness] What could bring someone to mourn? Considering the title of this artwork, where is Nuliajuk? Who is she, what might she represent? How did the artist show that she is sad? [Her facial expression, tears] Why is she sad? How could plastic have ended up inside the whales? Where is the plastic coming from? [A small black boat on the surface of the water, top right corner of the painting] What can you tell from the whales' expressions? Do you think these two whales will survive? What colours did the artist use? [Blue to represent water and maybe sadness, black for pollution, illness and death] Why do you think the artist chose to include a baby whale in her painting? [Possibly to demonstrate the lasting effects of pollution affecting multiple generations]

KNOW

- **Heather Campbell**[85] is an Inuit artist from Ottawa, born in Rigolet (Newfoundland and Labrador).
- The artist profile[86] of Heather Campbell briefly explains her inspirations and process.
- Nuliajuk (pronounced Noo-lee-AH-yook) is the Inuit Sea Spirit who controls all of the sea and marine animals essential to Inuit hunters and their survival. Inuit culture follows hunting protocols respecting that relationship, and the Inuit are strong advocates for the protection of northern lands and animals.[87] In different parts of the Arctic, Nuliajuk is known by other names, including Sedna.
- The legend of Nuliajuk can be explored in audio storytelling (*Sedna: Goddess of the Sea*[88] and *The Spirit of the Sea*[89]) and in books such as *Nuliajuk*[90] and *Stories of Survival and Revenge*[91] (teaching resource[92]).
- Books about ocean pollution include *Oil*[93] (teaching guide[94]), *Adventures with Finn and Skip: Fish,*[95] *The Global Ocean,*[96] and *Plastic Soup: An Atlas of Ocean Pollution*[97]. The *Ocean Wise* website offers educational kits about ocean plastics[98] for students of all grade levels.

WONDER

- How does pollution in oceans and other environments around the world impact the health and well-being of plants, animals and humans? Investigate the source of the pollution you are studying, how it travels and how it ends up in oceans or on land. What can we do to reduce pollution and protect the land and water? How might pollution affect future generations? To help answer these questions, explore the story map, *Our Relationship with the Ocean.*[99]
- What percentage of litter in a large park, a section of your community, or your school yard is made of plastic? Work with a partner or small group to collect and sort litter. Record the different types of waste and calculate the percentage of plastic found. Discuss where this plastic might have come from, how it could affect wildlife and waterways, and what actions your community could take to reduce plastic pollution.
- How can art inspire people to become aware of environmental issues and take action to create positive change in the world? See Indigenous Art and Activism (page 26) of this guide for more information.

[85] Heather Campell, "Heather Campbell," inuitartfoundation.org/profiles/artist/ (2017).
[86] Heather Iglolorte, "Heather Campbell _ Artist Profile," youtube.com/@heatherigloliorte7583 (2017).
[87] Peter Irniq, *The Story of Nuliajuk*, Canadian Museum of History, historymuseum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Nuliajuk-EN.pdf.
[88] Perchance Theatre, "*Sedna: Goddess of the Sea* as told by Deantha Edmunds in Tors Cove, NL." youtube.com/@perchancetheatre5472 (2022).
[89] Rebecca Hainnu, *The Spirit of the Sea*, English/Inuktitut Paperback and Audiobook, Inhabit Media (2024).
[90] Knud Rasmussen, *Nuliajuk*, Inhabit Education Books (2017).
[91] Rachel Qitsualik-Tinsley and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley, *Stories of Survival and Revenge: From Inuit Folklore*, Inhabit Media (2014).
[92] Department of Education, Government of Nunavut, *Stories of Survival and Revenge from Inuit Folklore: Traditional Story Study*, angirrami.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Stories-of-Survival-and-Revenge_Traditional-Story-Study.pdf.
[93] Jonah Winter, *Oil*, Beach Lane Books (2020).
[94] Beach Lane Books, *Oil - Curriculum Guide*, d28hgpri8am2if.cloudfront.net/tagged_assets/5706200/9781534430778_cg_oil%20curriculum%20guide.pdf.
[95] DK and Brendan Kearney, *Adventures with Finn and Skip: Fish: A Tale about Ridding the Ocean of Plastic Pollution*, DK Children, Penguin Random House Canada (2020).
[96] Rochelle Strauss, *The Global Ocean*, Citizenkid series, Kids Can Press (2022).
[97] Michiel Roscam Abbing, *Plastic Soup: An Atlas of Ocean Pollution*, Island Press imprint, Princeton University Press (2019).
[98] Ocean Wise, "Ocean Plastic Education Kits," ocean.org/action/ocean-plastic-education-kit/.
[99] Canadian Geographic Education, "Our Relationship with the Ocean," storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/bd8faf3cd20a4bc6a3000b450d0e36eb.

NULIAJUK IN MOURNING



Heather Cambell -
Nuliajuk in Mourning

RESPOND

- Create an artwork inspired by Campbell's *Nuliajuk in Mourning*. Choose an animal from your region and depict how pollution is harmful to them (see examples by other students[100]). Think about how emotions can be shown in your artwork using colour, line, body language, facial expressions or background details.
- Let the unpredictable flow of ink inspire you to create an artwork. Follow Heather Campbell's demonstration of inkblot painting.[101] Use acrylic inks on mineral paper or the glossy side of poster board. You can also achieve a similar result using the wet-on-wet watercolour technique.
- Upcycle plastic waste into a work of art. For example, create a communal mosaic with collected bottle caps from milk and juice jugs.[102]
- Write lyrics to the melody of a familiar song about the effects of pollution on ocean animals. Record it and share it on the school's intercom system or with your local radio station, or make a music video like this one: *We're Connected to the Ocean*.[103]
- Create a short animation or a puppet show that tells a story about how pollution affects humans, other animals or plants. Have the characters in the animation find a solution to the problem. For inspiration, watch the short animation, *A Whale's Tale*.[104]
- Take action by collecting garbage in the schoolyard, the surrounding neighbourhood or a park. Categorize and count the pieces collected. What percentage is made up of single-use plastics?

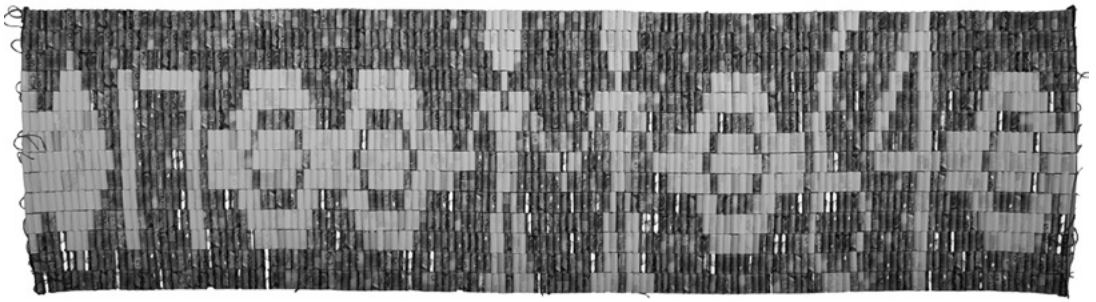
[100] Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Programs, "Gallery," bowseat.org.
[101] National Gallery of Canada, "Online Studio: Inkblot Painting with Heather Campbell," youtube.com/@ngcmedia (2026).
[102] MAWA, Bottle Cap Mosaic, project images provided by Lita Fontaine, resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Bottle_Cap_Mosaic_Project.pdf.

[103] Remy Rodden, "We're Connected to the Ocean," youtube.com/@RemyRodden (2017).
[104] Cartoon Network UK, "Hopeworks | All Short Films, Cartoon Network UK," youtube.com/@cartoonnetworkuk (2018). [30:15 - 33:11 mins]

WAMPUM BELTS MARKING TREATIES

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will learn about the significance of Wampum Belts, the importance of respecting promises and treaties, and the history of land ownership in relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Settlers.



Vanessa Dion Fletcher - *Relationship or Transaction*

LOOK

Card 20. Vanessa Dion Fletcher, *Relationship or Transaction,*
$5 Canadian notes, screen prints, jute twine, 97.5 x 390 x 2.5 cm (2014)

Look closely at the material used to create this artwork. What is it made of? [$5 bills and $5 bill replicas]. How was it made? What might it represent?

KNOW

- **Vanessa Dion Fletcher**[105] is a Potawatomi and Lenape artist from Toronto/Lenapehoking (Ontario).
- *Relationship or Transaction* is a representation of the Western Great Lakes Covenant Chain Confederacy Wampum Belt (see artifact reproduction[106]) that symbolizes a promise of friendship, peace and respect between First Nations and the British, reminding them to care for their relationship like a strong chain. In this artwork, Dion uses rolled $5 bills instead of shell beads. By swapping money for traditional materials, the artist encourages viewers to think about how agreements between nations were originally meant to be ongoing commitments rather than one-time financial transactions.
- Wampum are tubular beads made from white (whelk) and purple (quahog) Atlantic coast seashells used primarily by the Indigenous Peoples of the Eastern Woodlands. Because of its prominence as a currency in the period following European contact, Wampum has become synonymous with currency. Wampum Belts are made of shells sewn onto belts that are not worn, but traditionally used for storytelling, as ceremonial gifts, and for recording important events or agreements.
- A treaty is a formal agreement among nations to do a particular thing or to help each other. Wampum Belts have marked treaty agreements between the Indigenous Peoples and settler government regarding the sharing and use of the Land. Understanding and respecting the treaties is important.
- Children's books about wampum beads include *Alex Shares His Wampum Belt*[107] (book reading[108]); *Two Row Wampum*;[109] and *Wampum: The Story of Shaylyn the Clam*.[110]
- Books about treaties include *This Is My Treaty*;[111] *Dakota Talks About Treaties*;[112] *Numbered Treaties A to Z*;[113] the *Treaty Tales* trilogy[114] [*The Handshake and the Pipe* (online flipbook[115]), *The Friendship*, and *We Are All Treaty People*]; *We Are All Treaty People*[116] (book reading[117]); *Treaty Words: For As Long As the Rivers Flow*[118] (literature guide[119]); and *Talk Treaty to Me: Understanding the Basics of Treaties and Land in Canada*.[120]

[105] dionfletcher.com.
[106] Canadian Museum of History, "Wampum Belt, 1764 Niagara Covenant Chain," historymuseum.ca/collections/artifact/2515318.
[107] Kelly Crawford, *Alex Shares his Wampum Belt*, Union of Ontario Indians (2017).
[108] Anishinabek Nation, *"Alex Shares his Wampum Belt,"* youtube.com/@AnishinabekNation (2021).
[109] Michelle Corneau, *Strong Stories Kanyen'keha:ka: Two Row Wampum*, Strong Nations Publishing (2016).
[110] Zig Misiak, *Wampum: The Story of Shalyn the Clam*, Canadian Author Education (2019).
[111] Kelly Crawford and Marci Becking, *This Is My Treaty*, Union of Ontario Indians (2025).
[112] Kelly Crawford, *Dakota Talks About Treaties*, Union of Ontario Indians (2017).
[113] Betty Lynxleg, Wahwahbiginojii David Anderson and Sandra Samatte, *Numbered Treaties A to Z*, Indigenous Education Press (2023).
[114] Betty Lynxleg, *Treaty Tales* (series), Strong Nations Publishing, strongnations.com.
[115] Betty Lynxleg, *Treaty Tales: The Handshake and the Pipe* (flipbook), online.fliphtml5.com/bbgkx/trqi/.
[116] Maurice Switzer, *We Are All Treaty People*, Union of Ontario Indians (2011).
[117] Anishinabek Nation, *"We Are All Treaty People* - Full Book," youtube.com/@AnishinabekNation (2017).
[118] Aimée Craft, *Treaty Words: For As Long As the Rivers Flow*, Annick Press (2021).
[119] Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments and Indigenous Education Initiative, *Treaty Words: For As Long As The Rivers Flow* - Literature Guide, ieimi.org/learning-resources/treaty-words-for-aslong-as-the-rivers-flow/.
[120] Crystal Gail Fraser and Sara Komarnisky, *Talk Treaty to Me: Understanding the Basics of Treaties and Land in Canada*, HarperCollins Canada (2026).

- Educational resources about treaties include the book *Treaties;*[121] the websites *Ezhi-nawending: How We Are Related*[122] and *Treaty Education - Resources;*[123] as well as the *Treaties in Canada Education Guide and Worksheets*[124] and the *Canada's History*[125] educational package which includes *Treaties and the Relationships That Follow* (for teens), *Kayak: We Are All Treaty Peoples* (for younger students) and a teacher's guide. Resources specific to each province and territory are also available online, including the *Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba* website.[126]
- To better understand the often contradictory interpretations of treaty relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the Crown, watch the interview with Richard Hill[127] or the CBC Indigenous short educational video *Wampum belts: the first treaties in North America,*[128] Episode 3 of *8th Fire, Whose Land Is It Anyway?*[129] (teaching resource[130]), or Alanis Obomsawin's film, *Trick or Treaty?*[131] (educator's guide[132] and mini-lesson[133]).
- Treaty Days[134] are recognized on different days throughout Canada, depending on the particular treaty that is being commemorated.

WONDER

- Use the online Native Land[135] search tool to determine treaty territories around the world.
- What is the significance of the statement "We are all Treaty People"?
- What is a promise? How long does a promise last? [As long as the two people agree it will] Have you ever made a promise? What was it? Did you ever break a promise? How did you feel about it? Why should we keep promises? [Integrity, responsibility, honesty, the right thing to do]
- "The words 'as long as the sun shines, as long as the waters flow downhill, and as long as the grass grows green' can be found in many treaties since the 1613 Two Row Wampum Treaty. It set a relationship of equity and peace," says Faith Keeper Oren Lyons.[136] What is the significance of these words? [They express that treaties are intended to be honoured forever. Treaties are not simply historical documents; they are ongoing agreements between peoples that continue to guide relationships today. They were made with future generations in mind and remain relevant today.]
- Why do you think the artist used real $5 bills and copies of $5 bills to create the Wampum artwork? [In her artist statement (see the reverse of card 20), she explains that they symbolize the effects of colonialism in Canada and how money was used to undermine nation-to-nation treaty relationships. She contrasts two ways of understanding treaties: as agreements to build respectful relationships between nations and to protect Indigenous lands and sovereignty, or as transactions focussed on land, power, and money. The $5 bills also refer to the annual $5 treaty payment that many Treaty First Nations members still receive today—a payment amount promised in the treaties that has remained unchanged since 1875.][137, 138]

[121] Simon Rose, *Treaties,* Indigenous Life in Canada: Past, Present, Future Series, Beech Street Books (2018).
[122] Anishinabek Nation, *Ezhi-nawending: How We Are Related,* anishinabek.ca/education-resources/treaty-education-home/.
[123] *Treaty Education – Resources,* treatyeducationresources.ca/.
[124] The Canadian Encyclopedia, "*Treaties in Canada Education Guide and Worksheets*" thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/studyguide/treaties-in-canada-learning-guide-and-worksheets.
[125] Canada's History, "Treaties and the Treaty Relationship Educational Package," canadashistory.ca/education/classroom-resources/treaties/treaties-educational-package.
[126] Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, "Student and Teacher Resources," trcm.ca/education/teach/.
[127] Historica Canada, "Richard Hill | Ep 4 | Oral History | Voices From Here," youtube.com/@HistoricaCanada (2020).
[128] CBC Indigenous, "Wampum belts: the first treaties in North America," youtube.com/@CBCIndigenous (2024).
[129] CBC Documentary Unit, "*Whose Land is it Anyway?,*" 8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada and the Way Forward, Episode 3 (2013), curio.ca. [Also available on various YouTube channels.]
[130] Chelsea Prince, *8th Fire Guide for Educators,* CBC Learning, curio.ca/media/catCurio.caalog/e5/c9/e5c95239-396c-4772-aee5-cf84389c7e00/8thfireguide.pdf (2012).
[131] Alanis Obomsawin, *Trick or Treaty?,* nfb.ca/film/trick_or_treaty/ (2014).
[132] Brad Baker and Stephanie Maki, *Trick or Treaty? and Hi-Ho Mistahey! Educator's Guide,* NFB Education, www3.onf.ca/sg/100803.pdf.
[133] NFB Educator Network, "Mini-Lesson for *Trick or Treaty?,*" blog.nfb.ca/blog/2021/09/24/mini-lesson-for-trick-or-treaty/ (2021).
[134] René R. Gadacz, "Treaty Day," thecanadianencyclopedia.ca (2006; latest edition 2025).
[135] Native Land Digital, native-land.ca.
[136] Historica Canada, "Treaties in Canada Education Guide," historicacanada.ca/productions/guides/treaties-in-canada-education-guide (2019).
[137] Vanessa Dion Fletcher, Artist statement on the reverse of Card 20.
[138] Lisa Myers, "Land Use," *Reading the Talk* (exhibition catalogue), Museum London, Art Gallery of Peterborough and MacLaren Art Centre (2014).

RESPOND

- Explore historical wampum belts to understand the significance of their symbols and designs. Replicate and showcase them in the classroom. Richard David Hamell offers templates[139] for several historical wampum belts.
- Write a paragraph, poem or creative piece that explains the symbolism, design choices and message conveyed in a created or existing wampum belt.
- Create an acknowledgment statement with the help of the *Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples & Traditional Territory.*[140]
- Attend or help organize a Treaty Day event to recognize treaties connected to the local area and learn about Indigenous cultures, histories and land rights.
- Communicate an important message by designing (and creating!) a wampum belt inspired by the activity suggested at the end of the *What is a Wampum Belt?* video by The Digital Classroom Experience[141] or the collaborative *North End Wampum Belt Project.*[142] Drawing on the principles of clarity, balance, symbolism and respect, create a pattern using colours, shapes, lines and symbols to represent a community agreement, promise, relationship or shared value.

Ways to design the belt:

- Draw the design on graph paper,[143] a hand-drawn grid, or a tubular bead[144] or pony bead[145] template, then colour it with crayons or markers.
- Create a collage using small pieces of coloured paper or magazine images.
- Design a virtual wampum belt using the *NativeTech*[146] website or *Minecraft* (Creative Mode).

Bead weaving techniques:

- "Weave" pony beads onto pipe cleaners using the simple technique demonstrated by Sarah Cardullo.[147]
- Use the off-loom two-needle bead weaving method demonstrated in Art with Ms. K's wampum belt tutorial.[148]
- Weave pony beads with yarn on a DIY cardboard following tutorials by Rich Hammell,[149, 150] or Floretta Prestigiacomo.[151]
- Build a cardboard box loom[152] and weave with Perler beads or glass beads.
- Build a wooden loom and weave with rawhide, imitation sinew and artificial wampum beads following Len Griffen's 4-part *How to Make a Wampum Belt* tutorial series.[153]
- Make and weave recycled paper beads[154] as a whole-class project.

[139] Richard David Hamell, *Workshop Wampum Belts.cdr,* ganondagan.org/_files/ugd/4db8b6_d05b4a64269b4e848976037f6b457675.pdf (2001).
[140] Canadian Association of University Teachers, "Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples & Traditional Territory," caut.ca/content/.
[141] The Digital Classroom Experience, "What is a Wampum Belt? | Canadian History Activity," youtube.com/@thedigitalclassroomexperience (2025).
[142] Every One Every Day Kjipuktuk / Halifax, "Our North End Wampum Belt." halifaxiseveryone.ca/blog/our-north-end-wampum-belt (September 8, 2025).
[143] Art Here and There, "Pattern & Communication: Wampum Belts." arthereandthere.com/arteducation/pattern-communication-wampum-belts/ (2012).
[144] Resilience Project, Wampum Belt Design Template, resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Wampum_Belt_Design_Template.pdf.
[145] Resilience Project, Pony Bead Design Template, resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Pony_Bead_Design_Template.pdf.
[146] NativeTech: Native American Technology and Art, "Weave A Virtual Wampum Belt," nativetech.org/beadwork/wampumgraph/index.html.
[147] Sarah Cardullo, "Wampum," youtube.com/@sarah357cat (2013).
[148] Art with Ms. K, "Wampum Belt," youtube.com/@artwithms.k44that explains the symbolism, design choices, and message conveyed by94 (2020).
[149] Ganondagan, "Pony Bead Wampum Belt Demonstration," youtube.com/@ganondagan7089 (2021).
[150] Richard David Hamell, *Making A Wampum Belt,* ganondagan.org/_files/ugd/4db8b6_4c7435f3529a43cd93ea67195abe0408.pdf (2020).
[151] "Wampum Belt Weaving Video Series," *YouTube,* youtube.com/@florettaprestigiacomo5734 (2015).
[152] John William, "Mini Wampum Belt Tutorial on Box Loom," youtube.com/@johnwilliam4935 (2020).
[153] Len Griffin, "How to Make a Wampum Belt Part 1," youtube.com/@lengriffin (2014).
[154] Art with Ms. K, "Recycled Paper Beads," youtube.com/@artwithms.k4494 (2021).

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will learn about Métis beading as an activity of self-reflection/meditation, a community tradition and a social activity, and examine its symbolic meaning.

LOOK

Card 6. Christi Belcourt, *This Painting is a Mirror,*
acrylic on canvas, 206 x 256 cm (2012).

- Does the design of this painting seem familiar to you? Where have you seen this type of design? [Similar to beaded designs on mittens, moccasins, vests, etc.]
- List the plants and animals you recognize in this painting. [Bees, blue jays, hummingbirds, moths, robins, blueberries, strawberries, oak leaves, poppies, roses, chokecherries, bunchberry flowers]
- Talk about symmetry, then draw an imaginary line down the middle of the painting. Can you find the elements that don't follow the symmetrical pattern? [Bees, brown orbs representing the Spirit World]
- What do the plants and animals represent in this painting? What can you infer about the meaning of the painting from the artwork's title?

KNOW

- **Christi Belcourt**[155] is a Michif (Métis) artist from Ontario.
- This artwork is titled *This Painting is a Mirror* because it reflects back to the viewer all the beauty that is already within them. We are not separate from anything, we are born connected to the earth, with the capacity to love, to be kind, to be generous, to be gentle. As Odawa Elder Wilfred Peltier taught, "Everything we need to know is already inside of us."[156] This teaching is also explored in the children's book *Smile So Big*,[157] where a child who has been teased receives a magical beaded mirror from her mother and learns to recognize her inner beauty and accept herself.



Christi Belcourt - *This Painting is a Mirror* (detail)

- The artist has developed a technique to transfer beadwork into painting; every dot represents a bead. The documentaries *The Wisdom of the Universe*[158] and *Christi Belcourt: Life in Balance*[159] explore her creative process and the inspirations behind her Métis dot art paintings. She is also featured in the educational history book for kids *Canadian Women Now and Then*[160] (teaching guide[161]).
- The Art Gallery of Ontario commissioned and acquired Belcourt's *The Wisdom of the Universe*, a large painting in a style similar to the ***Resilience*** artwork *This Painting is a Mirror*. The gallery offers an online teaching guide,[162] a multisensory art experience,[163] and a fun video of kids sharing what they think about the painting.[164]

[155] christibelcourt.ca
[156] Christi Belcourt, Artist statement on the reverse of Card 6.
[157] Sunshine Quem Tenasco, *Smile So Big*, Scholastic Canada (2023).
[158] TVO Docs, "*The Wisdom of the Universe* | Christi Belcourt | TVO Arts," youtube.com/@tvo (2024).
[159] Kathy Browning, *Christi Belcourt: Life in Balance*, Videos of Visual Artists in Greater Sudbury series, Laurentian University, laurentian.ca/academics/schools/education/videos-visual-artists-greater-sudbury (2013).
[160] Elizabeth MacLeod, *Canadian Women Now and Then*, Kids Can Press (2020).
[161] Kids Can Press, *Canadian Women Now and Then - Teaching Guide*, kidscanpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CanadianWomenNowAndThen_2664_teaching.pdf
[162] TVO Arts, "Study Guide: *The Wisdom of the Universe*, Christi Belcourt, (2014)," tvoarts.org (2023).
[163] Art Gallery of Ontario, "Multisensory Moments: Christi Belcourt's *The Wisdom of the Universe*," youtube.com/@ArtGalleryofOntario (2022).
[164] PBS Kid Critics, "What Do Kids Think of This Painting?," pbs.org/video/what-do-kids-think-of-this-painting-q1anym/ (2025).

THE FLOWER BEADWORK PEOPLE

- The Métis became known as the "Flower Beadwork People" for their vibrant floral designs made with glass seed beads from trade (see the video, *The Flower Beadwork People*[165]). Blending First Nations quillwork with European floral embroidery, their distinctive style reflects their heritage as descendants of both groups. Their symmetrical patterns often feature plant lifecycles—from seeds and stems to flowers and fruit—symbolizing growth, change, balance and harmony in nature and life.
- Today, Métis beadwork continues to evolve while honouring traditional designs. Contemporary Métis artists experiment with colours, shapes and styles. Beadwork is both craft and fine art. Many artists use beadwork to share personal or political messages. See *The Frame* teaching guide[166] on MAWA's *Art Alive* website.
- Beadwork is a practice that builds community and connection. Historically an intergenerational activity where people shared knowledge, beading circles today serve the same purpose. Like dot painting, it provides a calm, meditative space for reflection and focus.
- Children's books about Métis culture and beadwork include *Métis Like Me*,[167] *What's in a Bead?*[168] and *Heart Berry Bling*[169] (teaching guide[170]). Middle school books include *The Flower Beadwork People*,[171] *The Métis: People, Culture, and History*,[172] *Métis: The People and Nation*,[173] and *Discovering and Understanding The Métis*.[174] See also the website *Stories of the Red River Cart*,[175] which is full of short stories (with teaching guides) for children as well as teens.

WONDER

- How do your identity, culture and community influence what you create or enjoy? What stories would you share through art? What traditions, patterns or symbols would help tell your story?
- What symbols from nature feel meaningful to you?

[165] Parks Canada, "The Flower Beadwork People," youtube.com/@parkscanada (2016).
[166] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "The Frame," artalive.mawa.ca/teaching-guides/the-frame.
[167] Tasha Hilderman, *Métis Like Me*, Tundra Books (2024).
[168] Kelsey Borgford, *What's in a Bead?*, Second Story Press (2024).
[169] Jenny Kay Dupuis, *Heart Berry Bling*, HighWater Press imprint, Portage & Main Press (2023).
[170] Jerica Ryan,*Teacher Guide for Heart Berry Bling*, Portage & Main Press (2023).
[171] Sherry Farrell Racette, *The Flower Beadwork People*, Gabriel Dumont Institute (2009).
[172] Rebekah Wilson, *The Métis: People, Culture, and History*. Indigenous Peoples series, Capstone (2027).
[173] Arnolda Dufour Bowes, *Métis: The People and Nation*, Indigenous Nations in North America series, Beech Street Books (2024).
[174] Michel Noël and Sylvie Roberge, *Discovering and Understanding The Métis*, Auzou Canada (2024).
[175] *Stories of the Red River Cart*, redrivercartstories.ca/stories/.

RESPOND

- Create a reflectional symmetry pattern using the centerline, grid paper, fold-and-trace methods, or tools such as math mirrors, lightboxes and the symmetry mode of a digital drawing tool.
- Design a beadwork pattern. Make stencils[176] to create an original pattern or use copyright-free resources such as Miner's *Métis and Anishinaabe Beading Templates*[177] or Poitras-Jarret's activity instruction sheets and video tutorials[178] for simple symmetrical *Métis Beadwork Design*[179] or *Drawing Flowers, Leaves, Berries and Stems*.[180]
- Create an artwork with colourful shape cut-outs inspired by nature.[181]
- Create a dot art project. Use paint to fill in a design on paper,[182] canvas,[183] rocks, wood panels or reclaimed objects.[184, 185, 186] Use dotting tools such as the ends of pencils or wooden skewers. Dot art can also be created using digital tools.[187]
- Work with beading needles and seed beads on small felt squares or circles. Consult *wâpikwaniy: A Beginner's Guide to Métis Floral Beadwork*[188] and its DVD, or follow a beading tutorial by Jennine Krauchi.[189] Alternatively, make a simple beaded flower bracelet.[190] Find more tutorials on MAWA's *Art Alive* Ways of Making webpage.[191]
- Organize a school beading or dot painting circle. All are welcome to join — Elders, staff, parents and participants from any grade level. Build relationships while beading or dotting: collaborate, engage in conversation and share stories.

[176] Two Wolf Studio, "How to Design Beadwork Using Stencils," youtube.com/@twowolfstudio538 (2021).
[177] Dylan AT Miner, *Métis and Anishinaabe Beading Templates*, Vol. 1, academia.edu (2018).
[178] SaskCulture, "Drawing Spirit Animals," saskculture.ca/programs/saskculture-programs/culture-days/culture365gcs/drawing.
[179] SaskCulture, *Métis Beadwork Design by Phillis Poitras-Jarrett*, Culture 365 - Getting Creative Series, saskculture.ca/content/documents/21.04.07.PhyllisPoitrasJarrett.Activity5a.F_8OyRmPz.pdf.
[180] SaskCulture, *Drawing Flowers, Leaves, Berries and Stems with Phyllis Poitras–Jarrett*, Culture 365 - Getting Creative Series, saskculture.ca/content/documents/21.04.07.PhyllisPoitrasJarrett.Activity5g.FINAL.pdf.
[181] Indigenous Art Adventures with Lance Cardinall, "Episode 8 - Family Art Adventures! Metis Felt Flower Hanging. WÂPIKWANIY (Flower) ᐊᐧᐱᑲᐣᐦᐩ,"youtube.com/@indigenousartadventureswit695 (2020). [Start at 08:15 minutes]
[182] Harbourfront Centre, "Virtually Junior - Métis Dot Art with Marissa Magneson," youtube.com/@harbourfrontcentre (2020).
[183] a faithful attempt, "Métis Dot Painting," afaithfulattempt.blogspot.com (2024).
[184] MAWA Programs, "Dot Painting Exercise with Lita Fontaine," vimeo.com/mawawpg (2022).
[185] Dot Painting Project, images provided by Lita Fontaine, resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Dot_Paintingl_Project.pdf.
[186] Edmonton Public Schools, "Métis Dot Art with Angela Hall," youtube.com/@edpublicschools (2023).
[187] Ampere, "Creating Art Inspired by Traditional Métis Dot Art," amp.ca/fr/learning/creating-traditional-metis-dot-art/.
[188] Gregory Scofield and Amy Briley, *wâpikwaniy: A Beginner's Guide to Métis Floral Beadwork*, Gabriel Dumont Institute (2001).
[189] MAWA Programs, "Two-Needle Métis Beading Tutorial with Jennine Krauchi," vimeo.com/mawawpg (2017).
[190] Métis Gathering, "Educational Resources: Beading," metisgathering.ca/classroom-resources/learning-packages/.
[191] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Ways of Making," artalive.mawa.ca/activities/ways-of-making#beading.

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will consider the territories of Indigenous Nations and see the urban environment as an Indigenous landscape and a site of Indigenous identity and cultural resurgence.

LOOK

Card 24. Maria Hupfield, *Waaschign*
Card 35. Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *(That's A-Mori)*
Card 38. Jeneen Frei Njootli, *White Swan*
Card 39. Nigit'stil Norbert, *Reflect (series of 9)*
Card 45. Pitaloosie Saila, *Strange Ladies*

Without reading the artist statements, try to identify some artworks that explore the theme of urban Indigenous life. For each artwork, think about the message the artist might be trying to convey. Now read the corresponding artist statements. Did your interpretations match the artists' intended messages, or did you notice something new?

KNOW

- All Canadian cities are located on Indigenous territories, where Indigenous people continue to create and strengthen Indigenous spaces. Use the online Native Land[192] search tool to determine the territories where your city (or any city!) is located.
- To gain insight about an artist's experiences, creative process and intentions, research websites, articles and artist talks. For example, watch *Interview with Maria Hupfield*[193] or *Pitaloosie Saila: A Personal Journey*[194] to learn about these two ***Resilience*** artists whose artworks explore urban Indigenous experiences.
- In 2021, 801,045 Indigenous people were living in urban areas.[195] That is nearly half of all Indigenous people in Canada. The largest urban Indigenous populations are in Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Vancouver. Many Indigenous people move to cities to be with loved ones, to pursue education and employment opportunities, or to access the services they need. Some have lived in cities for generations, while others have only recently transitioned from rural and northern communities. Some have been displaced due to child welfare practices of removing Indigenous children from their homes and communities.[196] Some regularly go back and forth between the city and their home communities, while others live temporarily in cities due to fires, floods, or other circumstances. Many retain their Indigenous culture through connections to a community of origin, whether their own or that of their parents/grandparents.[197, 198]
- Indigenous youth filmmakers from Montana (US) created the short documentaries *Walking Between Two Worlds*[199] and *Finding Our Own Way*[200] to share the unique perspectives and challenges of growing up in urban environments while maintaining cultural connections.
- The National Arts Centre's *Indigenous Cities* website[201] is an interactive online project that invites students to explore audio stories, songs and virtual maps inspired by the recollections of Indigenous community members from cities across Canada.
- Children's books that explore the experiences of urban Indigenous people include *Jenny's Concrete Powwow,*[202] *The Friendship Centre*[203] and *Little Wolf.*[204] Graphic novels for more mature students include *Indiginerds,*[205] *Surviving the City*[206] (teaching guide[207]) and *Becoming Wolf.*[208]

[192] Native Land Digital, native-land.ca.
[193] Harbourfront Centre, "Interview with Maria Hupfield," youtube.com/@HarbourfrontCentre (2007).
[194] WAG-Qaumajuq, "Pitaloosie Saila: A Personal Journey," youtube.com/@WinnipegArtGallery1 (2018).
[195] Statistics Canada, "Indigenous population continues to grow and is much younger than the non-Indigenous population, although the pace of growth has slowed," *The Daily*, 150.statcan.gc.ca (Sept. 21, 2022).

[196] National Association of Friendship Centres, *Urbanization and Indigenous Peoples in Canada: Responses for the Questionnaire from the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2021).
[197] Kory Wilson and Colleen Hodgson, *Pulling Together: A guide for Indigenization of post-secondary institutions,* BCcampus (2018).
[198] Environics Institute, *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study - Main Report* (2010).
[199] MAPS Media Institute, "Walking Between Two Worlds: The Urban Indigenous Youth Experience," youtube.com/@MAPSMediaInstitute (2024).
[200] MAPS Media Institute, "Finding Our Own Way: The Urban Indigenous Youth Experience," youtube.com/@MAPSMediaInstitute (2026).
[201] The National Arts Centre, "*Indigenous Cities,*" nac-cna.ca/en/indigenouscities.
[202] Shawna Lee Corbould, *Jenny's Concrete Powwow,* Medicine Wheel Publishing (2026).
[203] Theresa Meuse, *The Friendship Centre,* Nimbus Publishing (2025).
[204] Teoni Spathelfer, *Little Wolf,* Heritage House Publishing (2021).
[205] Alina Pete, ed., *Indiginerds: Tales from Modern Indigenous Life,* Iron Circus Comics (2024).
[206] Tasha Spillett, *Surviving the City,* Vols 1-3, HighWater Press imprint, Portage & Main Press (2018, 2020 and 2024).
[207] Christine M'Lot, *Teacher Guide for Surviving the City,Vols 1–3: Exploring Identity, Allyship, and Social Action for Meaningful Change in Grades 7–12,* Portage & Main Press (2025).
[208] *Becoming Wolf,* Surrounded by Cedar Child & Family Services (2023).

- Episode 1 of *8th Fire, Indigenous in the City*[209] (teaching guide[210]), features urban Indigenous people who are united in their determination to reassert their culture within a population of non-Indigenous Canadians. Indigenous music, often in contemporary genres, is a longstanding tradition of urban Indigenous survivance. Musicians shape cultural expressions, challenge stereotypes and tell their own stories.[211]
- Public artworks created by Indigenous artists, such as murals and sculptures in prominent city spaces, promote relationship-building and dialogue, share decolonial perspectives and counter the erasure of Indigenous peoples from urban areas. These artworks are visible symbols of resilience. For example, see *Morning Star* by KC Adams; *O-ween du muh waun. (We were told.)* by Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero; *Mediating the Treaties* by Rolande Souliere; and *The Path of Our Ancestors* by Jackie Traverse featured on the Winnipeg Arts Council's Gallery and Map of Public Art.[212]

WONDER

- Consult the ***Resilience*** art cards to discover the artists' Nations. What is their community of origin? Where do they currently live and work? Which of the artists are urban Indigenous people?
- What is the Indigenous population in the province or territory and city or community you live in? In your school? In your school division?
- Imagine a moment in your past when you felt alone in a new place or situation. Where were you? What was unfamiliar about this place or situation? Landscape? People? Language? What were you feeling? What did you do, and how did you cope? Did that help you overcome the situation, or did it leave lasting effects? What did you learn from the experience?
- What and where are the Indigenous spaces of the urban landscape near you? [in Winnipeg: Naawi-Oodena (urban reserve), Nine Circles Community Health Centre's "circle room," Oodena Celebration Circle, Red River College's sweat lodge, Niizhoziibean (The Gathering Place at The Forks), Turtle Island Neighbourhood Centre, Urban Shaman Contemporary Aboriginal Art, WAG-Qaumajuq, etc.]
- Who are the Indigenous musicians active in cities near you? What public art by Indigenous artists can be seen in these urban spaces?

RESPOND

- Use photography, photo editing software or collage to create a self-portrait that places you in an unfamiliar landscape. Your image should express how you feel in this place, your perception of it, or how you adapt and cope within it. Alternatively, create a photo essay exploring an urban or rural landscape that is meaningful to you. See the CityScapes[213] photo essay lesson plan for guidance.
- Write the lyrics to a song that expresses resilience or coping with unfamiliarity from your perspective.
- Involve the entire class or work in groups on a collaborative street art project using non-permanent materials (such as sidewalk chalk or window soap paint). Use this form of highly visible and accessible art to explore the notions of identity and culture.
- Volunteer at a local organization dedicated to helping at-risk youth, such as Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc. (Ndinawe) in Winnipeg.
- Interview an urban Indigenous person or Elder (face-to-face, via web conferencing, by email or as pen pals). Ask how many years they or their family have lived in the city. Why did they move to the city? What opportunities and challenges does living in the city present? What is their community of origin? What do they do to retain their culture?

[209] CBC Documentary Unit, "Indigenous in the City," *8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada and the Way Forward*, Episode 1 (2013), curio.ca. [Also available on various YouTube channels.]
[210] Chelsea Prince, *8th Fire Guide for Educators*, CBC Learning, curio.ca/media/catCurio.caalog/e5/c9/e5c95239-396c-4772-aee5-cf84389c7e00/8thfireguide.pdf (2012).
[211] Liz Przybylski, "Indigenous Survivance and Urban Musical Practice," *Revue de recherche en civilisation américaine*, no. 5 (2015).
[212] Winnipeg Arts Council, "Gallery and Map of Public Art," winnipegarts.ca/public-art/gallery.
[213] National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education, "CityScapes," nccie.ca/lessonplan/cityscapes/.

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will explore aspects of Indigenous experience from pre-contact to the present, including Indigenous strength and resilience through adversity, injustice and significant change.

LOOK

Card 40. Daphne Odjig, *The Indian in Transition,*
acrylic on canvas, 2.74 x 8.23 m (1978)

- What do you see? List the people, places, things, events, actions and symbols depicted in the artwork.
- How many parts are there to the story being told in this artwork?
- Describe the style of this artwork as it relates to the elements and principles of design.[214] [Interweaving ovoid shapes, solid colour, undulating lines, bold outlines, flattened perspective, abstract figuration, organic shapes, balanced compositions]

KNOW

- **Daphne Odjig**[215] (1919-2016) was an Anishinaabe (Odawa-Potawatomi) artist from the Wiikwemkoong Reserve on Manitoulin Island (Ontario).
- *The Indian in Transition*[216] is widely considered Daphne Odjig's masterpiece. It depicts the history of colonization in Canada and Indigenous resilience. The artwork is divided into four quadrants:[217]
  - Pre-contact Life: An idyllic scene of Anishinaabe life filled with joy as figures dance to the beat of resonant drums. Bird-like shapes (protective Thunderbird), ancestors or other spirits appear in the sky. Two individuals look to the right (towards the East) at something approaching from a distance.
  - Cultural Disruption Begins: A pale-skinned explorer, a missionary and white settlers arrive aboard a ship with a serpent-like head at the bow. This marks the beginning of cultural disruption. Torn drums drift in the water as ancestral or spiritual figures at the top centre watch over the events below.
  - Colonization's Impact: A pale-skinned figure holds an open book above a cross fallen onto a faceless community affected by illness and death; European-style buildings or settlement structures; a broken bottle; and small children being led away from their families and traditions.
  - Cultural Return: A figure carrying a big drum and a large bird, hover in the sky over a crowd of strong Anishinaabe people returning to their traditions and moving forward into the future.
- The artwork portrays Indigenous resilience similar to Rebecca Thomas's spoken word piece *Canada: A Creation Story*[218] and the graphic novels *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book: Revisited and Expanded*[219] and *This Place: 150 Years Retold*[220] (teaching guide,[221] 10-episode CBC Books podcast[222]).
- In their Introduction to ***Resilience***, Lee-Ann Martin and Shawna Dempsey write: "The images in this billboard exhibition prompt us to rethink and reshape the narrow dictionary definition of resilience. For these Indigenous women artists, resilience is embodied as endurance, adaptability and sovereignty in relation to customary cultural practices, contemporary identities, the land, and the impact of colonial practices and strategies."[223] Read Lee-Ann Martin's curatorial statement, *The Resilient Body*,[224] to deepen your understanding of resilience as an expression of Indigenous endurance.

[214] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Elements and Principles of Design," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/elements-principles-of-design.
[215] Bonnie Devine, "Daphne Odjig," thecanadianencyclopedia.ca (2011; last edited 2025).
[216] Canadian Museum of History, "Canadian Museum of History virtual tour– Indigenous artist Daphne Odjig's *The Indian in Transition*," youtube.com/@CanMusHistory (2023).
[217] Information drawn from sources cited in footnotes 229 and 230.

[218] The Walrus, "Canada: A Creation Story | Rebecca Thomas | Walrus Talks," youtube.com/@thewalrus (2017).
[219] Gord Hill, *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book: Revisited and Expanded*, Arsenal Pulp Press (2021).
[220] K. Akiwenzie-Damm, S. Assu, B. Mitchell, R. Qitsualik-Tinsley, S. Qitsualik-Tinsley, D. A. Robertson, N. J. Sinclair, J. Storm, R. Van Camp, K. Vermette and C. Vowel, *This Place: 150 Years Retold*, HighWater Press imprint, Portage & Main Press (2019).
[221] Christine M'Lot, *Teacher Guide for This Place: 150 Years Retold*, Portage & Main Press (2021).
[222] CBC Podcasts, "*This Place*," cbc.ca/listen/cbc-podcasts/1020-this-place (2021).
[223] Lee-Ann Martin and Shawna Dempsey, "*Resilience*, The National Billboard Exhibition Project," resilienceproject.ca (2018).
[224] Lee-Ann Martin, "The Resilient Body," resilienceproject.ca (2018).

- In *The Indian in Transition*, Odjig melds Woodland School aesthetics and storytelling with modern art influences, using bold colours, thick, flowing lines and simplified, rounded shapes to create an interconnected image full of movement that conveys relationships and culture.
- In the early 1970s, Daphne Odjig co-founded the Professional Native Indian Artists Inc. (PNIAI), also known as The Indigenous Group of Seven, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The group challenged the art establishment's classification of Indigenous art as cultural artifacts, advocating for its recognition as fine art. The PNIAI organized nationwide exhibitions to address the systemic barriers faced by Indigenous artists. Joseph M. Sánchez details the history, legacy and Odjig's significant impact in *Shades of Strength: Daphne Odjig's Impact on Indigenous Art and Culture*.[225]
- Daphne Odjig is often referred to as the grandmother of contemporary Indigenous art. In 2002 and 2011,[226] Canada Post released stamps featuring her artwork, and in 2025, the Royal Canadian Mint issued a special $2 coin[227] to commemorate her contributions—the first Canadian coin to honour a female visual artist. The coin's outer ring features her drawing of a fisher positioned above her signature on *The Indian in Transition*, a symbol connected to her name, as "Odjig" is anglicized as "Fisher."
- Odjig's life and artistic career are showcased in media, including the videos *Daphne Odjig Artist at the McMichael*[228] and *Toronto Stories Live: Daphne Odjig*,[229] and the TVO podcast *The Art of Sovereignty: Daphne Odjig*.[230] Additionally, *Daphne Odjig: Potawatomi's Celebrated Visual Artist Who Told the Stories of Her People*[231] is a nonfiction book that introduces young readers to her life and work.
- National Indigenous History Month[232] is observed every June, with National Indigenous Peoples Day held on June 21. This date, chosen to align with the summer solstice, celebrates the rich cultural diversity, heritage and significant accomplishments of Métis, Inuit and First Nations peoples.

WONDER

- In an interview about the creation of *The Indian in Transition*, Daphne Odjig said: "When a truck arrived to move the final product, a carpenter had to hack away at the door frame so the painting could fit through the exit."[233] Knowing the dimensions of the artwork, estimate whether or not it would fit on your classroom wall. Then use a ruler or measuring tape to verify your hypothesis. How does the size of an artwork influence its interpretation?
- Seek out artworks by Daphne Odjig in your local galleries and museums. In Winnipeg, you can find the mural *The Creation of the World* (1972) at the Manitoba Museum, and a re-creation of *Thunderbird Woman* on an exterior mural at the University of Winnipeg's Duckworth Centre.
- The artworks in ***Resilience*** explore the theme of Indigenous resilience. Select any art card. How does this artwork relate to Indigenous resilience? How does it relate to Daphne Odjig's *The Indian in Transition*?
- Reflect on your personal experience or research your family/community history at a moment in time when adversity, injustice or change required action to overcome.

[225] Royal Canadian Mint, "Shades of Strength: Daphne Odjig's Impact on Indigenous Art and Culture," www.youtube.com/@canadianmint (2025).
[226] Canada Post, "Art Canada series enriched by colourful palette of native artist," canadapost-postescanada.ca/cpc/en/our-company/news-and-media/corporate-news/news-release/2011-02-21-art-canada-series-enriched-by-colourful-palette-of-native-artist (Feb. 12, 2011).
[227] The Royal Canadian Mint, "Celebrating Daphne Odjig," mint.ca/en/discover/canadian-commemorative-circulation-program/2025/daphne-odjig.
[228] Canada Art Channel, "Daphne Odjig Artist at the McMichael," youtube.com/@CanadaArtChannel (2008).
[229] Museum of Toronto, "Toronto Stories Live: Daphne Odjig," youtube.com/@myseumoftoronto6752 (2021).
[230] TVO Today, "Daphne Odjig," *The Art of Sovereignty*, tvo.org/podcasts/the-art-of-sovereignty/daphne-odjig (2022).
[231] Professor Beaver, *Daphne Odjig: Potawatomi's Celebrated Visual Artist Who Told the Stories of Her People*, True Canadian Heroes - Indigenous People of Canada Edition Series, Speedy Publishing Canada (2021).
[232] Government of Canada, "National Indigenous History Month," rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1466616436543/1534874922512.
[233] Meagan Campbell, "'We want the biggest damned painting you can do'- Daphne Odjig, celebrated Aboriginal painter, on her epic masterpiece," macleans.ca (2014).



Daphne Odjig - *The Indian in Transition*

RESPOND

- Create a multi-part artwork that depicts your personal experience in overcoming a challenge. It could begin with a scene of living in safety, followed by the element of change that brought pain or consequences, and end with the overcoming of adversity and a renewed sense of hope.
- Design a postage stamp to represent your identity or your community by drawing on a template[234] or by working in a photo editing software. Insert your artwork into the stamp.
- Write a poem or spoken-word piece focussed on a personal or shared community struggle or story. To spark creativity, refer to the *Poetic Resilience*[235] lesson plan on the Poetry in Voice website, or listen to the episode "The Power of Poetry"[236] of the *Unreserved* podcast.
- Identify the initiatives your school has introduced in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action[237] (see *Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*[238] for a youth-friendly version of this document). Then, explore additional ways to support reconciliation by considering initiatives such as Imagine a Canada[239] or Project of Heart[240] and age-appropriate actions from *52 Ways to Reconcile*.[241]
- Plan a school program or event to celebrate National Indigenous History Month or National Indigenous Peoples Day.[242]
- Attend Indigenous gatherings, events and celebrations near you.

[234] Postage Stamp Template, resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Postage_Stamp_Template.pdf.
[235] Kristel Boyd, "Poetic Resilience," poetryinvoice.ca/teach/lesson-plans/poetic-resilience.
[236] CBC Radio, "The Power of Poetry," *Unreserved with Rosanna Deerchild*, cbc.ca/player/play/audio/1.6382588 (March 11, 2022). [00:00 - 26:00 mins]

[237] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Calls to Action* (2015).
[238] First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, *Spirit Bear's Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, fncaringsociety.com/publications/spirit-bears-guide-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-canada-calls-action.
[239] National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, "Imagine a Canada," nctr.ca/education/imagine-a-canada/.
[240] Project of Heart, projectofheart.ca/.
[241] David A. Robertson, *52 Ways to Reconcile: How to Walk with Indigenous Peoples on the Path to Healing*, McClelland & Stewart (2025).
[242] Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, "About National Indigenous Peoples Day," rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca.

INDIGENOUS ART AND ACTIVISM

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will learn how art serves political and cultural roles, raising awareness of social injustices and environmental issues.

LOOK

Card 21. Lita Fontaine, *Mni Wiconi - Water Is Sacred,*
colour photo, variable dimensions (2016)

What is happening in this photograph? What do you see? [No Dakota Access Pipe Line (NoDAPL) Water Protectors, protest banners, images of Thunderbird Woman]. What are the Water Protectors protesting? [The Energy East oil pipeline]. How does this photograph function as both art and activism?

KNOW

- In a video, **Lita Fontaine** discusses *Mni Wiconi - Water Is Sacred,* explaining the photograph's context, symbolism, and her personal connection to water.[243]
- Images created by the Onaman Collective[244] are included in Fontaine's artwork. Christi Belcourt (another ***Resilience*** artist) is part of this collective and active in protests protecting water.[245]
- Indigenous teachings view water as sacred and living, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life and our responsibility to protect water for future generations.
- Autumn Peltier is a young water activist who began speaking out for clean water at age 8, inspired by her great-aunt Josephine Mandamin.[246] Known as a "water warrior," she continues to advocate for safe drinking water in Indigenous communities. Learn more through *The Water Walker,*[247] *Amazing Women in Canada: Autumn Peltier,*[248] or the Rebel Girls audiobook[249] and podcast.[250]

[243] MAWA Programs, "Lita Fontaine speaks about her artwork," vimeo.com/mawawpg (2022).
[244] "Isaac Murdoch & Christi Belcourt Banners," onamancollective.com/murdoch-belcourt-banner-downloads/.
[245] Sakihitowin Awasis, "Keep It in the Ground!," canadianart.ca/features (Aug. 7, 2017).
[246] David J. Gallant, "Josephine Mandamin," The Canadian Encyclopedia, thecanadianencyclopedia.ca (2020, last edited 2025).
[247] James Burns, *The Water Walker,* Seeing Red 6 nations (2020), in Royal Roads University, "Autumn Peltier: RRU Changemakers Speakers Series," youtube.com/@RoyalRoadsUniversityVictoria (2022). [8:25 - 22:15 mins]
[248] Susan Currie, *Autumn Peltier,* Amazing Women in Canada series, Beech Street Books (2024).
[249] Rebel Girls, "Autumn Peltier: Saving Sacred Water," youtube.com/@RebelGirls (2023).
[250] Rebel Girls, "How Autumn Peltier Became a Voice for Water and Indigenous Rights | Get to Know," youtube.com/@RebelGirls (2025).



Lita Fontaine - *Mni Wiconi – Water Is Sacred*

- Educational resources that incorporate Indigenous knowledge about water include Water First,[251] Operation Water Spirit,[252] Indigenous STEAM,[253] *Biinaagami Giant Floor Map,*[254] as well as *Water is Life,*[255] which features water-themed artwork by Jaime Black (another ***Resilience*** artist).
- Children's books about water protection include *Autumn Peltier: Water Warrior;*[256] *Minnow: The Girl Who Became Part Fish;*[257] *We Are Water Protectors;*[258] *Nibi's Water Song;*[259] and *The Water Walker.*[260] Middle school students can explore *Minnow*[261] and *Search for Clean Water.*[262]
- World Water Day is observed annually on March 22.
- Children's books about activism include *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*[263] (short film,[264] teaching guide[265]) and *Sometimes People March.*[266] Books for middle school students include *Little by Little: You Can Change the World,*[267] *Protests,*[268] and

[251] Water First, "Education Resources," waterfirst.ngo/what-we-do/school-water/education-resources/.
[252] Safe Drinking Water Foundation, "Operation Water Spirit," safewater.org/operation-water-spirit.
[253] Indigenous STEAM, "Water," indigenoussteam.org/learning-activities/water/.
[254] Canadian Geographic, "Biinaagami: Our shared responsibility to the Great Lakes," cangeoeducation.ca/en/maps/biinaagami/.
[255] Canadian Geographic Education, *Water is Life,* cangeoeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Water-is-Life_EN-1.pdf (2021).
[256] Carole Lindstrom, *Autumn Peltier, Water Warrior,* Roaring Brook Press imprint, Macmillan Publishers (2023).
[257] Willie Poll, *Minnow: The Girl Who Became Part Fish,* Medicine Wheel Publishing (2023).
[258] Carole Lindstrom, *We Are Water Protectors,* Roaring Brook Press imprint, Macmillan Publishers (2023).
[259] Sunshine Tenasco, *Nibi's Water Song,* Lee & Low Books (2021).
[260] Joanne Robertson, *The Water Walker,* Second Story Press (2017).
[261] Willie Poll, *Minnow,* Medicine Wheel Publishing (2026).
[262] Simon Rose & Kathleen Corrigan, *Search for Clean Water,* Indigenous Life in Canada: Past, Present, Future series, Beech Street Books (2021).
[263] Cindy Blackstock & Eddy Robinson, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History,* Books & Learning Guides, First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides.
[264] Spirit Bear TV, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History,* vimeo.com/showcase/10778781 (2020).
[265] Emily Williams, Melisa Brittain & Spirit Bear, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History - Lesson Plans for the Book and Film,* First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/lesson_plans_for_the_book_and_film.pdf.
[266] Tessa Allen, *Sometimes People March,* Clarion Books imprint, HarperCollins Canada (2020).
[267] Sonya Ballantyne, *Little by Little: You Can Change the World,* HighWater Press imprint, Portage & Main Press (2024).
[268] Simon Rose, *Protests,* Indigenous Life in Canada: Past, Present, Future series, Beech Street Books (2020).

You Can Be an Activist.[269] For high school students, *Art of Protest* [270] explores the relationship between art, activism and social change.

- Art can perform social, political and/or cultural functions. In the case of Indigenous art, it is often all three.[271]
- ***Resilience*** curator Lee-Ann Martin's lecture, *Intersecting Practices of Art and Activism*,[272] presents the work of three female artists, including Daphne Odjig (another ***Resilience*** artist), and discusses how they challenged art movements and society at large.
- Examples of "art as activism" occurred during the 2018 celebrations of Canada's 150th birthday. For many Indigenous people, the framing of "Canada 150" represents the country's long history of colonialism and of injustices that persist today and erase the histories of Indigenous people who have lived here for more than 15,000 years.[273] Many artists joined the movement, sharing work that celebrates the resilience of Indigenous communities and challenges Canadians to reflect on our country's complicated legacy from a new perspective.[274]

WONDER

- What is the significance of "Water is life"? [In a video, Elder and Water Walker Dorothy Taylor shares *Sacred Waters Water Teachings*[275]]
- What other ***Resilience*** artworks explore the theme of water? [Cards 3, 10, 18, 33, 38, 39, 50]
- Each ***Resilience*** artwork can be viewed in terms of art as activism. Choose an art card and try to identify the topic or issue the artist may be raising awareness about.
- Beyond Water Is Life, what Indigenous advocacy campaigns are active in Canada? Consider initiatives such as End the Gap, I Am a Witness, Idle No More, Jordan's Principle, LAND BACK, the Moose Hide Campaign, No More Stolen Sisters, Orange Shirt Day, Shannen's Dream, Spirit Bear and the Bear Witness Campaign, We Are All Treaty People and We Matter. What issue are they addressing, who is affected and why is advocacy needed? What actions are being taken, what progress has been made and what challenges remain? Find an artwork that explores the campaign. What message does the artist share, and how can art contribute to advocacy and social change?
- What social injustices or movements concern you? What campaigns address these issues, or have successfully done so in the past? Can you identify an artist whose work raises awareness of these topics?

RESPOND

- Create an art project that explores an environmental issue or social injustice that is important to you or that you are studying in class. Visit MAWA's *Art Alive* Ways of Making webpage[276] to discover videos and ideas about art and activism. Share your message through visual art or another form of creative expression, such as performance, music, or creative writing.
- Write or record a *Letter to Canada*[277] about a social or environmental issue that matters to you and why.
- Join a local protest or commemorative march.
- Lead change in your community by forming a school committee to raise awareness about an issue. For example, on May 5, the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S+), wear red, display red paper dresses, or plant red-painted cardboard cut-outs on wooden skewers in an appropriate school or community space.

[269] Charlene Rocha & Mary Beth Leatherdale, *You Can Be an Activist*, Citizenkid series, Kids Can Press (2024).
[270] De Nichols, *Art of Protest: Creating, Discovering, and Activating Art for Your Revolution*, Big Picture Press imprint, Candlewick Press (2021).
[271] Jasmeen Siddiqui, *Necessary Affairs: Exploring the Relationship Between Indigenous Art and Activism*, Communities & Collections: Undergraduate Student Works, Western University Open Repository, uwo.scholaris.ca (2017).
[272] MAWA Programs, *Lee-Ann Martin: Intersecting Practices of Art and Activism*, vimeo.com/mawawpg (2011).
[273] Krysta Hessey, "Why some Indigenous people are calling out Canada 150," *Maclean's*, youtube.com/@MacleansCanada (2017).
[274] Michelle Cyca, "Resistance 150: Indigenous artists challenge Canadians to reckon with our history," chatelaine.com (June 21, 2017).
[275] GreenUP, "Gichitwaa Nibi - Sacred Waters Water Teaching with Elder Dorothy Taylor," youtube.com/@ptbogreenup (2021).
[276] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Ways of Making," artalive.mawa.ca/activities/ways-of-making#art-activism.
[277] First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, « Letters to Canada », youtube.com/@fncaringsociety (2013).

INSPIRED BY ACTUAL EVENTS

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will explore artworks inspired by significant cultural events in Indigenous communities and develop visual responses to significant events in their own communities.

LOOK

Card 3: Shuvinai Ashoona, *Summer Sealift,*
lithograph, 56.5 x 76.3 cm (2003)

What is happening in this artwork? [A bird's-eye view of a summer sealift in an Arctic Inuit community]

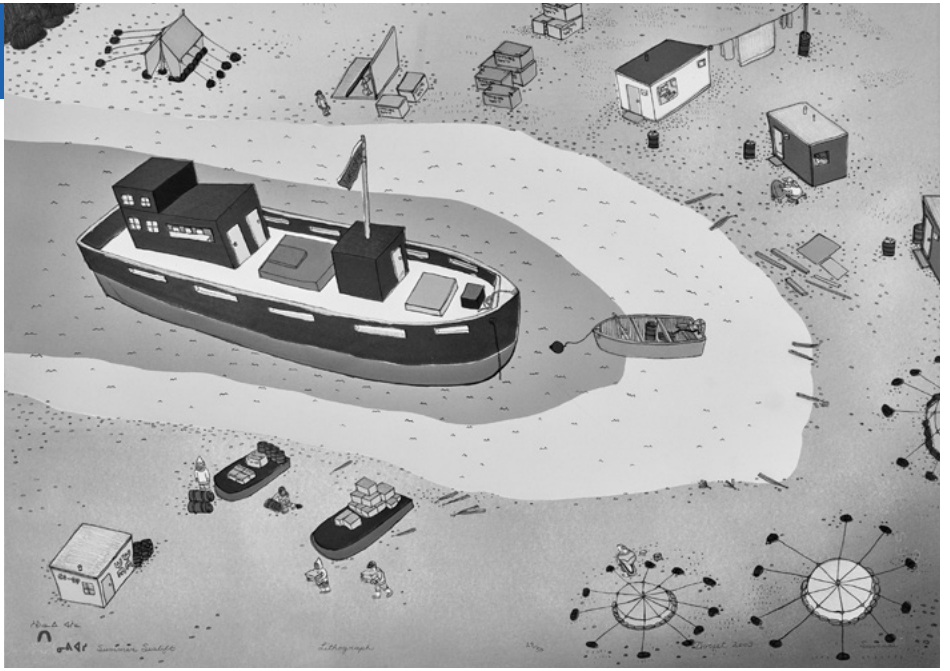
What types of boats do you see? [The *Nascopie* cargo ship anchored offshore, two barges that ferry supplies between ship and shore, a motor boat]

What details of community life does the artwork show? [People working together to unload and distribute supplies, a woman carrying a baby in an amauti (or amautik), someone who appears to be building a structure, another who might be stone carving] What types of structures do you see? [A mix of traditional stone-secured tents and modern buildings; the presence of the Kinngait Studios[278] logo suggests the co-op is among the structures]

Card 9: Lori Blondeau, *Asiniy Iskwew,*
photograph, 152.4 x 111.8 cm (2016)

What is the first thing you notice in this portrait? How would you describe the woman in the photograph? Why might rocks or landscapes be important in this artwork? How could the artist be using colour, clothing or the woman's pose to communicate a message?

[278] Dorset Fine Arts, "Kinngait Studios," dorsetfinearts.com/kinngait-studios.



Shuvinai Ashoona - *Summer Sealift*

KNOW

- In Ashoona and Blondeau's work, both artists find inspiration in significant events that have impacted their respective communities.
- **Shuvinai Ashoona (ᓰᕕᓐᓇ ᐊᔪᓐᓇ)** (1961–2025) was a ground-breaking Inuit artist from Kinngait, Nunavut, and one of the first Inuit artists to gain recognition as a contemporary artist in Canada and internationally. As a teenager, she lived on the land with her family, and those experiences deeply influenced her artwork. Her drawings often start with scenes from everyday life but transform as she works, blending observation, memory and imagination to both document and reimagine the world around her. To learn more about her, see the article "Making Art on Top of the World,"[279] the downloadable book *Shuvinai Ashoona: Life & Work*[280] and the video *Portrait of Shuvinai Ashoona*.[281]

  The Nascopie[282, 283] was a Hudson's Bay Company supply ship that delivered essential goods to northern outposts for many years, including

[279] Patricia Leigh Brown. "Making Art on Top of the World," *The New York Times*, nytimes.com (June 1, 2022).
[280] Nancy G. Campbell, "*Shuvinai Ashoona: Life & Work*," Art Canada Institute, artcanada.com/books/online-books/ (2017).
[281] Canada Council for the Arts, "Portrait of Shuvinai Ashoona, #GGArts2024 winner," youtube.com/@CanadaCouncil (2024).
[282] Russel Brothers Archive Index, "Nascopie Lighter," russelbrothers.ca/xnascopie.html.
[283] Peter C. Kohler, "Arctic Lifeline: H.B.S.S. Nascopie," Wanted on Voyage: Ocean Liner Monographs (July 1, 2023).

Ashoona's community, Kinngait. In 1947, it struck a reef at the harbour entrance and was stranded there for over two months, until a storm broke it in half. Its bow slid into the water, but the stern clung to the reef until another storm swept it away. The sinking of the *Nascopie* became an important story in the region and has appeared in the work of many Inuit artists. Although Ashoona was born long after the ship sank, she likely heard stories about it from Elders. In *Summer Sealift*, she depicts the *Nascopie* anchored offshore, highlighting her unique approach of merging the past with present-day observations and imaginative futures rooted in personal and collective memory (see also *Titanic, Nascopie, and Noah's Ark*[284] or *Untitled (World, Squid and Nascopie)*[285]).

Children's books such as *Una Huna?: What Is This?*[286] and *Baseball Bats for Christmas*[287] explore the importance of the annual sealift, showing how supply ships bring essential goods, excitement and change to Inuit communities. Teachers can show clips from the series *High Arctic Haulers*[288] to illustrate how sealifts are loaded and delivered, including the types of supplies transported and their importance to community life.

Ashoona is renowned for her large, detailed drawings created with coloured pencil, ink and marker, as seen in *Re-Imagining the World*[289] and *Mapping Worlds*[290] (audio exhibition resource[291] and drawing tutorial[292]). She has also turned landscapes and imaginative scenes into three-dimensional artworks by covering geometric forms with her drawings, as seen in *Shuvinai Ashoona: Help Us*[293] (project ideas for blending landscape and sculpture[294]).

- **Lori Blondeau** is a Cree / Saulteaux / Métis artist known for her work in photography, performance and installation, where she challenges stereotypes and celebrates Indigenous strength and resilience. To learn more about the artist, see the article "*Way of Being: The Art of Lori Blondeau*"[295] and the video *Portrait of Lori Blondeau*.[296]

  Blondeau's *Asinîy Iskwew* (Cree for "Rock Woman") photo series honours the importance of rock formations and sacred sites in Plains Indigenous cultures. In the images, the artist stands on large rocks wearing a flowing red velvet robe to symbolize strength and connection to the land. The series was inspired by the story of Mistaseni,[297, 298] (Cree for "big rock"), a sacred 400-tonne glacial erratic that served as a ceremonial gathering place for Plains Cree and other First Nations before it was controversially destroyed in 1966 to make way for the Gardiner Dam and create Lake Diefenbaker for irrigation and hydroelectric power. Through these photographs, Blondeau commemorates this loss while celebrating Indigenous histories, cultural knowledge and enduring relationships with the land. See the artist talks *Lori Blondeau speaks about her artwork Asiniy Iskwew*[299] and *Here we are; where did we go from here?*[300]

  The significance of rocks in Indigenous cultures is often understood through their role as sacred, ancient beings, sometimes called "Grandfather rocks." They are connected to ceremony, teachings, memory and relationships with the land. Children's books that explore this include *I Am A Rock*,[301] *Siha Tooskin Knows the Nature of Life*,[302] *Trudy's Healing Stone*[303] and *Trudy's Rock Story*[304] (teaching guide[305]).

[284] Art Canada Institute, "Key Works, *Titanic, Nascopie,* and *Noah's Ark,*" artbooks.artcanada.com/shuvinai-ashoona/key-works.
[285] Madrona Gallery, "Shuvinai Ashoona, #148-2094", madronagallery.com/artists/shuvinai-ashoona.
[286] Susan Aglukark, *Una Huna?: What Is This?*, Inhabit Media (2018).
[287] Michael Arvaarluk Kusugak, *Baseball Bats for Christmas* (reissue), Annick Press (2025).
[288] CBC Television, *High Arctic Haulers*, gem.cbc.ca/ (2020).
[289] Art Canada Institute, *Shuvinai Ashoona: Re-Imaging the World*, artcanada.ca/online-exhibitions.
[290] Art Canada Institute, *Shuvinai Ashoona: Mapping Worlds*, artcanada.com/online-exhibitions.
[291] Vancouver Art Gallery, *Shuvinai Ashoona: Mapping Worlds* [SoundCloud playlist], soundcloud.com/vanartgallery/sets/shuvinai-ashoona-mapping (2020).
[292] Vancouver Art Gallery, "Art At Home Live | Shuvinai Ashoona," youtube.com/@VanArtGallery (2020).
[293] Marion Scott Gallery, "*Shuvinai Ashoona: Help Us,*" marionscottgallery.com/exhibition/shuvinai-ashoona-help-us/.
[294] Art Gallery of Ontario, "*Playing With the Idea of a Three Dimensional Landscape,*" ago.ca/learn/ago-makes/three-dimensional-landscape.

[295] Robert Enright, "Way of Being: The Art of Lori Blondeau," *Border Crossings*, vol. 40, no. 2, bordercrossingsmag.com/article/way-of-being-the-art-of-lori-blondeau (2021).
[296] Canada Council for the Arts, "Portrait of Lori Blondeau, 2021 #GGARTS winner," youtube.com/@CanadaCouncil (2021).
[297] University of Saskatchewan, "Mistusinne," *Indigenous Saskatchewan Encyclopedia*, teaching.usask.ca/indigenoussk.
[298] Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre, *Buffalo Child Stone: Interpretive Booklet* (2021).
[299] MAWA Programs, *Lori Blondeau speaks about her artwork Asiniy Iskwew*, vimeo.com/871907476 (2023).
[300] STEPS Public Art, "*Here we are; where did we go from here?* by Lori Blondeau | 2022 CreateSpace Public Art Forum Keynote," youtube.com/@STEPSPublicArt (2022). [20:46 - 32:28 mins]
[301] Ashley Qilavaq-Savard, *I Am A Rock*, Inhabit Media (2024).
[302] Charlene Bearhead & Wilson Bearhead, *Siha Tooskin Knows the Nature of Life*, HighWater Press imprint, Portage & Main Press (2020).
[303] Trudy Spiller, *Trudy's Healing Stone*, Medicine Wheel Publishing (2019).
[304] Trudy Spiller, *Trudy's Rock Story*, Medicine Wheel Publishing (2017).
[305] Medicine Wheel Education, *Trudy's Rock Story - Teacher Lesson Plans and Resources* (2018).

INSPIRED BY ACTUAL EVENTS

WONDER

- What events or stories have shaped your family, school, community, country or cultural group? What happened? Was this a first-hand experience or was the knowledge passed down from family members, Elders or oral traditions? When and where did it take place? What events led up to it? Why is it significant? Who was involved and who was affected? How did different individuals experience and respond to the event? What has happened since, and how has the community changed over time?

RESPOND

- Create a visual story or self-portrait inspired by a significant historical or contemporary event. Use colour, imagery, symbols and details to communicate the experience or issue. Consider how you want to tell the story. Will you represent it realistically, or reinterpret it through imagination as Ashoona does? Will you focus on how individuals or communities were affected? Or will you create a response that highlights resilience, healing and hope for the future, similar to Blondeau's approach?
- In addition to *Summer Sealift* and *Asinîy Iskwew*, several other ***Resilience*** artworks reference significant historical events. Read the artist statements of the artworks by Vanessa Dion Fletcher [Card 20], Lita Fontaine [Card 21], Marianne Nicolson [Card 36] and Daphne Odjig [Card 40]. Choose one of the events mentioned and research it using interviews, oral histories, photographs, maps, articles, books or community knowledge. Present your findings in a report, podcast, video or visual display. Explain the who, what, when, where, why and how of the event. Then analyze the artwork's symbolism, imagery, materials and other artistic choices. Explain how these elements communicate the event and what they suggest about the artist's perspective.



Lori Blondeau - *Asiniy Iskew*

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will examine how visual artists influence, comment on, question and challenge social, political, and cultural discourse and identity, and explore how art can be a means of knowing the self, sharing viewpoints and understanding the perspectives of others.

LOOK

Without reading the artist statements, try to identify as many portraits as you can from the ***Resilience*** art cards. Now skim through the artist statements on the reverse side of the art cards to see if you might have missed a few artworks that do not seem like portraits at first glance, but actually are. [Cards 9, 12, 19, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35, 37, 40, 43, 45, 46, 49, 50]

KNOW

- A **portrait** is an artwork that represents a person or group of people. A **self-portrait** is an artwork in which the artist represents themselves.
- The person in the portrait is usually called a "**sitter**" even if they are not sitting down. This is because in the past, most portraits were painted of someone who had to sit really still for a very long time while an artist painted them from real life. Before the invention of the camera, artists didn't have photographs to look at while drawing.
- Portraiture can take a variety of forms:
  - Realistic – gives an accurate depiction of what a person looks like, their physical appearance
  - Expressive – shows emotion
  - Surrealistic – represents things as they look in real life but in unusual, imaginary or weird combinations
  - Romanticized – either simplifies or idealizes someone
  - Conceptual or symbolic – represents the person without being a depiction of the person themselves
- A portrait can show more than just what a person looks like. It can tell us something important or interesting about the subject, such as their lifestyle, where they live, what they enjoy, or how they feel. It can also communicate a deeper message. By showing the subject in a certain way, the artist is also expressing their own ideas and perspective.
- ***Resilience*** features portraits that tell us about an individual [Card 37], portraits that are the artists' own self-exploration [Cards 31, 35, 46], portraits that represent a group of people [Cards 45, 48, 49], and portraits that speak about community or global issues [Cards 9, 12, 19, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28,29, 40, 43, 50].

WONDER

- **What Is a Portrait?** What comes to mind when you hear the word "portrait"? What different forms can a portrait take? What does it mean to "portray" someone? Why do people create portraits? Can a portrait represent a community, culture, family or shared experience rather than just one individual? Does a portrait always need to show a person's face? Why or why not? How could you create a portrait without showing the sitter at all?
- **Portraits and Identity.** What might a portrait reveal about a person's identity, experiences, values, relationships or community? What details help you understand who the sitter is? How do clothing, objects, colours, symbols, facial expressions, the framing or the background help us understand a portrait? How do the artist's choices influence the story being told?
- **Portraits and Resilience.** How can a portrait tell a story of strength, survival, perseverance, or hope? What experiences or challenges might a portrait communicate? How can portraits help preserve memories, histories and cultural knowledge? In what ways can portraiture challenge stereotypes or misconceptions about people and communities? How can creating or sharing a portrait be an act of resilience?

LOOKING IN / LOOKING OUT: PORTRAITURE



Meryl McMaster - *Dream Catcher* (detail)

- **Portraits in Everyday Life.** Where do you encounter portraits in everyday life? Consider school photos, family albums, social media profiles, selfies, documentaries, currency, memorials and advertisements. What similarities and differences do you see between these portraits and those displayed in art galleries or as public art?
- **Considering the Artist.** How do self-portraits differ from portraits by others, and how do people present themselves? Consider how the relationship between artist and subject influences the portrait. Did the subjects have a say in how they were portrayed? What responsibilities do artists have when representing others? Whose perspectives are represented?

RESPOND

- Create a portrait of a person based on an interview or research (or create a self-portrait). Choose a realistic or conceptual approach: a portrait does not necessarily have to show a person's physical appearance. Use a variety of elements (expressions, poses, clothing, symbols, colours, setting, metaphor) to reveal their personality and values. Consider what you want to include and leave out. Visit MAWA's *Art Alive* Ways of Making webpage for portrait examples and tutorials.[306]
- Using KC Adams' *Perception Leona Star* [Card 1] as a starting point, lead a discussion about racism, stereotypes, prejudice and the feeling of being judged. Explore the series[307, 308] and how it was created.[309] Why did Adams choose this title? How do the image and text work together to communicate a message? How does the work challenge stereotypes? Extend the activity by creating an artwork or series inspired by *Perception*, using the *Teacher Guide for KC Adams' Perception*.[310]
- Take a stand through a portrait or self-portrait. Consider how portraits can draw attention to an issue, cause, or message that matters to you. See *Warrior Woman: Stop the Silence!* [Card 28] and *Naw Jaada/ Octopus Woman* [Card 50] for examples. See also Indigenous Art and Activism (page 26) to learn more.
- Create a timeline showing how portraits of a chosen theme have changed over time. Gather examples from different periods, including historical paintings, photographs and contemporary artworks. Analyze how these depictions have changed over time. Reflect on the questions from the WONDER section above. Add notes, sketches, images and observations to your timeline.
- Choose an artwork and reinterpret it as a poem, diary entry, letter, or another form of creative writing.[311] For example, consider Jaime Black's *Untitled* [Card 8] and her poem-style artist statement. How is this portrait different from traditional portraits? What story, memory, or emotion does the artwork communicate? How does the poem influence your understanding of the artwork? Use your observations and ideas to bring the portrait to life in a new way.

[306] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Ways of Making," artalive.mawa.ca/activities/ways-of-making#portraiture.
[307] "*Perception* Photo Series," kcadams.net/PerceptionPhoto.html.
[308] KC Adams, *Perception: A Photo Series*, HighWater Press imprint, Portage & Main Press (2019).
[309] Urban Shaman, "*Perception* KC Adams," youtube.com/@urbanshamangallery (2015).
[310] Reuben Boulette, *Teacher Guide for KC Adams' Perception: A Photo Series*, HighWater Press imprint, Portage & Main Press (2019).
[311] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Ways of Looking", artalive.mawa.ca/activities/ways-of-looking. [See *Narrative Interpretations and Reinterpretations* sections]

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will experience women Indigenous artists as part of art history (herstory) and as integral voices in contemporary art. They will engage with historical and contemporary artworks to question who creates and controls images and how these images affect our understanding of reality.[312] They will value the stories, experiences and voices of Indigenous Peoples and their communities. They will consider how artists use artmaking to "proclaim one's identity and affiliations" and "locate one's artistic voice within one's personal history and culture of origin."[313]

LOOK

All 50 *Resilience* artworks!

What historical, political, cultural and social events may have inspired these artworks? Can personal artworks also be political? Have any of these artworks changed your understanding of Indigenous cultures or experiences? What role does research have in understanding art and artists? How has the definition of art changed or grown over the years? How has art's role in society changed over the years?

KNOW

- Although artists use art to express themselves and explore the topics that interest them, they generally don't work alone. They share ideas, inspire each other and collaborate. They recontextualize, layer and juxtapose imagery from different times and places. Their work reflects a hybridity of media, cultures, thoughts and traditions. Contemporary art can also push beyond classical boundaries as artists explore a wide range of materials, techniques and creative processes, many of which challenge conventional ideas about art. Visit the *Art Alive* website to learn more about contemporary approaches to art.[314]

WONDER

- Before you were introduced to the ***Resilience*** artworks, were you familiar with any women artists or Indigenous artists? If not, why do you think that is?
- Can an artwork be a statement or spark a conversation? Why might artists want to provoke or surprise their audience?
- How can art change the way we view our cultures and societies, and even help them evolve?
- How can viewing and engaging with artworks and artists help us relate to others? Why is it important to pay attention to and honour the voices that aren't always heard?

RESPOND

- Choose a ***Resilience*** artwork that you feel drawn to. What can you find out about this artist? Research their life and works.
- Look at the paintings *Indian Encampment* (1891)[315] by Frederick A. Verner and *Indian Family in the Forest* (1851)[316] by Cornelius Krieghoff. What do these paintings have in common? What words would you use to describe them? Whose perspective do they present? How might the scenes look from the point of view of the people depicted? Who creates and controls images of Indigenous experiences, and how are these images shared? How do the images you encounter in visual and popular culture differ from the artworks in the ***Resilience*** artworks? Which images do you consider more valuable, more common or more truthful? Why?
- Are you familiar with the terms "othering" or "otherness"? Research these concepts. Have you ever felt that you were seen as "different" or treated as an outsider? Why do you think this happens? Create a poem, song, or artwork inspired by this experience.

[312] Olivia Gude, "Postmodern Principles - In Search of 21st Century Art Education (Gazing)," *Art Education*, researchgate.net (2004).
[313] Olivia Gude, "Postmodern Principles - In Search of 21st Century Art Education (Representin')," *Art Education*, researchgate.net (2004).
[314] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Contemporary Approaches to Art," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/contemporary-approaches-to-art.
[315] Frederick Arthur Verner, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.
[316] Cornelius Krieghoff, *Indian Family in the Forest*, mbam.qc.ca/en/works/25670/.

PATHWAYS TO UNDERSTANDING

The images of ***Resilience*** provide finely-wrought examples of contemporary art as well as entry points for discussing issues and exploring techniques, materials and forms. The following section will give students the tools to analyze, talk about and appreciate contemporary art. Use the art cards to inspire in-depth investigations, such as visual art research projects, oral presentations, essays, web page designs and independent creations.

HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING

Use the Sacred Hoop (also known as the Medicine Wheel) to guide you in a holistic self-reflection. When viewing an artwork, think about how it makes you feel, spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally.

CURATORIAL RESEARCH

A **curator** is the person who selects and interprets works of art for an exhibition. Select and organize artwork for a hypothetical exhibition. Work with artwork from the set of cards, or select one artwork as inspiration for researching other artworks and/or artists. Decide on an idea, theme or purpose for the exhibition, such as:

- a survey of artwork by a particular artist
- a survey of artwork by a group of artists from a particular region or Nation
- a showcase of multiple artists working in similar mediums or themes
- a cross-cultural exchange

Make artwork selections based on the message you are trying to convey to the audience. Find a punchy exhibition title. Write a curatorial statement that explains the main idea of the exhibition, describes how the artist or artists explore the theme, giving examples, and explains why the theme is important or how it connects to the world today. Design an exhibition foldout complete with text, artist bios, images and descriptions of the artwork or present a curatorial talk to share your research.

ARTIST STUDY

From the set of art cards, select and research an artist who interests you. Write a biography, record a podcast, create an audiovisual piece profiling the artist, or build a web page to showcase them and their artwork.

- Introduce the artist: Find a picture of the artist. When and where were they born? Are they still living?
- What happened in history during their lifetime? News? Politics? What were some major events during their lifetime? Did these influence their artwork? In what ways is the artwork a reflection of society or a product of its time?
- Find more examples of their artwork (image, title, date, medium) from a particular period, or a series of artworks spanning different stages of their artistic career, including artworks that are well known and some not so well known. How do they help you understand the artist's point of view?
- Find examples of creative choices that the artist makes to express their point of view (elements of design, media, technique, subject matter, etc.).
- How do you feel about their artwork and why? Elaborate with details.
- Research other interesting facts about them.

THEME EXPLORATION

Researching a particular subject will deepen your understanding and appreciation for the artist's artwork and perspective. It is also an important part of the creative process, as learning new things brings awareness, ignites passion, and creates a sense of urgency. These will influence the artistic choices you make as an artist or curator. Themes related to ***Resilience*** that may be of research interest include the legend of Nuliajuk (also known as Sedna), Nalujuk Night, the origins of Métis beadwork, the repatriation of Indigenous cultural items, environmental stewardship, treaties, etc.

ARTISTIC RESPONSE

Choose a ***Resilience*** artwork and create your own original artwork inspired by it. Take inspiration from the artists, but do not copy their work. Create something based on your own experiences and ideas. Review the *Cultural Appropriation* section (page 6) before responding to another artist's work.

Examples of ways the cards can be used to inspire artmaking:

Card 50. Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, *Naw Jaada / Octopus Woman*
(Also see Cards 19 and 41) [Create a paper or digital collage.]

Card 4. Rebecca Gloria-Jean Baird, *Biskaabiiyang – returning to ourselves* (Also see Cards 1, 12, 21, 25, 28 and 32)
[Integrate text as an element in the creation of an artwork.]

Card 37. Shelley Niro, *The Rebel*
[Create a portrait of a loved one.]

Card 26. Bev Koski, *Ottawa #1, Berlin #1*
[Transform a found object.]

Card 30. Teresa Marshall, *Mi'kmaq Universe*
[Create an abstraction of something you believe.]

DISSEMINATION

Provide students with opportunities to share their artwork. Sharing works in progress and finished artworks allows students to celebrate their creativity, take pride in their learning and engage in meaningful dialogue. It can build confidence, encourage reflection, support constructive feedback and foster connections with a wider audience. For instance, they could display their work in a school hallway, organize an exhibition at a community centre or share on social media using the hashtag **#resilienceartcards**. Visit Ways of Sharing[317] on MAWA's *Art Alive* website for more ideas on sharing student artwork.

[317] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Contemporary Approaches to Art," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/contemporary-approaches-to-art#contemporary-ways-of-making.

THE FELDMAN MODEL OF ART CRITICISM[318]

The four-step Feldman Model guides students in studying and critically responding to an artwork. It moves from describing and analyzing what they see, to interpreting meaning and the artist's intent, and finally to judging the artwork's success. Teachers can use the steps to guide class discussions, while students can use the model to develop group or individual critiques.

Step 1: Description - What do I see?
List the visual elements of the work in an objective way. Avoid making judgements. Focus on describing what you see without value words like "beautiful" or "ugly". Visual Thinking Strategies (see page 8 of this teaching guide) can be helpful in discussing:

- The elements of design[319] (line, shape and form, colour and value, texture, space). For example, "The artwork is almost entirely covered in different shades of blue, with a few touches of white and yellow. The artwork has a circular shape." [Card 2]
- Medium and technique (tools, materials, methods and approaches[320] the artist used to make the artwork).
- Subject matter (things, people, places in the artwork). For example, "In this photograph, there is a woman in a forest, dressed in long, flowing red fabric. Everything else around her is green. She is in the centre of the picture, and it looks like she is dancing because her rapid motion blurs the image of the fabric." [Card 8]

Guides for describing visual elements: Describe the artwork as though you are sharing what you see with someone in another room. Include recognizable images, colours, lines, shapes, patterns and textures. What stands out the most? How do you think the artist made this artwork?

[318] Edmund Burke Feldman, *Varieties of Visual Experience: Art as image and idea*, H. N. Abrams (1972).
[319] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Elements and Principles of Design," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/elements-principles-of-design.
[320] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Contemporary Approaches to Art," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/contemporary-approaches-to-art#contemporary-ways-of-making.

Step 2: Analysis - How is the work designed and organized?

Describe how the different parts of the artwork work together. Think about how the artist made use of:

- The principles of design[321] (balance; contrast; emphasis and focal point; movement; proportion; repetition, pattern and rhythm; harmony and unity; variety)
- Other approaches, such as contemporary elements of art[322] (time, perspective, text, etc.) and postmodern principles (juxtaposition, layering, hybridity, etc.)[323]

Guides for analysis: How is this work constructed or planned? Is the composition symmetrical or asymmetrical? How does the artist draw your attention to the area of emphasis? What is in the foreground, middle ground, and background? What are the sizes and placement of the items you see? How does the use of colour, pattern, line, shape or texture affect the tone of this artwork? How do the different parts of the artwork relate to each other? How does the choice of materials or visual elements and placement of objects or people affect the message of the artwork and communicate the central idea, feeling, emotion or focus?

Step 3: Interpretation - What is the artist saying?

Propose ideas for possible meaning, based on evidence from the artwork. Consider whether or not the artist has included any symbolic images in the artwork. Use prior knowledge to make inferences about the artwork's meaning and predict the artist's intention. What was the context in which the artwork was created (when, where, by whom)? Consider your own experiences and how they might influence your perception of the artwork's meaning.

Guides for interpretation: How would you describe the way this artwork makes you feel? What is the mood or tone? Does it remind you of something you have experienced, or something you have seen before? How might this work relate to events going on in the community/world? Can you see any connections to other subjects you study (language, history, dance, science, math, etc.)? Are there any symbolic images in this piece? What might they mean? Why do you think the artist made this work? What might they be hoping to communicate? What clues or evidence do you see in the artwork that supports your ideas?

Step 4: Judgement - Is this a successful work of art?

- In order to determine how successful you feel an artwork may be, consider meaning, craftsmanship, expressive qualities, purpose of the artwork, etc. Understand that different artists have different goals and intentions with their artwork (self-expression, social action, cultural/historical preservation, provocation, etc.).
- Consider the significance of the artwork in culture/society.
- Relate the artwork to yourself, personally. How does it make you think/feel?

Guides for judgement: Do you connect with this artwork? In what ways? How do we know if an artwork is successful or not? Why do we look at art? What criteria might we use to judge an artwork? Might the criteria change depending on the purpose of the artwork? In what ways might this artwork be important for people to see and/or discuss? Is it still art if it is not beautiful? Is it still art if it makes you uncomfortable? Does art need to be meaningful? Who gives the artwork meaning: the artist who made it, the viewer experiencing it, or both? Describe why you think this artwork is important/effective.

[321] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Elements and Principles of Design," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/elements-principles-of-design.
[322] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Contemporary Approaches to Art," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/contemporary-approaches-to-art#contemporary-elements-of-art.
[323] MAWA, *Art Alive*, "Contemporary Approaches to Art," artalive.mawa.ca/ways-to-approach-art/contemporary-approaches-to-art#postmodern-principles.



Nadya Kwandibens - *Concrete Indians – 10 Indigenous Lawyers*

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