

# 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



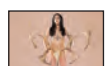
13 Hannah Claus



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

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

Introduction	5
Ways of Looking	8
Gifts from the Land	11
Seasonal Patterns and the Four Directions	12
Nuliajuk in Mourning	14
Wampum Belts Marking Treaties	16
The Flower Beadwork People	18
Indigenous in the City	20
Indigenous Resilience	22
Indigenous Art and Activism	24
Inspired by Actual Events	26
Looking In/Looking Out: Portraiture	28
History/Herstory: The Artists of <i>Resilience</i>	30
Pathways to Understanding	31
Building Relationships	34

The word "resilience" is centered within a horizontal, irregular blue brushstroke that has a textured, painterly appearance.

resilience

## 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 that have Indigeneity at their centre.

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

By using these art cards, you are doing important and essential work. You are responding to Call to Action #62 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: *We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to: Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve participants.*<sup>1</sup> You are validating the experiences and traditions of your Indigenous students, and instilling respect and understanding for Indigenous Peoples in students of all backgrounds.

For most Canadians, the intergenerational understanding of Indigenous histories and culture has been influenced by the 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 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 imported from other Indigenous groups. For example, the Plains version of the pow wow dance is now found across North America. (Elder Albert McLeod, 2019)

<sup>1</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015).



# INTRODUCTION

## CONTEXT OF THE ARTWORK

The artwork reflects the perspectives of diverse Indigenous women artists. It was 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.<sup>2</sup> When engaging with the artwork, consider the artist's place of origin. How do her traditional territories and traditions 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" and read the curatorial essay "The Resilient Body"<sup>3</sup> and/or these two art magazine articles, "Nationwide Public Art Project to Feature 50 Indigenous Women"<sup>4</sup> and "Taking Back the Territory".<sup>5</sup>

## HOW TO

There are many ways to engage with the artworks in this set of cards. The cards can provide students with a window into each artist's self-expression and cultural understanding. They can be used to inspire students' own creative explorations and artmaking experiences. The art cards can also incite questions and discussion for inquiry-based learning on subjects outside the visual arts, including social studies (Treaties and land ownership), language arts (identity and sense of place), math (pattern-making), science (environmental stewardship) and more.

This teaching guide is in no way definitive; it originates in Manitoba, which is the home of many Plains cultures such as the Cree, Assiniboine,

Anishinaabeg, Dakota and Métis. While this guide reflects a Prairie Indigenous cultural lens, facilitators can adapt their content and activities to reflect the Indigenous perspectives of their territory in combination with other available pedagogical resources.

This guide offers teaching strategies and loose lesson plans with themed project and assignment suggestions. It is not intended to follow a linear sequence. Lessons can be modified for curriculum relevance, age appropriateness, prior knowledge, lived experience and urgency. They can evolve, year after year, with increasing complexity, deeper understanding and impactful actions.

The Medicine Wheel is suggested as a guide for ongoing learning and appreciation of the interconnectedness of all things. "There are many versions of medicine wheel teachings. These teachings vary from one community to another but there are some foundational concepts that are similar between the various medicine wheel teachings."<sup>6</sup> The wheel is a circle divided into quadrants symbolizing the medicine of the four directions (east, south, west, north) and other relationships expressed in sets of four, such as seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter), stages of life (infant, youth, adult, elder), aspects of life (spiritual/soul, emotional/heart, intellectual/mind, physical/body) and elements of nature (fire, air, water, earth).

"Wisdom is achieved by first **becoming aware** of the learning through all the senses, requiring the learning to be introduced to the students in multiple modalities. Understanding is achieved by providing students with enough time to solidify the learning so that they are able to **replicate the learning**. A deeper understanding is achieved by students relating to the learning at a deeper level to become knowledgeable to the point that they are able to **apply the learning** in any situation. To say that the students have achieved wisdom requires that they are able to **create some action** with the learning and teach it to others."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Turtle Island Map (Pre-Contact Linguistic Groups), 4 Seasons of Reconciliation, <https://www.reconciliationeducation.ca>.

<sup>3</sup> Lee-Ann Martin, *The Resilient Body*, MAWA, <https://resilienceproject.ca/en/index.php?p=essay>.

<sup>4</sup> Leah Sandals, "Nationwide Public Art Project to Feature 50 Indigenous Women", *Canadian Art* (2018).

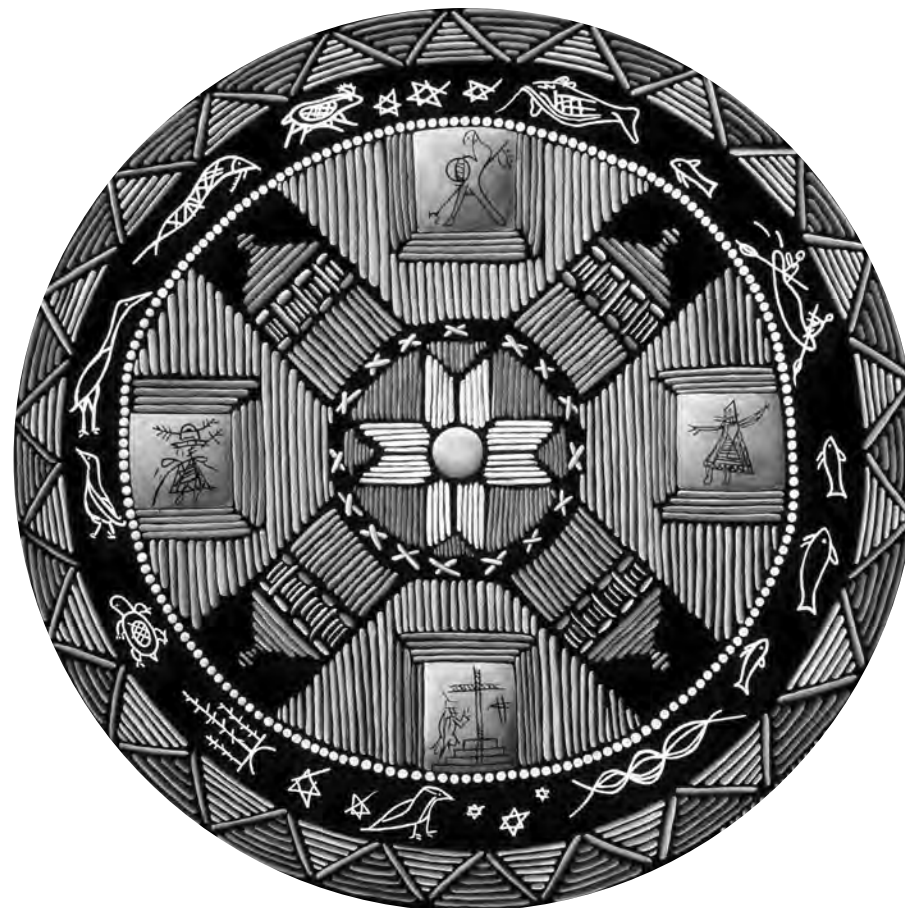
<sup>5</sup> Borderviews, "Taking Back the Territory", *Border Crossings* (2018).

<sup>6</sup> Susan Manitowabi, "The Medicine Wheel Teachings", *Historical and Contemporary Realities: Movement Towards Reconciliation* (no date).

<sup>7</sup> "Teaching by the Medicine Wheel", *Education Canada* (2014).

## NOTE

- This guide uses post-contact concepts and modern interpretations of Indigenous languages: terms such as “Mother Earth”, “sacred” and “Medicine Wheel” are modern constructions. Colonization resulted in incalculable damage to Indigenous knowledge systems. With the help of Traditional Knowledge Keepers, much has been safeguarded and is primarily being shared using the English language of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Suggested projects and activities can be explored individually or collaboratively.
- This guide, along with images of all 50 Resilience artworks and artist statements, is available online for easy teacher and student access. It also includes links to references, resources and templates for quick lesson planning. Visit [resilienceproject.ca](https://resilienceproject.ca).



Teresa Marshall | Mi'kmaq Universe

# WAYS OF LOOKING

The following is a list of looking activities intended to engage students, spark curiosity, and facilitate interpretation and discussion. Teachers can use them to introduce a visual art lesson, to inspire work in other artistic disciplines, as a springboard for research and writing, or to illustrate concepts in other disciplines such as math, science and social studies. Looking is also a worthwhile activity in and of itself... simply engaging in a looking activity with one art card a month for the entire school year will expose students to artworks by Indigenous women artists and the mediums and concepts the artworks address.

## 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 about the artwork to reconstruct it as a whole. Which details or aspects were overlooked?

## VISUAL THINKING STRATEGIES<sup>8,9</sup>

At any grade level, teachers can use Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)<sup>10</sup> 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 students a series of three questions while looking at 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.
- If the student needs to elaborate in order to make their observations clearer, the teacher should ask: ***What do you see that makes you say that?***
- If the comments on that particular student’s “noticing” wind down, the teacher should ask: ***What else can we find?***

During this activity, the teacher is encouraged to act only as a facilitator and not play the role of “expert”, even if they have prior experience with the artwork. It is their job to remain neutral and open to new ideas and observations. As the discussion continues, paraphrase each student’s observations and make connections with the observations of other students.

<sup>8</sup> VTS is an inquiry-based teaching method developed by Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine.

<sup>9</sup> “Visual Thinking Strategies”, <https://vimeo.com/vtsvimeo>.

<sup>10</sup> “What is VTS”, Castellani Art Museum.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 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 she 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? What did the artist want to communicate? How does the choice of materials or visual elements (colour, perspective, etc.) and placement of objects or people affect the message of the artwork and communicate the central idea, feeling, emotion or focus?
- 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 she 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.

## ART DESCRIPTION AND DRAWING<sup>11</sup>

How would you describe an artwork to a person who has not seen it? Have students work in pairs. Allow 15 minutes for one person (who has an art card in hand) to describe the artwork using only words (no pointing!) to a partner who draws according to the description, in an attempt to reproduce the artwork. Encourage the describers to notice and describe all the details and practice using the elements of art language. When done, reveal the original artwork to the drawers, laugh and have the partners switch roles.



Jackie Traverse  
*Harvesting the hair  
of Mother Earth*

<sup>11</sup> Cindy Ingram, "Super Fun Art Description and Drawing Activity for Developing Language Skills", <https://artclasscurator.com> (2017).

# WAYS OF LOOKING

## KINETIC TRANSLATIONS

- Create an Art Tableau. Have students reproduce an artwork using their bodies in space. Act out the artwork. Pose like the characters and/or make the shapes in the artwork using your bodies. Shoot and print an 8x10 photo of your art tableau to present alongside the original piece for comparison. Talk about how it felt to become part of the artwork.
- Use facial expressions and body movements to communicate what the artwork feels like.
- Create the sounds you would hear if you were immersed in the artwork.
- Create a dance inspired by the artwork.
- Converse about the artwork using only miming gestures.

## COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Juxtapose two art cards from the set and/or challenge students to make their own pairings. Consider commonalities and differences in theme, subject matter, mood, medium, art elements, year of production, the artist's place of origin, etc. Chart your findings in a Venn diagram<sup>12</sup> or write a comparative essay. Here are a few suggested pairings:

**Card 41** Jane Ash Poitras, *Fort Chip Future*

**Card 40** Daphne Odjig, *The Indian in Transition*

**Card 42** Annie Pootoogook, *Cape Dorset Freezer*

**Card 3** Shuvina Ashoona, *Summer Sealift*

**Card 6** Christi Belcourt, *This Painting is a Mirror*

**Card 34** Nadia Myre, *Meditations on Red*

**Card 8** Jaime Black, *Untitled*

**Card 9** Lori Blondeau, *Asiniy Iskwew*

**Card 10** Heather Campbell, *Nuliajuk in Mourning*

**Card 48** Jackie Traverse, *Harvesting the hair of Mother Earth*

**Card 14** Dana Claxton, *Baby Girlz Gotta Mustang*

**Card 37** Shelley Niro, *The Rebel*

**Card 43** Sherry Farrell Racette, *Ancestral Women Taking Back Their Dresses*

**Card 27** Nadya Kwandibens, *Concrete Indians - 10 Indigenous Lawyers*

**Card 19** Rosalie Favell, *I awoke to find my spirit had returned*

**Card 46** Jessie Short, *Wake Up!*

**Card 22** Melissa General, *Nitewaké:non*

**Card 31** Meryl McMaster, *Dream Catcher*

**Card 24** Maria Hupfield, *Waaschign*

**Card 35** Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *(That's A-Mori)*

**Card 28** Mary Longman, *Warrior Woman: Stop the Silence!*

**Card 16** Dayna Danger, *Big'Uns - Adrienne*

**Card 33** Lisa Myers, *through surface tension*

**Card 23** Tanya Harnett, *Paul First Nation - 2005 Wabamum Clean-up Site of a 700,000 Litre Oil Spill*

## 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 do you think they use it for? [Purification rites]

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 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?

[To illustrate the significance of Mother Earth]

## KNOW

- **Jackie Traverse**<sup>13</sup> is an Ojibway artist from Winnipeg (Manitoba).
- Mother Earth is a living being. She provides teachings and gifts to the two-legged beings (humans) who are the entrusted caregivers and protectors of her Land. Caring for the Earth and being good stewards is one of the key values that all Indigenous Nations share.<sup>14</sup>
- To the Anishinaabe, sweetgrass represents kindness, relationships and the mind, body and spirit. Sweetgrass represents the hair of Mother Earth and is considered to be one of the four sacred medicines. The four sacred medicines are Tobacco, Sage, Cedar

and Sweetgrass. Sweetgrass is often used in a Smudge Purification. The Smudge eliminates negative energies, bringing in the positive.

- “The Ojibwe (also Ojibwa, Ojibway and Chippewa) are an Indigenous people in Canada and the United States who are part of a larger culture known as the Anishinaabeg”<sup>15</sup> (also Anishinaabe), that also includes the Odawa, Saukteaux, Potawatomi, Oji-Cree and Algonquin Peoples.<sup>16</sup>
- Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22 to raise awareness about the environmental protection and care of our planet.

## 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 a painting to represent Mother Earth. What do you imagine she looks like? In your composition, have Mother Earth take up most of the space. 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 a Medicine Wheel created entirely out of gifts from Mother Earth [rocks, twigs, flowers, etc.].<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> “Jackie Traverse”, Wikipedia.

<sup>14</sup> Pamela Rose Toulouse, *Truth and Reconciliation in Canadian Schools* (2018).

<sup>15</sup> Charles Bishop, *Ojibwe, The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2008; latest edition 2016).

<sup>16</sup> “Anishinaabe”, Wikipedia.

<sup>17</sup> Medicine Wheel Project images provided by Lita Fontaine, [https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Medicine\\_Wheel\\_Project.pdf](https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Medicine_Wheel_Project.pdf)

# SEASONAL 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, interconnectedness and interconnectivity.

## LOOK

### Card 2. Kenojuak Ashevak, *Nunavut - Our Land*,

hand-coloured lithograph on paper, 230 x 370.5 cm (1992)

Which location in Canada is depicted in this artwork? [Nunavut, North] What types of 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. Example: The sun rises and sets, the water freezes and thaws.] Which colours did the artist use? Why? [Mostly blue to represent the cold, the water, the sky] Is there something peculiar about the shape of this artwork? 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 Cape Dorset (Nunavut), born on southern Baffin Island.
- Kenojuak Ashevak was featured in the NFB film *Eskimo Artist: Kenojuak*.<sup>18</sup>
- "The ecological calendar represented by up to thirteen lunar (moon) names was the dominant regulator of virtually all Inuit life."<sup>19</sup> Corresponding seasons include Early Spring, Spring, Summer, Early Autumn, Autumn, Early Winter, Winter. "Seasons in Nunavut correspond with the growth of the wildlife and plant life that the Inuit share the land with. Different ways of traveling the landscape,

hunting and creating shelter evolved as a result of their respect for, and close attention to, annual weather patterns."<sup>20</sup> "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."<sup>21</sup>

- 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 Ojibwe 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".<sup>22</sup> 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? [Stages of life: birth, youth, adult (or elder), death / Aspects of life: spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical / Elements of nature: fire (or sun), air, water and earth]

<sup>18</sup> *Eskimo Artist: Kenojuak* (19 min), National Film Board of Canada (1963).

<sup>19</sup> *Calendar of Inuit Seasons*, <https://www.tungasuvvingatinuit.ca>.

<sup>20</sup> Sara Smith, "A Plan for all Seasons" and "Inuit Year Infographic", *Travel Nunavut*.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Kikkert, "Nunavut", *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2007; latest edition 2016).

<sup>22</sup> "Ojibwe Learning Activities-Intermediate", *Four Directions Teachers Resource Kit*, <http://fourdirectionsteachings.com> (2006).

# SEASONAL PATTERNS AND THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

## RESPOND

- Create a circular artwork inspired by Ashevak's *Nunavut - Our Land*. Represent a location that is important to you: where you live, where your relatives live, where you have visited, where you would like to be. Print the template<sup>23</sup> 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. In the centre, draw the sun to the East and the moon to the West. Depict all four seasons starting with Spring in the East, where the sun rises. Continue with Summer to the South, Fall to the West and Winter to the North. Include changes in weather, water, land and sky. Add figures engaged in activities related to seasonal patterns. Trace your drawing's outlines in black ink or marker and fill them in with pencil crayon.
- Create a circular artwork representing 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] or any other cyclical pattern.
- Try safe and easy Kitchen Lithography<sup>24</sup> to understand the stone lithography process.



Kenojuak Ashevak | *Nunavut - Our Land*

<sup>23</sup> [resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Circular\\_Artwork\\_Template.pdf](https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Circular_Artwork_Template.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> "Lithographie maison-Kitchen Lithographie-Lithography", Emilie Aizier, YouTube channel (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? [The ocean] 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**<sup>25</sup> is an Inuit artist from Ottawa, born in Rigolet (Newfoundland).
- The artist profile<sup>26</sup> 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. As such, Inuit culture follows hunting protocols respecting that relationship, and the Inuit are strong advocates for the protection of northern lands and animals.<sup>27</sup> In different parts of the Arctic, Nuliajuk is known by other names, including Sedna.

- Pollution poses risks for the safety and health of both marine animals and humans. Study the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the largest offshore accumulation of ocean plastic in the world. These two videos are a good place to start: "How Much Plastic is in the Ocean?"<sup>28</sup> and "Plastic Ocean".<sup>29</sup>
- World Oceans Day is celebrated annually on June 8 to inform the public of the impact of human actions on the ocean and to call for better management of the oceans and their resources.

## WONDER

- In two columns, draw up a list of single-use plastic products [Cups, drinking straws, flip flops, plates, shopping bags, toys, utensils, water bottles] and a list of what you can do to reduce your plastic consumption by suggesting reusable and eco-friendly alternatives.
- Consult reference books to list all of the marine animals that call the ocean home. [Beluga whale, crab, clam, coral, cormorant, dolphin, fish, jellyfish, killer whale, lobster, octopus, oyster, pelican, penguin, seahorse, seagull, seal, shark, shrimp, starfish, squid, shell, sea urchin, narwhale, otter, sea anemone, sea turtle, sea lion, walrus]

## RESPOND

- 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?
- Create an artwork inspired by Campbell's *Nuliajuk in Mourning*. Choose a sea creature and depict how plastic pollution hurts the animal. Look at some examples<sup>30</sup> by other students.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.campbellart.ca>.

<sup>26</sup> "Heather Campbell \_ Artist Profile", Heather Igloliorte YouTube channel (2017).

<sup>27</sup> Peter Irniq, "The Story of Nuliajuk", Canadian Museum of History (no date).

<sup>28</sup> "How Much Plastic is in the Ocean?", Season 4, Episode 26 of It's OK to Be Smart (04:43), PBS (2017).

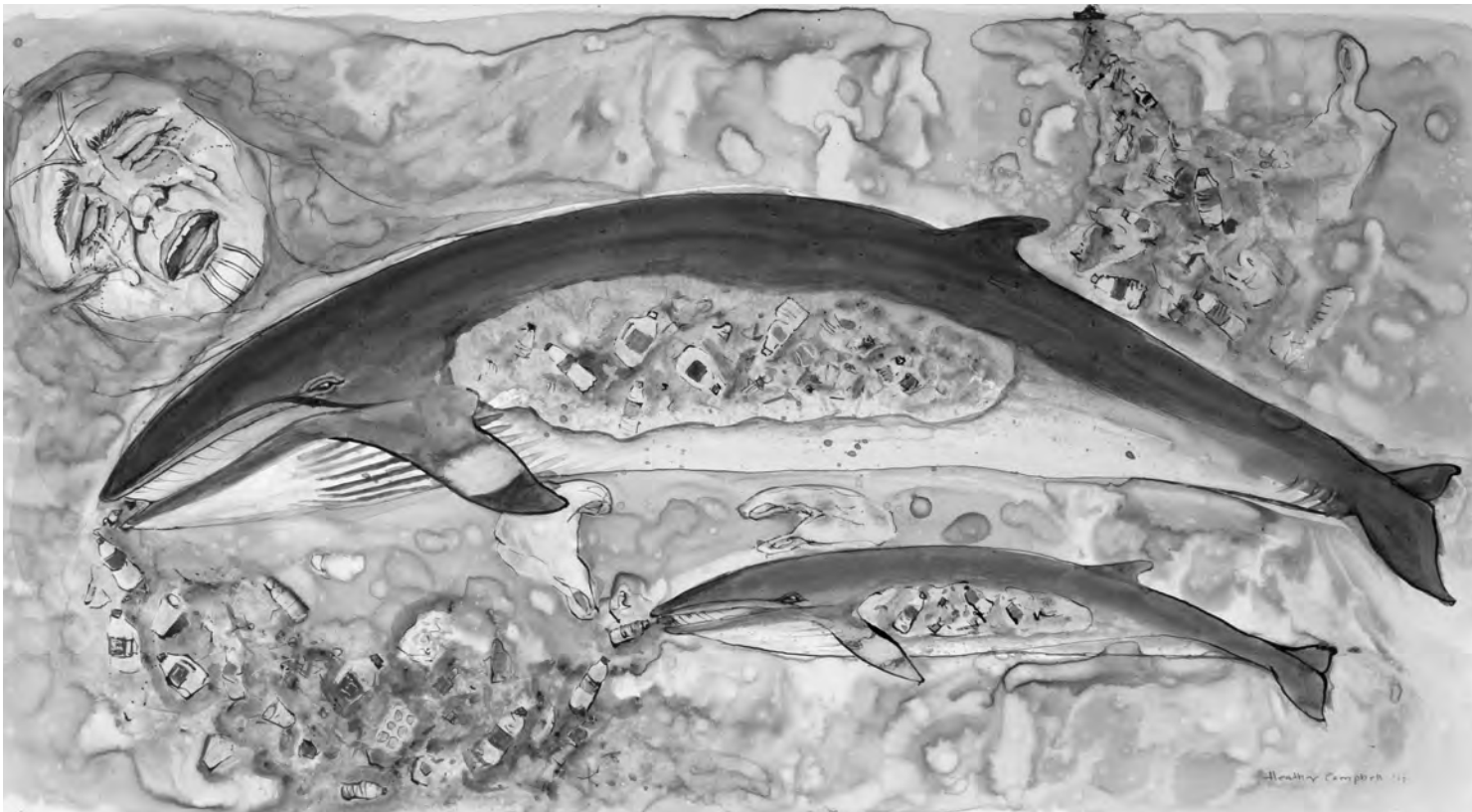
<sup>29</sup> "Plastic Ocean" (07:28), United Nations YouTube channel (2017).

<sup>30</sup> Gallery, Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Programs, <https://bowseat.org>.

## NULIAJUK IN MOURNING

Add Nuliajuk to the composition, making sure to capture her facial expressions. Outline the drawing with waterproof ink or a thin permanent marker. To mimic the artist's depiction of the flowing texture of the ocean, use alcohol inks, watercolours on mineral paper, the glossy side of poster board, or employ the wet on wet watercolour technique or the salt on watercolour technique.

- Recycle by creating a communal mosaic with collected bottle caps from milk and juice jugs.<sup>31</sup>
- 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".<sup>32</sup>



Heather Campbell  
*Nuliajuk in Mourning*

<sup>31</sup> Bottle Cap Mosaic, Project images provided by Lita Fontaine, [resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Bottle\\_Cap\\_Mosaic\\_Project.pdf](https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Bottle_Cap_Mosaic_Project.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> "We're Connected to the Ocean", Remy Rodden YouTube channel (2017).

# WAMPUM BELTS MARKING TREATIES

## LEARNING OUTCOME:

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

## 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? How was it made? What might it represent?

## KNOW

- **Vanessa Dion Fletcher**<sup>33</sup> is a Potawatomi and Lenape artist from Toronto/Lenapehoking (Ontario).
- *Relationship or Transaction* is a representation of the Covenant Chain<sup>34</sup> Wampum Belt presented by William Johnson, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to the assembled Nations at the conclusion of the Council of Niagara (1764), asserting their alliance through the symbol of a chain connecting First Nations and British houses.<sup>35</sup>
- 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.

- 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.
- Knowledge Keeper Maurice Switzer discusses the history and importance of treaty belts in the video “The Wampum Belt: A Nation to Nation Relationship”.<sup>36</sup>
- Works of children’s literature that explore treaties as subject matter include the *Treaty Tales Trilogy*,<sup>37</sup> the Kayak issue titled “We are all Treaty People”,<sup>38</sup> *Alex Shares his Wampum Belt*<sup>39</sup> and *Dakota Talks about Treaties*.<sup>40</sup>
- Episode 3 of *8th Fire*, “Whose land is it anyway?”,<sup>41</sup> introduces the importance of the Land in the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the rest of Canada.
- Treaty Days<sup>42</sup> are celebrated on different days throughout Canada, depending on the particular treaty that is being commemorated.

## WONDER

- Study the Treaty Map of Canada<sup>43</sup> or the online Native Land<sup>44</sup> search tool to determine treaty territories around the world. When is the treaty in your place of residence celebrated?
- What is the significance of the phrase “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]

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.dionfletcher.com>.

<sup>34</sup> Cornelius J. Jaenen, “Covenant Chain”, *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2006; latest edition 2016).

<sup>35</sup> Taylor MacLean, “Revisiting Promises of Friendship, Respect & Peace on the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Treaty of Niagara”, University of Toronto, Centre for Indigenous Studies (2014).

<sup>36</sup> Maurice Switzer in “The Wampum Belt: A Nation to Nation Relationship”, *Reconciliation Education YouTube channel* (2017).

<sup>37</sup> Betty Lynxleg, *The Handshake and the Pipe* (2014), *The Friendship* (2015), and *We Are All Treaty People* (2015), from the *Treaty Tales Trilogy*.

<sup>38</sup> “We are all Treaty People”, *Kayak: Canada’s History Magazine for Kids* (September 2018).

<sup>39</sup> Kelly Crawford, “Alex Shares his Wampum Belt” (2017), *GEDSB Indigenous Education YouTube channel* (2018).

<sup>40</sup> Kelly Crawford, *Dakota Talks about Treaties* (2017).

<sup>41</sup> “Whose land is it anyway?”, Episode 3 of *8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada & the Way Forward* (43:24), CBC (2013) in *Aboriginal Worldviews and Education*, University of Toronto. Available in DVD format at public libraries.

<sup>42</sup> René R. Gadacz, “Treaty Day”, *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2006; latest edition 2016).

<sup>43</sup> “Treaty Map of Canada”, *4 Seasons of Reconciliation*, <https://www.reconciliationeducation.ca>.

<sup>44</sup> <https://native-land.ca>.

# WAMPUM BELTS MARKING TREATIES

- “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.<sup>45</sup> What is the significance of these words? [Outline the time period that the treaties are to be honoured – forever; treaties were made with future generations in mind]
- Why do you think the artist made Wampum out of \$5 bills and \$5 bill replicas? [As a symbol of the colonial dimensions of Canadian society and the role of money in bypassing and dissolving nation-to-nation treaty relationships;<sup>46</sup> to emphasize the opposing understandings of treaty as building relationships between nations (preserving Indigenous lands and sovereignty) or as a transaction in power and monetary terms (securing of British territory);<sup>47</sup> and because every member of a Treaty First Nation can still receive \$5 per year, a payment promised to them in the treaties and not increased since 1875]

## RESPOND

- Design (and weave!) a Wampum Belt to represent the idea of sharing or a promise you have agreed to. Here are some suggestions to guide you in your creation:
- Measure and draw a grid for the basis of a Wampum Belt (or use this template)<sup>48</sup> and colour in your design with purple crayons (or markers) of varying shades.
- Design and create a collage Wampum by cutting and gluing small rectangular strips of white and purple paper or magazine images.

- Design and weave a giant Wampum Belt with rope and painted toilet paper rolls.
- Weave a virtual Wampum Belt<sup>49</sup> or design one using the Creative Mode in Minecraft.
- Design a repetitive pattern using the provided template<sup>50</sup> for pony beads. Try three ideas and pick your favourite.
- By hand, make white, purple and black tubular paper beads<sup>51</sup> to weave a Wampum design. This would probably require a whole class effort!
- Students in early years can “weave” using pony beads and pipe cleaners, as in this tutorial.<sup>52</sup>
- Students in middle and junior years can weave using pony beads and thread on a loom, as in this tutorial.<sup>53</sup>
- Students in junior or senior years can weave using perler beads and a handmade loom, as in this tutorial.<sup>54</sup>
- Write a paragraph or any type of poem expressing the symbolism of your design or the design of a particular Wampum Belt.
- Acknowledge the Indigenous Land we live on. In Winnipeg, your school is located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. The *Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples & Traditional Territory*<sup>55</sup> can help you formulate an acknowledgment statement.
- Research Wampum Belts to discover many other meaningful designs and symbols found in them.
- Attend or plan a Treaty Day celebration to commemorate the day that the treaty in your area was signed and to promote public awareness of Indigenous culture, history and heritage for all Canadians.

<sup>45</sup> The Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign, <http://honorthetworow.org>.

<sup>46</sup> Artist statement on the reverse of Card 20.

<sup>47</sup> Lisa Myers, “Land Use”, *Reading the Talk* (exhibition catalogue) (2014).

<sup>48</sup> [https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Wampum\\_Belt\\_Design\\_Template.pdf](https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Wampum_Belt_Design_Template.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> Weave A Virtual Wampum Belt, NativeTech: Native American Technology and Art, <http://nativetech.org>.

<sup>50</sup> [https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Pony\\_Bead\\_Design\\_Template.pdf](https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Pony_Bead_Design_Template.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> Rita Shehan, “A Guide to Making Paper Beads”, *The Spruce Crafts*, <https://www.thesprucecrafts.com>.

<sup>52</sup> “Wampum”, Sarah Cardullo YouTube channel (2013).

<sup>53</sup> “Wampum Belt” (Parts 1 to 6), Floretta Prestigiacomo YouTube channel (2015).

<sup>54</sup> “Wampum Belt perler Tutorial”, John Whitford YouTube channel (2017).

<sup>55</sup> *Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples & Traditional Territory*, Canadian Association of University Teachers, <https://www.caute.ca>.

# THE FLOWER BEADWORK PEOPLE

## LEARNING OUTCOME:

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

## 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**<sup>56</sup> 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."<sup>57</sup>
- The artist has developed a technique to transfer beadwork into painting; every dot represents a bead.

- Métis people were known as the "Flower Beadwork People" for their colourful trailing floral designs in glass seed beads on dark backgrounds. Patterns were influenced by the Ojibwe principle of representing four stages of the plant to include seeds, stems, leaves, buds and fruits or flowers. Beading patterns are symmetrical, sometimes divided into quadrants, to emphasize the importance of balance and harmony in nature and in life.
- Traditionally, beading was an intergenerational social activity. Women gathered to create and share skills. Sometimes, they would create pieces as gifts for family members, to strengthen and protect them.
- Beading and dot painting are meditative activities that encourage self-reflection.
- Plants and animals represent connections to Mother Earth. Plants are used in traditional ceremonies and as medicine. Learn more about Indigenous plants from the artist's perspective.<sup>58 59</sup>
- Learn more about the history of beadwork<sup>60 61</sup> and beading techniques.<sup>62 63</sup>

## WONDER

- Think of a particular person to commemorate, such as a family member, an important friend or yourself. List that person's gifts, qualities and role in your life. Correlate these to elements found in nature.
- Consult resources to learn about beading and how to bead, books or online tutorials such as the Two-Needle Métis Beading Tutorial with Jennine Krauchi.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>56</sup> <http://christibelcourt.com>.

<sup>57</sup> Excerpt from the artist statement on the reverse of Card 6.

<sup>58</sup> Christi Belcourt, *Medicines to Help Us: Traditional Métis Plant Use* (2007).

<sup>59</sup> Metis Artist Christi Belcourt Discusses Painting "My Heart is Beautiful", Christi Belcourt YouTube channel (2012).

<sup>60</sup> "The Flower Beadwork People" (4:41), Parks Canada YouTube channel (2016).

<sup>61</sup> "Our Shared Inheritance: Traditional Métis Beadwork" (47:52), (2002),

Gabriel Dumont Institute YouTube channel (2019).

<sup>62</sup> Gregory Scofield and Amy Briley, *wāpikwaniy: A Beginner's Guide to Métis Floral Beadwork* (2001).

<sup>63</sup> Beading 101 Techniques Series, Renee Bedard YouTube channel (2014).

<sup>64</sup> "Two-Needle Métis Beading Tutorial with Jennine Krauchi", MAWA (2017).



## RESPOND

- Draw symmetrical patterns.<sup>65 66</sup>
- Use templates<sup>67</sup> to familiarize participants with Métis beading designs and facilitate pattern development. Students can follow an outlined beading design, try to replicate a design or create their own.
- Work with sticker dots on black construction paper cut into rectangles, squares or circles.
- Practice dot painting by creating circular mandalas divided into a six-segment grid<sup>68</sup> on black cardboard or recycled CDs.<sup>69</sup> Dot paint on rocks or reclaimed wood.
- Work with painted dots on black-painted cardboard, canvas or wood panel. Use DIY Dotting Tools such as the ends of pens, pencils, paintbrushes or wooden skewers.
- Work with beading needles and seed beads on 4x4-inch felt squares or circles that can later be sewn onto clothing or bags.
- Organize a school beading group to meet on a weekly basis during lunch hour. All are welcome to join — teachers, parents, participants from any grade level.
- Build relationships while beading or dotting: collaborate, engage in conversation, share personal stories.



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

<sup>65</sup> "Drawing a Symmetrical Butterfly", Pamela Smader YouTube channel (2016).

<sup>66</sup> Brenda Hoddinott, "Shortcut for Drawing with Symmetry", <https://www.drawspace.com>.

<sup>67</sup> Dylan Miner, *Métis and Anishinaabe Beading Templates Vol. 1* (2018), <https://www.academia.edu>.

<sup>68</sup> "How to paint dot mandalas with Kristin Uhrig #6- Peacock design", Kristin Uhrig YouTube channel (2017).

<sup>69</sup> Dot Painting Project images provided by Lita Fontaine, [https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Dot\\_Painting\\_Project.pdf](https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Dot_Painting_Project.pdf).

# INDIGENOUS IN THE CITY

## LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will consider the traditional 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*,**  
photograph, variable dimensions (2017)

**Card 35. Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter, *(That's A-Mori)*,**  
photograph, variable dimensions (2016)

**Card 38. Jeneen Frei Njootli, *White Swan*,**  
photograph, 28 x 43.5 cm (2013)

**Card 39. Nigít'stil Norbert, *Reflect (series of 9)*,**  
35mm film (2009)

**Card 45. Pitaloosie Saila, *Strange Ladies*,**  
lithograph on paper, 38.2 x 57 cm (2006)

Without reading the artist statements, try to identify 5 artworks that explore the theme of urban Indigeneity. Try to determine the message the artist wishes to convey in each of these artworks. Now read the corresponding artist statements. Were you correct? Make a list of nouns and adjectives, verbs and adverbs that are used in the artist statements associated with each of the above artworks.

## KNOW

- The term “urban Indigenous Peoples” refers primarily to First Nation, Inuit and Métis individuals currently residing in urban areas.
- Use the Treaty Map of Canada<sup>70</sup> or the online Native Land<sup>71</sup> search tool to determine the treaty or territories where your city (or any city!) is located.

- In 2016, almost 900,000 Indigenous people lived in urban areas. That is more than half of all Indigenous people in Canada. The largest urban Indigenous populations are in Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto. Many Indigenous people move to cities for family, opportunities for education and work, and the services available. Some have lived in cities for generations, while for others the transition from rural areas or reserves is still very new. Some live temporarily in cities, because of fire and floods, a need to access health services or other circumstances.
- All Canadian cities are located on traditional territories of Indigenous Nations, and Indigenous people are creating Indigenous spaces within them. Most urban Indigenous Peoples consider the city they live in to be their “home”. However, many retain their traditional and contemporary Indigenous culture through connections with a community of origin, whether it be their own or that of their parents/grandparents.<sup>72 73</sup>
- The documentary *No Address* features Indigenous people who come to Montreal seeking jobs and a better life, and in doing so are dislocated from their traditional values and communities, torn between staying and returning home.<sup>74</sup>
- Tasha Spillet's graphic novel *Surviving the City* tells a story of kinship, resilience, cultural resurgence and the anguish of a missing loved one.<sup>75</sup>
- Episode 1 of *8th Fire*, “Indigenous in the City”,<sup>76</sup> 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.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>70</sup> “Treaty Map of Canada”, 4 Seasons Reconciliation, <https://www.reconciliationeducation.ca>.

<sup>71</sup> <https://native-land.ca>.

<sup>72</sup> Kory Wilson, *Pulling Together: A guide for Indigenization of post-secondary institutions* (no date).

<sup>73</sup> Environics Institute, *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study - Main Report* (2010).

<sup>74</sup> Alanis Obomsawin, “No Address” (56 min), National Film Board of Canada (1988).

<sup>75</sup> Tasha Spillet, *Surviving the City* Vol. 1, Highwater Press (2018).

<sup>76</sup> “Indigenous in the City”, Episode 1 of *8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada & the Way Forward* (43:24), CBC (2013) in *Aboriginal Worldviews and Education*, University of Toronto. Available in DVD format at public libraries.

<sup>77</sup> Liz Przybylski, “Indigenous Survivance and Urban Musical Practice”, *Revue de recherche en civilisation américaine* (2015).

Notable artists include: A Tribe Called Red, *Electric Pow Wow Drum*; Buffy Sainte-Marie and Tanya Tagaq, *You Got To Run (Spirit Of The Wind)*; Dioganhdi, *Native New Yorker*; Drezus, *Get Up!*; Eekwol and TRhyme, *For Women By Women*; Inez Jasper, *Dancin' on the Run*; Iskwé, *The Unforgotten*; JB the First Lady, *Still Here*; and TRhyme, *Kill H.E.R.*<sup>78</sup>

## WONDER

- Consult the 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?
- 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 is the Indigenous population in the province and city you live in (according to the census for Aboriginal identity population)?<sup>79</sup> In your school? In your school division?
- What and where are the Indigenous spaces of the urban landscape near you? [Winnipeg: Circle of Life Thunderbird House; Nine Circles Community Health Centre's "circle room"; Oodena Celebration Circle; Red River College's sweat lodge; Selkirk Avenue's Bell Tower, etc.]

## RESPOND

- Use photography, photo editing software or collage to create a self-portrait, a visual representation of yourself in an unfamiliar landscape. Your image should depict how you feel in this place, your perception of this place or the way in which you cope in this place.
- Write the lyrics to a hip hop song that expresses coping with unfamiliarity from your perspective.
- Join a youth movement such as AYO!<sup>80</sup> or attend their Friday night Meet Me @ the Bell Tower gatherings.<sup>81</sup>
- Volunteer at a local organization dedicated to helping at-risk youth, such as Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc. (Ndinawe) in Winnipeg.
- Interview an urban Indigenous person (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. What opportunities and challenges does living in the city present? What is their community of origin? What do they do to retain their traditional culture?

<sup>78</sup> Do an Internet search on the artists and titles to see these music videos.

<sup>79</sup> Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Peoples Highlight Tables, 2016 Census*.

<sup>80</sup> *Aboriginal Youth Opportunities*, <https://www.ayomovement.com>.

<sup>81</sup> *Meet Me @ the Bell Tower - Stop The Violence Facebook Page*.

# INDIGENOUS RESILIENCE

## 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)**

- Describe the style of this artwork as it relates to the elements of art. [Interweaving ovoid shapes, flattened perspective, undulating lines, bold outlines, solid colour, abstract figuration, organic shapes, balanced compositions]
- What do you see? People? [Indigenous figures, two Indigenous figures drumming, Indigenous Elders, European explorer, European settlers, European nun wearing black robe] Things? [Boat, buildings, fallen cross, book, torn drums, empty glass bottle] Indigenous symbolism? [Sacred drums, two Thunderbirds, earth, water, wind, serpent, eye of Mother Earth] What is happening? [Protection, strength, cultural tradition, arrival, change, devastation, destruction, illness, death, struggle, freedom, rejuvenation, hope]
- How many parts are there to the story being told in this artwork? [1. intact Indigenous culture, 2. arrival of a European sailing ship, 3. destruction of the culture and impoverishment of the Indigenous people, 4. rekindling of the culture and reappearance of the protective thunderbird]<sup>82</sup>

## KNOW

- **Daphne Odjig**<sup>83</sup> (1919-2016) was an Anishinaabe (Odawa-Potawatomi) artist from the Wiikwemkoong Reserve on Manitoulin Island (Ontario).
- Daphne Odjig's unique style is a melding of both the Indigenous aesthetics of the Woodlands School,<sup>84</sup> depicting Indigenous stories and teachings using contemporary mediums, and European genres such as abstraction, cubism, expressionism and surrealism.

- Daphne Odjig co-founded Professional Native Indian Artists Inc., a.k.a. The Indigenous Group of Seven.<sup>85</sup> Because of this, she is often referred to as the grandmother of contemporary Indigenous art.
- The Indigenous Group of Seven organized exhibitions across Canada to challenge the barriers Indigenous artists faced in the Canadian art establishment. At that time, Indigenous art was often not seen as fine art, but as handicraft or artifact.<sup>86</sup>
- *The Indian in Transition* represents the experience of Canada's Indigenous Peoples from pre-contact to the present.<sup>87</sup> It "takes the viewer on an historical odyssey from a time before the arrival of Europeans through the devastation and destruction of Aboriginal cultures to an expression of rejuvenation and hope. Odjig's story unfolds with the figure on the left playing the drum, which symbolizes strong Aboriginal cultural traditions, while overhead is a protective Thunderbird. Then, a boat arrives filled with pale-skinned people. The boat's bow becomes a serpent, a bad omen in Anishinaabe mythology. Next, Odjig depicts Aboriginal people trapped in a vortex of political, social, economic and cultural change. Four ethereal figures rise above the fallen cross and broken drums against a symbol of bureaucratic authority. To the right, a figure struggles free, sheltering the sacred drum, under the protection of the Thunderbird and the maternal eye of Mother Earth at the upper left of the painting. Odjig ends the story as it began, with a message of mutual understanding and hope for the future."<sup>88</sup>
- The artwork portrays Canada from an Aboriginal perspective.<sup>89</sup> The spoken word piece by Rebecca Thomas, *Canada: A Creation Story*,<sup>90</sup> also looks at Canadian history from an Indigenous point of view.
- This painting was commissioned by what is now the Canadian Museum of History, where it remains.
- In 2002 and 2011, Art Canada postage stamps featured artworks by Daphne Odjig to commemorate her accomplishments and reflect the country's national identity.

<sup>85</sup> Erica Commanda, "The Indigenous Group of Seven", <http://muskratmagazine.com> (2015).

<sup>86</sup> Bonnie Devine, "Daphne Odjig: 1919-2016", *Canadian Art* (2016).

<sup>87</sup> Paul Gessell, "Mourning Daphne Odjig, dead at 97", *Galleries West* (2016).

<sup>88</sup> Media Relations - Canadian Museum of History, "Daphne Odjig's masterpiece adorns the walls of the Museum", (2014).

<sup>89</sup> Jann L.M. Bailey, "Daphne Odjig", *Horizons* (2011).

<sup>90</sup> Rebecca Thomas, "Canada: A Creation Story", *The Walrus* YouTube channel (2017).

<sup>82</sup> Judy Stoffman, "Aboriginal modernist painter Daphne Odjig led Indian Group of Seven", *Globe and Mail* (2018).

<sup>83</sup> Joan M. Vastokas, "Contemporary Indigenous Art in Canada", *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2013; latest edition 2016).

<sup>84</sup> Joan M. Vastokas, "Contemporary Indigenous Art in Canada", *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2013; latest edition 2016).

- Daphne Odjig was featured in the NFB film *The Colours of Pride*.<sup>91</sup>
- “Daphne Odjig Artist at the McMichael” features the artist herself speaking about her wide range of work and her history as an artist.<sup>92</sup>
- “Most often, resilience is narrowly defined in the dictionary as the ability to recover from and cope with adversity. Within the Indigenous discourse, resilience usually refers to the ability of Indigenous people to overcome the adversarial and enduring impacts of colonialism.... 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.”<sup>93</sup>
- In the context of these art cards, resilience signifies strength and focus in the face of racism and sexism.<sup>94</sup>
- National Indigenous Peoples Day is celebrated annually on June 21, the summer solstice, to celebrate the cultural diversity of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis 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.”<sup>95</sup> 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?
- Can you find examples of how traditional European painting influenced some of Daphne Odjig’s other artworks? Look online and in art books.
- Seek out artworks by Daphne Odjig in your local galleries and museums. In Winnipeg, you can visit the mural titled *The Creation of the World* (1972) at the Manitoba Museum, and the Winnipeg

Art Gallery’s Art Search<sup>96</sup> database identifies several of her artworks belonging to their collection.

- 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.

## RESPOND

- Create a long, 4-part artwork in Woodlands style (or any another style!) that depicts your personal experience in overcoming a challenge. It should begin to the left with a scene of living in safety, then the particular element that brought pain, followed by the consequences of this change and ending to the right with the overcoming of adversity and a renewed sense of hope.
- Create a postage stamp by drawing on a template<sup>97</sup> or download a free postage stamp template to work with in photo editing software. Insert your artwork into the stamp. Have your stamp design printed as an actual postage stamp through Canada Post.<sup>98</sup>
- Write a slam poetry or spoken word piece expressing a personal story/struggle with sincere emotion, power and intensity. Find a way to share it (presentation, audiovisual recording, vlog).
- Attend Indigenous gatherings, events and celebrations near you. For example, Winnipeg annually hosts The Manito Ahbee Festival<sup>99</sup> and Indigenous Day Live,<sup>100</sup> both of which celebrate Indigenous arts, culture and music.
- Plan a school event to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Henning Jacobsen, “The Colours of Pride” (27 min), National Film Board of Canada (1973).

<sup>92</sup> “Daphne Odjig Artist at the McMichael”, Canada Art Channel YouTube channel (2008).

<sup>93</sup> Lee-Ann Martin and Shawna Dempsey, *Resilience, The National Billboard Exhibition Project - Introduction* (2018).

<sup>94</sup> Lee-Ann Martin, *The Resilient Body* (2018), <https://resilienceproject.ca/en/index.php?p=essay>.

<sup>95</sup> Meagan Campbell, “We want the biggest damned painting you can do”: Daphne Odjig, celebrated Aboriginal painter, on her epic masterpiece”, *Maclean’s* (2014).

<sup>96</sup> Winnipeg Art Gallery Collections, Art Search database, <https://www.wag.ca/art/art-search>.

<sup>97</sup> [https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Postage\\_Stamp\\_Template.pdf](https://resilienceproject.ca/pdf/Postage_Stamp_Template.pdf).

<sup>98</sup> Create custom stamps, <https://www.canadapost.ca/cpc/en/home.page>.

<sup>99</sup> <http://manitoahbee.com>.

<sup>100</sup> <https://indigenousdaylive.ca>.

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/indigenous-peoples-day.html>.



# INDIGENOUS ART AND ACTIVISM

## LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will understand the ways in which art can perform political and cultural functions, including bringing public awareness to 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

- Art can perform social, political and/or cultural functions. In the case of Indigenous art, it is often all three.<sup>102</sup> Some artworks bring awareness to Indigenous issues through process, context, product or interpretation. They can engage the general public with an idea, be used as a teaching tool or an in-depth conversation starter.
- Examples of “art as activism” occurred during the 2018 celebrations of our nation’s 150<sup>th</sup> 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. Métis artist Christi Belcourt led the #Resistance150<sup>103</sup> project as a prominent voice of protest. Many other 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.<sup>104</sup>

- Christi Belcourt is also active in protests protecting water, and some of the images created by her collective are featured in this photograph by Lita Fontaine.<sup>105</sup>
- *Resilience* curator Lee-Ann Martin’s lecture<sup>106</sup> presents the work of three female artists, including Daphne Odjig, and discusses the ways in which they challenged art movements and society at large.
- Youth activism is youth engagement in community organizing for social change.<sup>107</sup> Autumn Pelletier<sup>108</sup> is a young Water Protector from Wiikwemkoong First Nation, the same community Daphne Odjig came from, who draws attention to our most sacred resource — the water we drink.
- Teachers can use youth literature such as *The Water Walker*<sup>109</sup> (with accompanying Teacher Guide) and *Missing Nimâmâ*<sup>110</sup> to introduce Indigenous stories and concerns to their classes.
- World Water Day is celebrated annually on March 22 to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.

## WONDER

- What is the significance of “Water is life”? Why is water so important? [The future of humanity depends on the water’s health]
- What other *Resilience* artworks explore the theme of water? [Cards 3, 10, 18, 33, 38, 39, 50]
- Each *Resilience* artwork can be interpreted in terms of art as activism. Select any art card and try to determine which issue the artist may intend to promote awareness of.
- What other Indigenous campaigns exist besides Water is Life? What do they advocate for? Why is there a need for advocacy on these issues? [End the Gap, I am a Witness, Idle No More, Jordan’s Principle, Legacy of Hope, Moose Hide, No More Stolen]

<sup>102</sup> Jasmeen Siddiqui, “Necessary Affairs: Exploring the Relationship Between Indigenous Art and Activism”, Western University Undergraduate Awards (2017).

<sup>103</sup> <https://twitter.com/Resistance150>.

<sup>104</sup> Michelle Cyca, “Resistance 150: Indigenous artists challenge Canadians to reckon with our history”, Chatelaine (2017).

<sup>105</sup> Sakihitowin Awasis, “Keep It in the Ground!”, Canadian Art (2017).

<sup>106</sup> Lee-Ann Martin, “Intersecting Practices of Art and Activism”, Wendy Wersch Memorial Lecture (2011).

<sup>107</sup> “Youth Activism”, <https://www.wikipedia.org>.

<sup>108</sup> CBC News, “The teen fighting to protect Canada’s water - meet Autumn Peltier” (7:41), “The National” video (2018).

<sup>109</sup> Joanne Robertson, *The Water Walker* (2017) / Laura Horton *The Water Walker Teacher Guide*.

<sup>110</sup> Melanie Florence, *Missing Nimâmâ* (2015).

Sisters, Orange Shirt Day, Shannen's Dream, We are all Treaty People, We Stand Together, We Matter]

- Are there issues or social injustices you are concerned about? Movements you are connected to? Are there campaigns in place to address them? Are you aware of a campaign from the past that has helped redress an inequality or issue and has positively affected our current existence? Can you find any Indigenous or non-Indigenous artists whose artwork brought or brings awareness to these concerns?

## RESPOND

- Answer one of the 94 Calls to Action<sup>111</sup> listed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. What will you do to effect change?
- Create a visual art project in any medium that brings awareness to an issue or social injustice that is important to you.
- Write or video a Letter to Canada<sup>112</sup> expressing a particular inequality or environmental issue you are concerned about and explaining why it is important.
- Join a local protest or commemorative march.
- Lead change within your own community. Assemble a school committee to bring awareness to an issue. Example: For National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (May 5) wear anything red, paste a red paper cutout dress on your classroom door, plant a cardboard heart-shaped drawing representing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG2S+) on a wooden skewer in your school yard, a local park, or at the legislative building, an Indigenous site or memorial sculpture.



Lita Fontaine | Mni Wiconi – Water is Sacred

<sup>111</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015).

<sup>112</sup> "Letters to Canada", Incaringociety YouTube channel (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 picture? [A sealift (crane-bearing cargo ship) has arrived to make an annual delivery of supplies to a remote Arctic community; people are unloading cargo] Describe all of the things you see. Is this a painting, drawing, or something else? [Lithography is a printmaking method based on the principle that oil and water do not mix]

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

Describe the woman you see in the photograph. What do you notice about her? What words would you use to describe her? What significance does the colour red have, in different communities and cultures? [In Western cultures, it can symbolize love, passion, danger; in Asia, luck, prosperity, happiness and long life; in contemporary Indigenous cultures, a red dress signifies missing and murdered women and girls] How are rocks connected to Indigenous traditions? [Rocks are sometimes called “grandfathers” because they are old and have many stories to tell; studying rocks provides valuable lessons from the earth; rocks are sometimes used to mark sites for celebrations]<sup>113</sup> What is a petroform? [Shapes and patterns made by humans with large rocks]<sup>114</sup> What is a rite of passage ceremony? [A ritual, event, or experience that marks or constitutes a major milestone or change in a person’s life]<sup>115</sup>

## KNOW

- In Ashoona and Blondeau’s work, both women find inspiration for their artwork in significant events that had an impact on their respective communities.
- **Shuvinai Ashoona** is one of the first Inuit artists to exhibit as a contemporary artist, both in Canada and internationally. She was born in 1961 in Cape Dorset (more recently referred to by its original name, Kinngait). Ashoona’s community received annual deliveries of food and supplies by sealift. The *Nascopie*, which served for many years as a supply ship to the Hudson’s Bay Company’s northern outposts, delivered food, clothing, and other necessary supplies to Cape Dorset. On September 25th, 1947, the ship struck a reef in a storm, broke in half, and the bow slid beneath the water. The sinking of the *Nascopie* figures in the work of many artists from the region. Although Shuvinai Ashoona had not yet been born when the *Nascopie* sank in 1947, she would have heard the story from the elders. In her print, she imagines a large ship docked near her community. The work highlights Shuvinai’s tendency to take references from different eras and place them together, fusing the past, the present and the uncertain future in an imaginative context that also draws on memory and real life.<sup>116</sup>
- **Lori Blondeau** created a series of photographs to celebrate and pay homage to ancient sites that were significant to Indigenous Peoples from the Plains for ceremonies, battles and histories. Mistaseni (from Cree, “big rock”) was a 400-tonne sacred boulder in Saskatchewan that marked an important Indigenous gathering place. In the 1960s two dams were built: one joined the Qu’Appelle and Saskatchewan rivers, and the other was built across the South Saskatchewan River Valley. Water that had flowed freely for thousands of years was to be used for irrigation and to produce electrical power. The Government of Saskatchewan dynamited the

<sup>113</sup> “EARTHwise”, Kid’s ROCK!, Manitoba Rocks!,  
<https://www.manitoba.ca/iem/min-ed/kidsrock/earthwise/index.html>.

<sup>114</sup> “Petroform”, <https://www.wikipedia.org>.

<sup>115</sup> “Rite of passage”, <https://www.merriam-webster.com>.

<sup>116</sup> Nancy G. Campbell, *Shuvinai Ashoona: Life & Work* (2017).

rock in 1966 to make room for a man-made lake. The remaining rock has been completely covered by the water of the newly formed reservoir.

- *Asiniy Iskwew* is Cree for “Rock Woman”. Blondeau herself stands in the photo atop a pile of rocks, proud and resilient.

### WONDER

- Can you think of any significant events that have affected your family or community? Have any of these events happened in your lifetime? What happened? Can you find more information about the significant moments that led up to the event, and what has happened since? Have any of these events affected someone you know, or a community or cultural group with which you identify? How did the community respond? Were different people affected in different ways? Discuss the event(s) and the community’s response to the events(s) in groups, with your classmates, your teacher and community members.

### RESPOND

- Create an artwork inspired by a significant event that made an impact on your school community, city, country or cultural community. Think about ways to respond to this event through art: Do you want to represent the event differently than the way it happened in real life (like Ashoona)? Do you want to tell your audience about how the community was affected? Do you want to create a response that shows how your community plans to move forward (like Blondeau)?



Lori Blondeau  
*Asiniy Iskwew*



Shuvina Ashoona  
*Summer Sealift*

# LOOKING IN / LOOKING OUT: PORTRAITURE

## 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

- Portraits are depictions or representations of a person (or a group of people).
- Self-portraits are depictions or representations that artists create of themselves. In this case, the artist becomes both the subject and the object of the artwork.
- 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.
- Portraits tell us something new or important about the sitter — their lifestyle, where they live, what they enjoy, how they are feeling.
- Portraits can be about more than the person depicted and convey a larger message or meaning. Artists send us a message about the person in the portrait and, in doing so, express their own ideas.
- Portraiture can take on 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 herself
- *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 comes to mind when you think of the word “portrait”? Create a word web.
- What different ways are there to create a portrait? What does it mean to “portray” someone? What might a portrait share or reveal about a person?
- How do different mediums and techniques inform the meaning of a portrait?
- Does a portrait always have to show the sitter’s face? How could you create a “portrait” without showing the sitter at all?
- What can you learn about a person by looking at their portrait? In what ways can the setting of a portrait affect how you understand the sitter?
- Look at examples of other portraits from visual culture (contemporary culture) and from history. How has portraiture changed over the past few hundred years?



# LOOKING IN / LOOKING OUT: PORTRAITURE

- Who creates portraits? Does it matter who creates the portrait or how well they know/understand the sitter?
- Can you think of any examples of portraits you have seen in everyday life, in art, poetry, movies, visual culture? [Dollar bills and coins, documentaries, artworks, school photos, selfies, etc.]

## RESPOND

- Look at KC Adams' portrait work called *Perception: Leona Star* [Card 1]. In this work she uses text to accompany the photographs she took of Leona Star. What does the title *Perception* mean? Why do you think she chose that title? Have you been in a situation when someone had an incorrect perception of you? Did it bother you? What did you do about it?
- Look at the untitled portrait by Jaime Black [Card 8]. Read the poem that accompanies the artwork, and think about the following questions: Could this be considered a portrait? Why or why not? What is happening in this photo? What is different about this portrait when compared with most portraits we see? Do you think this is a portrait of someone Jaime Black knows, or is it a self-portrait? Who is the "she" that is referred to in the poem? Why is the person in the portrait wearing red? Does that colour have any significance? Based on both the photograph and the poem, how do you think the sitter feels? How does this portrait make you feel?
- Think of someone you find interesting. This can be a friend, family member, member of your community, or even a famous person. Create a portrait of that person that tells the audience something about them. If the person is visible in the portrait, how much of them will we see? How might you represent them (consider their size in relation to the frame, facial expression, pose/gesture, clothing, background, surrounding objects, etc.)? What might you include in the portrait? What might you intentionally leave out? What would you like to show, beyond the person's likeness?
- Develop a portrait of yourself or someone else that doesn't rely on representing the physical form. Think about ideas for conceptual portraits. How can you represent a person without using their physical appearance/body? What images, objects, metaphors, etc. could you use to represent what you know about someone or to represent yourself?
- Make a statement with a portrait. How can you use a portrait or self-portrait to call attention to an important issue you care about? [See Cards 28, 50]



Meryl McMaster | *Dream Catcher* (detail)

# HISTORY / HERSTORY: THE ARTISTS OF RESILIENCE

## 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 visual culture and historical and contemporary artworks to question who creates and controls images and how these images affect our understanding of reality.<sup>117</sup> 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.”<sup>118</sup>

## 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

- Contemporary art may cross over classical boundaries. Artists today can create art in any material or medium, many of which may not fit the more traditional notions of art (painting, sculpture, printmaking, etc.). Artists draw inspiration from any time and place. They use a multitude of strategies and processes to create art, responding to their own experiences and questions they have about the world.
- Artists most often do not work in isolation, but instead meet, talk, work and play together. They collaborate and share ideas. They recontextualize, layer and juxtapose imagery from different times and places. Their work reflects a hybridity of media, of cultures, of thoughts and traditions. They can use unconventional materials and imagery, and challenge stereotypes.

## WONDER

- Before you saw these *Resilience* images, did you know the names of women artists? Indigenous artists? If not, why not? [Most books written about artists feature white male artists]
- Can an artwork be a statement? A conversation? What role does provocation play in artmaking?
- How can art challenge and change the way we view our societies and cultures?
- How can viewing and engaging with artworks and artists help you to 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 her life and works.
- Look at the following paintings: Edmund Morris’s *Indian Teepees* (1908), Frederick A. Verner’s multiple works entitled *Indian Encampment* (1870-1919) and Cornelius Krieghoff’s *Indian Family in the Forest* (1851). What do these three paintings have in common? What are some words you might use to describe these artworks? From whose point of view are we seeing these scenes? What might these scenes look like from the perspective of the people depicted in them? Who creates and controls images of Indigeneity? How do these images get shared? How do the images you have seen in visual culture / pop culture differ from the artworks of the *Resilience* project? Which images do you feel are more valuable? More common? More truthful?
- Have you ever heard of the term “othering” or “otherness”? Research this word. Have you ever had an experience with “otherness” or being “othered”? Why do you think this happens? Write a poem or song, or create an original artwork as a response to or about your experience.

<sup>117</sup>Olivia Gude, “Postmodern Principles - In Search of 21st Century Art Education” (*Gazing*), *Art Education* (2004).

<sup>118</sup>Olivia Gude, “Postmodern Principles - In Search of 21st Century Art Education” (*Representin’*), *Art Education* (2004).

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, virtual exhibitions and independent creations.

## ARTWORK ANALYSIS

Select an artwork that you feel connected to or that you would like to understand better. Consult the printable handout *How to analyze an artwork*,<sup>119</sup> questions for high school participants that can be simplified for elementary students. Artwork analysis focuses on:

- FORM: medium / line / colour / texture / shape and form / size / composition (HOW?)
- CONTENT: subject matter / genre / theme / issue / narrative / story / idea / figures / details / motif / movement / symbolism (WHAT?)
- CONTEXT: time / place / community / attitude / society / politics (WHEN? WHERE? WHO? WHY?)

## THE FELDMAN MODEL OF ART CRITICISM<sup>120</sup>

The four-step Feldman Model can be used to study, analyze and write critically about what we see. It begins with an examination of an artwork's formal properties, moves into analysis of purposeful design (how artists make purposeful choices about how their works are composed) and interpretation (looking for the artist's intention and what might be communicated in the work), and concludes with judgement (deciding to what degree the artwork is successful). The steps are as follows and can be discussed as a whole class or in small groups, or be written about individually.

### 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<sup>121</sup> can be helpful in discussing:

- Formal elements of design (line, shape, form, colour, value, texture and space). For example, "The whole artwork is made up of different shades of blue, with only little bits of white and yellow. The artwork has a circular shape." [Card 2]
- Medium and technique (tools, materials and methods the artist used to make the artwork).
- Subject matter (things, people, places in the artwork). For example, "In this photograph, I see a woman standing in a forest, wearing red fabric. Almost everything around her is green. She is in the centre of the picture, and it looks like she is dancing because the fabric is blurry and looks like it is moving." [Card 8]

**Guides for describing visual elements:** Describe the artwork as if you are telling someone in another room what you are looking at. What do you notice in the artwork? Do you see any recognizable images? What colours has the artist chosen to use? Shapes? What stands out the most? How do you think this artwork was made?

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

Describe the relationship of elements in the artwork, and how the artist made use of:

- the principles of design (balance, contrast, movement, rhythm/pattern, proportion, unity, and variety)
- other formal considerations, such as exaggeration, perspective, juxtaposition, etc.

<sup>119</sup> "How to Analyze an Artwork: A Step-by-Step Guide", <https://www.studentartguide.com>.

<sup>120</sup> Edmund Burke Feldman, *Varieties of Visual Experience* (1972).

<sup>121</sup> "What is VTS", Castellani Art Museum.

# PATHWAYS TO UNDERSTANDING

**Guides for analysis:** How is this work constructed or planned?  
How does the artist draw your attention to the area of emphasis?  
What are the relationships between the elements of the artwork?  
How does the use of colour affect the tone of this artwork?

## 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 she 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.

## CURATORIAL RESEARCH

A curator is the person who selects and interprets works of art for an exhibition. Select and organize artwork for an imaginary 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
- a cross-cultural exchange
- an illustration of a theme or issue

Make artwork selections based on the message you are trying to convey to the audience. Find a punchy exhibition title. Write a curatorial statement.<sup>122</sup> Design an exhibition foldout complete with text, artist bios, images and descriptions of the artwork.

## 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 her and her artwork.

- Introduce the artist: Find a picture of the artist. When and where was she born? Is she still living?
- What happened in history during her lifetime? News? Politics? What were some major events during her lifetime? Did these influence her artwork? In what ways is the artwork a reflection of society or a product of its time?
- Find more examples of her artwork (image, title, date, medium) from a particular period, or a series of artworks spanning different stages of her 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 her point of view (elements of design, media, technique, subject matter, etc.).
- How do you feel about her artwork and why? Elaborate with details.
- Research other interesting facts about her.

## 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 Nulijuk (also known as Sedna), Nuljuk Night, the origins of Métis beadwork, etc.

## ARTISTIC RESPONSE

Choose an artwork from the card collection and respond to it by making an artwork of your own. Do not imitate, but create something from your own heart and experience. Be inspired by the artists, but do not take from them. For many years Indigenous artists have had their techniques,

images, experiences and mythologies used without permission or in disrespectful and thoughtless ways by non-Indigenous artists. Cultural appropriation is not acceptable. Indigenous Arts Protocols<sup>123</sup> must be respected. Note that 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.<sup>124</sup> [See Card 19. Rosalie Favell, *I awoke to find my spirit had returned.*]

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

**Card 50. Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, *Naw Jaada / Octopus Woman***  
[Create a paper or photoshop collage.]

**Card 4. Rebecca Gloria-Jean Baird, *Biskaabiiyang –returning to ourselves***  
[Use words in the creation of your art.]

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

**Card 9. Lori Blondeau, *Asiniy Iskwew***  
[Photograph yourself in an environment in which you feel powerful.]

**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.]

**Card 43. Sherry Farrell Racette, *Ancestral Women Taking Back Their Dresses* / Card 47. Skawennati, *Jingle Dancers Assembled***  
[Learn about skirt teachings<sup>125</sup> and sew a ribbon skirt,<sup>126</sup> with applique.<sup>127</sup>]

<sup>123</sup> "Indigenous Arts Protocols", Ontario Arts Council YouTube channel (2016).

<sup>124</sup> "Appropriation (art)", <https://www.wikipedia.org>.

<sup>125</sup> CBC Radio, "Skirt Teachings with Myra Laramee" Unreserved's Tuesday Teaching, <https://www.facebook.com/cbc/>.

<sup>126</sup> "Ribbon Skirt Tutorial With Billie Jo Kruger", Mountain Soul Studios YouTube channel (2018).

<sup>127</sup> "Ribbon Skirt Applique Tutorial with Billie Jo Kruger", Mountain Soul Studios YouTube channel (2018).



## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Engaging in classroom discussions surrounding Indigenous cultures, histories or contemporary realities can be challenging. Some topics can trigger strong emotional reactions in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students because everyone is affected by colonization. However, for many Indigenous students and teachers, these topics can be particularly difficult as they have affected their families or them personally. The teacher's role is to facilitate a meaningful experience by acknowledging emotions and encouraging students to speak only from their own experience.

### INVITING AN INDIGENOUS GUEST

Some school divisions have Indigenous Elders or Knowledge Keepers, but teachers can also request the assistance of a local Elder, Knowledge Keeper or community member by inviting them to speak to certain topics, participate in discussions and answer questions. Listening to someone with first-hand, lived experience and knowledge leads to powerful learning. Remember that Indigenous students should not be expected to educate the teacher or their peers. Make an offering of a gift to the guest in acknowledgement and in exchange for the knowledge, wisdom and teachings that they have shared. Be mindful of regional protocols<sup>128</sup> when approaching and hosting an Indigenous guest. In the cultures of the Prairies, tobacco may be offered and presented as a tobacco tie<sup>129</sup> following tobacco offering protocol.<sup>130</sup> Also consider a monetary honorarium, as you would provide for any outside speaker.

### THE TALKING/SHARING CIRCLE<sup>131</sup>

A talking circle promotes group participation in a discussion and can be used to allow students to share (show and talk about) their artwork. The talking circle has been used in all Indigenous cultures in different forms. It symbolically represents a safe place where everyone is equal and given an opportunity to speak their own truth. Students are gathered into a circle. Circles do not have observers, only participants, including the facilitator (Indigenous guest or teacher). The facilitator starts off by introducing the suggested topic of discussion while holding the talking

object (it can be a feather or other object connected to the Land such as a stick or a stone). Once the facilitator has finished sharing whatever is in their heart or on their mind, the talking object is passed, in a clockwise motion, to another participant. When receiving the talking object, the student may talk or pass it to the next person if they don't feel ready to talk or do not want to talk. The person holding the talking object is the only one who has the right to talk, without interruption. Others are expected to be respectful and listen without comment or judgment. If the group is large, time constraints may be placed beforehand. The talking object goes around until everybody has had at least one opportunity to talk, and may be passed around once again to give everyone the feeling that they have left nothing unsaid. Participants should not try to comfort someone who is expressing pain or is crying, unless the person talking asks for such support. Have tissues available. The facilitator may want to consider inviting the school counsellor to participate in the circle. What is said in the talking circle stays in the talking circle. *The Circle of Caring and Sharing*<sup>132</sup> is a good resource for introducing this topic to younger children.

### REFLECTION JOURNAL OR ARTIST STATEMENT

Journalling allows students to be honest, reflect, raise questions, form opinions, think deeply and be critical about their feelings and respond to what they are learning, then relate this information to their real life. Entries can be divided into three columns: What Happened Today and What I Learned; What I Think and Feel about What I Have Learned; What Questions I Have after Today.<sup>133</sup> Developing and sharing an artist statement (inspiration, process, meaning) connected to their artwork might also serve this purpose.

### DISSEMINATION

Provide students with an opportunity to share their artistic products with the world! They can exhibit completed artworks in the school hallway, organize an exhibition in a community centre or post projects on social media tagging #resilienceartcards.

<sup>128</sup> Wahéshon Shiann Whitebean, *Indigenous Elder and Community Protocols*, Concordia University (2019).

<sup>129</sup> Bear Standing Tall, "How to make a tobacco tie", Bear Standing Tall & Associates YouTube channel (2018).

<sup>130</sup> "Tobacco Offering Protocol", Centre for Indigenous Initiatives, Carleton University.

<sup>131</sup> Larry Merculieff, "The Talking Circle", The Global Center for Indigenous Leadership and Lifeways (2009).

<sup>132</sup> Theresa "Corky" Larsen-Jonasson, *The Circle of Caring and Sharing* (2016).

<sup>133</sup> It's Our Time First Nations Education Tool Kit Teacher's Guide (National and Manitoba) DRAFT, Manitoba Education and Training (2018).



Nadya Kwandibens | *Concrete Indians – 10 Indigenous Lawyers*

This Teaching Guide is a collaborative project developed by Yvette Cenerini (Métis), Lita Fontaine (Dakota/Anishinaabe/Métis), Dawn Knight and Elder Albert McLeod (Cree), with support from art educators and MAWA staff. Art images were selected by curator Lee-Ann Martin (Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory).

*Resilience: 50 Indigenous Art Cards and Teaching Guide* was produced by Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA), with funding from The Winnipeg Foundation, the Manitoba Government and the Manitoba Association for Art Education. MAWA is located on original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene Peoples, and the Homeland of the Métis Nation. This guide is written in the colonial languages of English and French. MAWA supports the growth and renewal of Indigenous languages and encourages the use of this guide in Indigenous languages.

Sincere thanks to the artists for their work.

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