Interpretive Guide & Hands-on Activities

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Travelling Exhibition Program

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wawisihcikan - adornment

Alberta

Alberta Foundation for the Arts

art gallery of alberta

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

The Interpretive Guide

The Art Gallery of Alberta is pleased to present your community with a selection from its Travelling Exhibition Program. This is one of several exhibitions distributed by The Art Gallery of Alberta as part of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. This Interpretive Guide has been specifically designed to complement the exhibition you are now hosting. The suggested topics for discussion and accompanying activities can act as a guide to increase your viewers' enjoyment and to assist you in developing programs to complement the exhibition. Questions and activities have been included at both elementary and advanced levels for younger and older visitors.

At the Elementary School Level the Alberta Art Curriculum includes four components to provide students with a variety of experiences. These are:

Reflection: Responses to visual forms in nature, designed objects and artworks
Depiction: Development of imagery based on notions of realism
Composition: Organization of images and their qualities in the creation of visual art
Expression: Use of art materials as a vehicle for expressing statements

The Secondary Level focuses on three major components of visual learning. These are:

Drawings: Examining the ways we record visual information and discoveries
Encounters: Meeting and responding to visual imagery
Composition: Analyzing the ways images are put together to create meaning

The activities in the Interpretive Guide address one or more of the above components and are generally suited for adaptation to a range of grade levels. As well, this guide contains coloured images of the artworks in the exhibition which can be used for review and discussion at any time. Please be aware that copyright restrictions apply to unauthorized use or reproduction of artists' images.

The Travelling Exhibition Program, funded by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, is designed to bring you closer to Alberta's artists and collections. We welcome your comments and suggestions and invite you to contact:

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Travelling Exhibition Program
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The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Travelling Exhibition Program (TREX) acknowledge that the artistic activity we support takes place on the territories of Treaty 6, 7 and 8. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived on and cared for these lands for generations and we are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities and growing our shared knowledge and understanding.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

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The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Curatorial Statement

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wawisihcikan
adornment

The travelling exhibit entitled ᐊ·Δ·ᓯᖏᑎᒃᓴ wawisihcikan - adornment", takes a look at adornment through an Indigenous perspective.

a·dorn·ment
/əˈdôrnmənt/

noun
1. a thing which adorns or decorates; an ornament.
"the necktie is no longer a necessary male adornment"

the action of adorning something.
"precious stones have been used for the purposes of adornment for over 7,000 years"

The meaning of adornment according to the dictionary states the use of item(s) that decorate, embellish, enhance, beautify, or enrich. It could be said adornment is the finishing touch that distinguishes the wearer.

Adornment from an Indigenous perspective goes beyond the items' beauty. It is an artistic expression that conveys many levels of communication. It makes connection to a spiritual foundation, the importance to land and place, and defines inherent culture.

Early adornment provides a sense of knowledge about our ancestors that reflect the natural world in which they lived. The seasonal round of birth and rebirth shape our world view in a circulatory way as everything is interdependent.

Spirituality has been the foundation for Indigenous peoples' lives and an 'intrinsic quality of creative activity.' These artistic expressions were woven into the fabric of daily life. 'Artifacts were generally created as items to be used, not as 'art'. Bags, pouches, along with awl and knife sheaths were functional yet beautifully decorated.

Through European contact and trade metal goods, cloth and glass beads were incorporated into the repertoire of the maker. Even as the use of trade materials increased, traditional styles of embellishment remained with the use of these traditional materials still being utilized to this present day, maintaining connection to ancestors and cultural traditions. 'Contemporary artists/artisans are keenly aware of their responsibility as guardians of traditions from which their imagery and inspiration derive.'

'More than beautiful ornamentation, adornment is a visual language expressing the joy of creativity, pride in attention to craftsmanship, and the desire to share with others. Above all, it honors oneself as well as one's people by doing a thing well.'
Sherr Dubin, Lois. North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment; Harry N. Abrams, Inc. New York. p11,12,18

'Adornment' is defined as the use of item(s) that decorate, embellish, enhance, beautify, or enrich. This exhibition features works by three indigenous artists from Alberta who create works of adornment which express the joy of creativity, pride in craftsmanship, and the desire to share their traditions with others.

This exhibition was curated by MJ Belcourt and organized by the Art Gallery of Alberta for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program is supported by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

Visual Inventory - List of Works

Elaine Alexie
Dinvi' trade bead necklace, 2021
Tanned caribou hide, silverberries, vintage trade beads
28 inches long x 1 inch wide
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Elaine Alexie
Dinvi' trade bead earrings set, 2021
Tanned caribou hide, silverberries, vintage trade beads, sterling silver earring hooks
3.75 inches long x 2 inches wide
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Elaine Alexie
A'tthan, Dinvi' and moosehorn necklace , 2021
Antique trade beads, silverberry, moose horn, silver components
28 inches long x 1.25 inches wide
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Elaine Alexie
A'tthan, Dinvi' and silverberry earrings set, 2021
Moosehide, antique trade beads, dentalium shell, silverberries, sterling silver earring hooks
3.5 inches long x 1 inch wide
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Elaine Alexie
Quilled Dene Floral Bolo Tie, 2021
Moosehide, antique and vintage seed beads, porcupine quills, sterling silver beads, leather, silver components
40 inches long x 3.25 inches wide
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Elaine Alexie
Ditsuu A'tan Ky'uu Gaonahtan - Grandmothers teachings through flowers signature necklace, 2021
Antique/vintage micro seed beads, caribou hide, vintage trade beads, antique torse beads, silverberry, dentalium shell, 24kt gold, silver components
24 inches long x 8 inches wide
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Erik Lee
Necklace, 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the artist

Erik Lee
Earrings, 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the artist

Erik Lee
Bracelet Cuff, 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the artist

Erik Lee
Ring, 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the artist

Carmen Miller
Split Toe Moccasins, 2021
Beaded, hand sewn tanned moose hide
Size 7
Collection of the artist

Carmen Miller
Earrings, 2021
Caribou tufting, beading on moose hide
Collection of the artist

Carmen Miller
Tufted Cuff, 2021
Caribou tufting, beading on moose hide
Collection of the artist

Carmen Miller
Clutch Purse, 2021
6.5 inches x 4 inches
Caribou tufting, beading on moose hide
Collection of the artist

Visual Inventory - List of Works

Carmen Miller
Hair Tie, 2021
6 inches round
Caribou tufting, beading on moose hide
Collection of the artist

Carmen Miller
Necklace, 2021
6.25 inches x 3.5 inches
Caribou tufting, beading on moose hide, cowrie shells
Collection of the artist

Total Works: 16 works/sets
11 frames

Visual Inventory - Images

Elaine Alexie
Dinvi' trade bead necklace and earrings set, 2021
Tanned caribou hide, silverberries, vintage trade beads, sterling silver earring hooks
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Elaine Alexie
A'tthan, Dinvi' and moosehorn necklace/ silverberry earring set, 2021
Moose hide, moose horn, silverberries, dentalium shell, antique trade beads, silver components, sterling silver earring hooks
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Elaine Alexie
Ditsuu A'Tan Ky'uu Gaonahtan - Grandmothers teachings through flowers signature necklace, 2021
Antique/vintage micro seed beads, caribou hide, vintage trade beads, antique torse beads, silver components, silverberry, dentalium shell, 24 kt gold
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Visual Inventory - Images

Elaine Alexie
Quilled Dene Floral Bolo Tie, 2021
Moosehide, antique and vintage seed beads, porcupine quills, sterling silver beads, leather, silver components
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Erik Lee
Bracelet Cuff, 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the artist

Erik Lee
Earrings, 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the artist

Erik Lee
Ring, 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the artist

Visual Inventory - Images

Erik Lee
Necklace, 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the artist

Carmen Miller
Earrings, 2021
Beading, caribou tufting on hide
Collection of the artist

Carmen Miller
Tufted Cuff, 2021
Beading, caribou tufting on hide
Collection of the artist

Visual Inventory - Images

Carmen Miller
Clutch Purse, 2021
Beading, caribou tufting on hide
Collection of the artist

Carmen Miller
Hair Tie, 2021
Beading, caribou tufting on hide
Collection of the artist

Carmen Miller
Split Toe Moccasins, 2021
Beaded, hand sewn tanned moose hide
Collection of the artist

Carmen Miller
Necklace, 2021
Beading, caribou tufting on hide, cowrie shells
Collection of the artist

Talking Art

Carmen Miller
Split Toe Moccasins, 2021
Beaded, hand sewn tanned moose hide
Collection of the artist

CONTENTS

Art Curriculum Connections

The following curricular connections taken from the Alberta Learning Program of Studies provide an overview of key topics that can be addressed through viewing and discussing the exhibition ᐊᐧᐃᐧᓯᐦᒋᑲᓐ wawisihcikan - adornment. Through the art projects included in this exhibition guide students will be provided the opportunity for a variety of learning experiences.

LEVEL k-6

REFLECTION
Component 1: ANALYSIS: Students will notice commonalities within classes of natural objects or forms.
Concepts
A. Natural forms have common physical attributes according to the class in which they belong.
B. Natural forms are related to the environment from which they originate.
C. Natural forms have different surface qualities in colour, texture and tone.
D. Natural forms display patterns and make patterns.

Component 2: ASSESSMENT: Students will assess the use or function of objects.
Concepts
A. Designed objects serve specific purposes.
B. Designed objects serve people.
C. Designed objects are made by people or machines.

Component 3: APPRECIATION: Students will interpret artworks literally.
Concepts
A. Art takes different forms depending on the materials and techniques used.
B. An art form dictates the way it is experienced.
C. An artwork tells something about its subject matter and the artist who made it.
D. Colour variation is built on three basic colours.
E. Tints and shades of colours or hues affect the contrast of a composition.
F. All aspects of an artwork contribute to the story it tells.

DEPICTION
Component 4 MAIN FORMS AND PROPORTIONS: Students will perfect forms and develop more realistic treatments.
Concepts
C. Images can be portrayed in varying degrees of realism.
F. Size variations among objects give the illusion of depth.

Component 6 QUALITIES AND DETAILS: Students will refine surface qualities of objects and forms.
Concepts
B. Colour can be made to appear dull or bright.
C. Gradations of tone are useful to show depth or the effect of light on objects.

COMPOSITION
Component 7 EMPHASIS: Students will create emphasis by the treatment of forms and qualities.
Concepts
A. The centre of interest can be made prominent by contrasting its size, shape, colour or texture from the other parts of the composition.
B. Format can be adjusted and composition tightened by editing or cropping the unnecessary areas from the edges of a work after it is completed.
C. Details, accents and outlines will enhance the dominant area or thing.

Grades 5 and 6

Students will interpret artworks for their symbolic meaning
Concepts
A. Artistic style affects the emotional impact of an artwork
B. An artwork can be analyzed for the meaning of its visible components and their inter-relationships.
C. Artworks contain symbolic representations of a subject or theme.

DEPICTION
Component 4: MAIN FORMS AND PROPORTIONS: Students will learn the shapes of things as well as develop decorative styles.
Concepts
A. All shapes can be reduced to basic shapes; i.e., circular, triangular, rectangular.
B. Shapes can be depicted as organic or geometric.
C. Shapes can be made using different procedures; e.g., cutting, drawing, tearing, stitching.

Component 6: QUALITIES AND DETAILS: Students will represent surface qualities of objects and forms.
Concepts
A. Texture is a surface quality that can be captured by rubbings or markings.
B. Textures form patterns.
C. Primary colours can be mixed to produce new hues.
D. Colour can be lightened to make tints or darkened to make shades.
E. Images are stronger when contrasts of light and dark are used.
F. Details enrich forms.

COMPOSITION
Component 8: UNITY: Students will create unity through density and rhythm.
Concepts
A. Families of shapes, and shapes inside or beside shapes, create harmony.
B. Overlapping forms help to unify a composition.
C. Repetition of qualities such as colour, texture and tone produce rhythm and balance.

Art Curriculum Connections continued

Component 9: CRAFTSMANSHIP: Students will add finishing touches.
Concepts
A. Finishing touches (accents, contrasts, outlines) can be added to make a work more powerful.

EXPRESSION
Component 10 (i)
PURPOSE 3: Students will decorate items personally created.
Concepts
A. Details, patterns or textures can be added to two-dimensional works.
B. Details, patterns or textures can be added to the surface of three-dimensional works.

PURPOSE 4: Students will express a feeling or a message.
Concepts
A. Feeling and moods can be interpreted visually.
B. Specific messages, beliefs and interests can be interpreted visually or symbolized.

Grades 7-9

ENCOUNTERS
GRADE 7

Students will:
- investigate natural forms, man-made forms, cultural traditions and social activities as sources of imagery through time and across cultures
- understand that the role and form of art differs through time and across cultures
- understand that art reflects and affects cultural character

COMPOSITIONS
Components 2: Students will experiment with techniques and media within complete compositions of two and three dimensions.

ENCOUNTERS
Sources of Images: Students will identify similarities and differences in expressions of selected cultural groups.
Concepts:
A. Symbolic meanings are expressed in different ways by different cultural groups.
B. Different cultural groups use different materials to create images or artifacts.

Transformations Through Time: Students will recognize the significance of the visual symbols which identify the selected cultural groups.
Concepts:
A. Artifacts can have religious, magical and ceremonial meanings.
C. Visual symbols are used for identification and status by people in groups.
D. External influences may have modified the imagery of a cultural group over time.

Art Curriculum Connections continued

Impact of Images: Students will search for contemporary evidence relating to themes studied.
Concepts:
A. Religious, magical or ceremonial images used in contemporary society can be identified.
B. Authority, power or politics in contemporary society may be described in image form.
C. The ways people generate visual works can be influenced by a number of factors.

Art 10-20-30

Art 10
Transformations Through Time
Concepts:
A. Works of art contain themes and images that reflect various personal and social conditions.
B. Technology has an affect on materials used in image making.

Impact of Images
Concepts
A. Simplified form communicates the purpose and function of designed objects.
B. The function of an artwork can be emphasized by its decoration.

Art 20
ENCOUNTERS
Students will:

Sources of Images: Recognize that while the sources of images are universal, the formation of an image is influenced by the artist's choice of medium, the time and the culture.
Concepts
A. Different periods of history yield different interpretations of the same subject or theme.
B. Artists and craftspeople use the possibilities and limitations of different materials to develop imagery.
C. Different cultures exhibit different preferences for forms, colours and materials in their artifacts.

Art 30
COMPOSITIONS
Students will:

Components
USE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS SOURCES FOR IMAGE MAKING.
Concepts
A. The selection and presentation of perceptions, conceptions and experience as visual content for artworks is an important aim of the artist.
B. Planned and spontaneous methods of working are ways of developing visual images.

Art Curriculum Connections continued

ENCOUNTERS
Students will:

Sources of Images: Research selected artists and periods to discover factors in the artists' environments that influenced their personal visions.
Concepts
A. Personal situations and events in artists' lives affect their personal visions and work.
B. Historical events and society's norms have an affect on an artist's way of life and work.

Transformations Through Time
Analyze the factors that generate a work of art, or an artistic movement: The experiences of the artists and the impact of the culture.
Concepts
A. A specific artistic movement and its works of art are influenced by the members' philosophic theme, stylistic identity and relationship to the community in which they exist.

Curriculum Connections continued

This exhibition is an excellent source for using art as a means of investigating topics addressed in other subject areas. The theme of the exhibition, and the works within it, are especially relevant as a spring-board for addressing aspects of the Science and Social Studies program of studies. The following is an overview of cross-curricular connections which may be addressed through viewing and discussing the exhibition.

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE

1–5 Students will identify and evaluate methods for creating colour and for applying colours to different materials.

i. Identify colours in a variety of natural and manufactured objects.

ii. Compare and contrast colours, using terms such as lighter than, darker than, more blue, brighter than.

iii. Order a group of coloured objects, based on a given colour criterion.

iv. Predict and describe changes in colour that result from the mixing of primary colours and from mixing a primary colour with white or with black.

v. Create a colour that matches a given sample, by mixing the appropriate amounts of two primary colours.

vi. Distinguish colours that are transparent from those that are not. Students should recognize that some coloured liquids and gels can be seen through and are thus transparent and that other colours are opaque.

vii. Compare the effect of different thicknesses of paint. Students should recognize that a very thin layer of paint, or a paint that has been watered down, may be partly transparent.

viii. Compare the adherence of a paint to different surfaces; e.g., different forms of papers, fabrics and plastics.

JUNI0R HIGH SCIENCE

SCIENCE 7 Unit A: Interactions and Ecosystems

Students will:

1. Investigate and describe relationships between humans and their environments

- describe examples of interaction and interdependency within an ecosystem
- identify examples of human impacts on ecosystems, and investigate and analyze the link between these impacts and the human wants and needs that give rise to them
- analyze personal and public decisions that involve consideration of environmental impacts, and identify needs for scientific knowledge that can inform those decisions

4. Describe the relationship among knowledge, decisions and actions in maintaining life-supporting environments

- identify intended and unintended consequences of human activities within local and global environments

Curriculum Connections continued

SOCIAL STUDIES

K.1 I am Unique
General Outcome: Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the multiple social, physical, cultural and linguistic factors that contribute to an individual's unique identity

Specific Outcomes

Values and Attitudes
Students will:
K.1.1 value their unique characteristics, interests, gifts and talents
K.1.2 appreciate the unique characteristics, interests, gifts and talents of others:
- appreciate feelings, ideas, stories and experiences shared by others

Knowledge and Understanding
Students will:
K.1.3 examine what makes them unique individuals by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions for inquiry:
- What are my gifts, interests, talents and characteristics?
- How do my gifts, interests, talents and characteristics make me a unique individual?
- How do culture and language contribute to my unique identity?

K.1.4 explore how we demonstrate respect for ourselves and others by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions for inquiry:
- What are the origins of the people in our school, groups or communities?
- How can we show interest and sensitivity toward social, physical, cultural and linguistic diversity in the school, groups and communities?
- How can we show respect and acceptance of people as they are?

1.1 My World: Home, School, and Community
General Outcome: Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how identity and self-esteem are enhanced by their sense of belonging in their world and how active members in a community contribute to the well-being, growth and vitality of their groups and communities.

Specific Outcomes

Values and Attitudes
Students will:
1.1.1 value self and others as unique individuals in relation to their world:
- appreciate how belonging to groups and communities enriches an individual's identity
- appreciate multiple points of view, languages, cultures and experiences within their groups and communities
- demonstrate respect for their individual rights and the rights of others
- recognize and respect how the needs of others may be different from their own

Curriculum Connections continued

SOCIAL STUDIES CONTINUED

1.1.2 value the groups and communities to which they belong:
- appreciate how their actions might affect other people and how the actions of others might affect them

1.2 Moving Forward with the Past: My Family, My History and My Community
General Outcome: Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how changes over time have affected their families and influenced how their families and communities are today.

Specific Outcomes

Values and Attitudes
Students will:
1.2.1 appreciate how stories and events of the past connect their families and communities to the present:
- recognize how their families and communities might have been different in the past then they are today
- appreciate how the languages, traditions, celebrations and stories of their families, groups and communities contribute to their sense of identity and belonging
- recognize how diverse Aboriginal...communities are integral to Canada's character
- acknowledge and respect symbols of heritage and traditions in their family and communities

Knowledge and Understanding
Students will:
1.2.2 analyze how their families and communities in the present are influenced by events of people of the past by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions for inquiry:
- How have changes affected my family over time?
- In what ways has my community changed over time?
- How have changes over time affected their families and communities in the present?
- In what ways have Aboriginal...and diverse cultural groups contributed to the origins and evolution of their communities over time?
- What connections do we have to the Aboriginal...and diverse cultures found in our communities?
- What are some examples of traditions, celebrations and stories that started in the past and continue today in their families and communities?

2.1 Canada's Dynamic Communities
General Outcome: Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how geography, culture, language, heritage, economics and resources shape and change Canada's communities

Curriculum Connections continued

SOCIAL STUDIES CONTINUED

Specific Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding
Students will:
2.1.3 investigate the cultural and linguistic characteristics of an Inuit, an Acadian and a prairie community in Canada by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions for inquiry:

- What are the cultural characteristics of the communities?
- What are the traditions and celebrations in the communities that connect the people to the past and to each other?
- How are the communities strengthened by their stories, traditions and events of the past?
- How do the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the communities studied contribute to Canada's identity?

4.2 The Stories, Histories and Peoples of Alberta
General Outcome: Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the role of stories, history and culture in strengthening communities and contributing to identity and a sense of belonging.

Specific Outcomes

Values and Attitudes
Students will:
4.2.1 appreciate how an understanding of Alberta's history, peoples and stories contributes to their own sense of belonging and identity:

- recognize how stories of people and events provide multiple perspectives on past and present events
- recognize oral traditions, narratives and stories as valid sources of knowledge about the land, culture and history
- recognize the presence and influence of diverse Aboriginal peoples as inherent to Alberta's culture and identity

Knowledge and Understanding
Students will:
4.2.2 assess, critically, how the cultural and linguistic heritage and diversity of Alberta has evolved over time by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- Which First Nations originally inhabited the different areas of the province?
- What do the stories of Aboriginal peoples tell us about their beliefs regarding the relationship between between people and the land?

Curriculum Connections continued

SOCIAL STUDIES CONTINUED

4.3 Alberta: Celebrations and Challenges
General Outcome: Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how Alberta has grown and changed culturally, economically and socially since 1905

Specific Outcomes

Values and Attitudes
Students will:
4.3.1 appreciate the factors contributing to quality of life in Alberta:
- value and respect their own and other cultural identities
- demonstrate respect for the rights, opinions and perspectives of others
- demonstrate respect for the cultural and linguistic diversity in Alberta
- value and respect their relationships with the environment

Knowledge and Understanding
Students will:
4.3.3 examine, critically, Alberta's changing cultural and social dynamics by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:
- In what ways has Alberta changed demographically since 1905?
- In what ways have Aboriginal peoples and communities changed over time?
- In what ways have music, art, narratives and literature contributed to the vitality of the culture, language and identity of diverse Alberta communities over time?

Artist Biographies/Statements

Elaine Alexie

Elaine Alexie is a member of Teetł'it Gwich'in First Nation and raised in her home community of Fort McPherson, NWT and curator of Indigenous Studies at the Royal Alberta Museum. She is a beadwork artist and is completing a PhD on Dene material culture at the University of Alberta. Her research examines the preservation of traditional Gwich'in knowledge and artistic practice through an analysis of Gwich'in beadwork traditions in several international museums. Through her creative practice, she focuses on the revival of Gwich'in material culture and works closely with her mom, Dorothy, and other knowledge holders through land based practices, hide tanning and Gwich'in sewing traditions.

Gwich'in Adornment:

"Gwich'in adornment is a representation of my culture, identity, and serves as a symbol of nationhood. It weaves traditional knowledge and practice together, allowing me to express myself as a Teetł'it Gwich'in woman. Adornment represents my connection to my homeland and the land-based knowledge that has been passed down in my family. These connections are reflected in in the tanned hides that I use, the floral motifs and designs I create, the porcupine quills and Dinvi' (Silverberry) seeds I gather from the land, the antique or vintage beads I source, and the furs harvested sourced from local Indigenous trappers. These pieces showcase my people's creativity and artistry, grounded in a sense of cultural pride, grounded in family practice, belonging, and a deep connection to my homelands"

Erik Lee

Erik Lee is a multi-disciplinary artist who's primary current professional work is in the jewelry stream.

This Plains Cree artist from the Ermineskin Band in Maskwacis, Alberta, is versed and studied in the visual languages and aesthetic - both historically and currently- of the material culture of his Indigenous Cree lineage. Erik's work is rooted in the sensibilities of Cree artwork and reflects the geometric and floral designs in Cree art, clothing and embellishment. Erik has, however, imbued these aspects of Cree art into a high end, contemporary, fine art jewelry style.

Working in the sterling silver medium, the artist's vision is contributing to the living work of the Plains Cree and the overall cultural fibre of the Canadian artistic world.

Studying under master coastal silver artists from the Kwakuitl tribe and master fabricators of the Navajo, Pueblo and Mandan tribes, Erik has developed a unique style, never using motifs or symbology of the tribes he has studied under, instead taking only techniques and methods to apply to his own vision as seen through his traditional deeply rooted cultural perspective towards the creation of wearable art. Erik uses many techniques to create his design creations including: overlay, inlay, chasing and repousse, hand engraving, lapidary, casting and cold and hot forge fabrication.

Artist Biographies/Statements

" I am an indigenous artist with a specific eye and world view. I strive to be representative of my heritage in my art. I also strive to forward that art and bring the uniqueness of myself to the world of art and the Plains Cree world of art. When people wear my pieces, I want them to be proud of who they are no matter what culture or place they might be from. I want them to shine like the silver from the inside and out..... I want to make people want to shine."
- Plains Cree Silversmith Erik Lee

Artist statement
Erik Lee

My work is informed by the visual language and design sensibilities of the Plains Cree. Growing up in awe of my mother's beadwork designs and the designs, patterns and motifs in my family and Nation's art and regalia is the strongest influence to my work. Plains art and adornment are very individual forms of expression. Every piece is a statement piece, the statement being, "here I am!".

While paying tribute to historical form, I also strive to innovate and bring new directions to Indigenous design. It is a living art form, just as Indigenous cultures are living and evolving entities. I like to do my part to further the art, bring it to new audiences and share the gift I have been given.

Carmen Miller

Alberta based artisan Carmen Miller has been practising different art mediums for most of her life. She was born in Edmonton and grew up in a military family and moved from coast to coast in Canada. Upon her father's retirement from the army, the family settled in Hinton. Carmen taught herself how to make simple beaded items at the age of eight and has been beading ever since. She has had some wonderful friends and teachers that have shared their knowledge of tanning hides, making birch bark baskets, tufting, and quillwork.

She learned the art of moose hair and caribou hair tufting 27 years ago and she loves it! Her tuftings are usually on wearable items such as moccasins, mittens, and jewelry and are combined with beadwork. Carmen is also widely known for her mini tufted jewellery.

Carmen didn't grow up surrounded by her Métis roots and culture but it has become an important part of her adult life. Practising and teaching her ancestor's art forms is very gratifying. The Métis people have a unique culture and are known as 'the flower beadwork people', and Carmen strives to carry on that part of her heritage, using flower designs, and natural materials such as home tanned moose and deer hides, porcupine quills, and birch bark. This year it is her goal to create some traditional clothing items of the Métis people including split toe moccasins, a smoking hat, a woven sash, and an octopus bag.

She participates in many Métis events in Alberta and is an award winner at the Great Northern Arts Festival in Inuvik and the Adaka Cultural Festival in Whitehorse, for traditional arts and beadwork.

Artist Interviews

Elaine Alexie

A member of the Teetl ‘it Gwich’in Nation in the North West Territories, Elaine is from Fort MacPheson though the majority of her upbringing was on the land in the Yukon. These facts which are instrumental to who she is as a person and her land-based art practice.

Elaine started sewing and beading at an early age, learning the skills from her mother and being inspired by spending time on the land. When she went on to do an undergraduate degree in Political Science and Indigenous Studies at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, her sewing practice intensified to offset her isolation from family and her home territory and the land. She followed her undergraduate degree with a Masters Degree in Political Science where she focused on connections to the land and how we govern ourselves as a people. In 2016 she and her husband moved to Edmonton and, in 2020, Elaine decided to return to university to do a Phd studying material cultures and the relevance of museum collections. Meanwhile, in 2021, she received employment with the Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton where she serves as curator of Indigenous Studies.

Since around 2012/2013 Elaine has been studying traditional Gwich’in techniques of adornment and in her personal art practice began using traditional techniques and materials to inform her contemporary sensibilities. As she describes this, she has been

...re-establishing a relationship with these items and then re-claiming practices.

In her beadwork, for example, she has been studying traditional designs and then drawing her own designs based on the styles and forms specific to her region. This has also involved learning how to use traditional materials, such as silver berries, which were used traditionally on dresses and tunics and dentalia shells, which draw attention to global trade and climate change. She has also recently begun learning techniques of porcupine quill work. Her more recent studies in museum collections has also influenced her. As she relates, as soon as she started her research in museums and collections the more she started thinking more deeply about bead working traditions. She began looking at things more closely and then re-creating those practices. As she states

My research informs my creative practice and my creative practice informs the research process. It’s all very intertwined and ...like a handshake.

As an artist, Elaine aims to present works which show the beauty of Gwich’in culture and how her works honour Gwich’in practices and how these practices demonstrate love of family and land. In her works she tries to use as many traditional materials as possible that represent her culture and demonstrate how her reclaiming of these techniques reclaims practices that have fallen out of use. For herself, learning about and using traditional materials has been a powerful and healing journey and helps her learn more about who she is as a Gwich’in person and Indigenous woman. Finally, over the years Elaine has developed a deep appreciation for museum collections and how they can teach one so much. As she indicates, her studies in such collections have helped her to grow in her artistic practice and allowed her to share this experience with others.

Artist Interviews continued

Erik Lee was born in Edmonton and raised in the Maskwacis/Pigeon Lake area of central Alberta. Art has always been a part of Lee's life. As a child he was always drawing and sculpting and pow wow regalia and wearable art has always been a part of his framework.

While he graduated from Grant MacEwan College (now MacEwan University) in Edmonton with a Diploma in Digital Arts and Media, Lee has maintained his interests in 'fine art' and has actively pursued his interests through the years. For a period of five to eight years he focused on sculpture, working in stone, antler and bone. He then moved to Vancouver and worked with Kwakuitl wood carvers on the west coast. One of his friends during this time was engraving silver and copper and Lee, fascinated with the medium, began making silver and copper jewelry. After moving back to Alberta Lee continued his self study, expanding his craft to include semi-precious stones in his work and teaching himself other techniques. He then had the opportunity to apprentice with Navajo and Zuni artisans in the United States and applied their techniques to his own work.

As an artist Lee's aim '*...is to blow people away*'. As expressed by the artist, his goal is to advance and innovate and build on the visual language and cultural heritage of the Plains Cree people. As he states:

We (the Plains Cree) *have so much to offer in visual expression and I want to do my part to continue that but also to innovate and build on that. Plains Cree art is an evolving thing and it is a great gift to be a part of that; to present it so new audiences can see it. Our art is not a stagnant thing: it is evolving and it is as much a part of the art world as anything hanging on a museum wall.*

Carmen Miller

Carmen Miller was born in Edmonton but, as her father was in the military, the family travelled and lived all over Canada and she was raised in many places. Her family came back to Alberta in 1978 and settled in Hinton where Miller currently lives.

As expressed by Miller, she has always been interested in art. She states that she became obsessed with beads when she was about 8 years old and started making beaded chains. While she has tried almost every type of art work, she has always returned to beading and the bulk of her work involves this technique. About 27 years ago she also began caribou and moose-hair tufting and her work at present focuses on both beading and tufting. Though most of her practice concerns jewelry production, however, she also makes moccasins, mittens, bags and birch bark containers.

Carmen Miller's primary reason for creating is for the enjoyment of making things. When it comes to sharing her work, however, her aim is to focus on the Métis aspect of her art and to educate others concerning Métis practices: to carry on the teachings and make sure the knowledge isn't lost.

First Nations Groups of Central Alberta and The Boreal Forest

Indigenous peoples have resided in and relied on the boreal forest for thousands of years. At present there are more than 600 primarily Indigenous communities in the boreal forest region of Canada. The forest region has and continues to provide both physical subsistence and spiritual wellbeing to the Native groups who reside within it. From large game like moose and caribou to smaller mammals such as beaver and rabbit, many common boreal mammals continue to provide food, clothing and tools for the human inhabitants of the forest. Fish and waterfowl also make up significant portions of the diet of many remote communities as well. Native trees, shrubs, grasses, lichens and fungi also feature prominently within Indigenous cultures by providing food, medicine, shelter and materials.

Industrial development is increasingly affecting Canada's northern communities. More than 17,000 members of Indigenous communities are employed directly by the forest products industry, generating income in areas where employment opportunities are sometimes hard to find. Many others are employed in the oil and gas industries as well.

The following pages provide a summary of First Nations groups who inhabit the boreal forest region of Alberta.

The **Dunne-za** are an Athabascan-speaking group of First Nations people. Traditionally referred to as the Beaver tribe by Europeans, the traditional territory of the Dunne-za is around the Peace River in Alberta and British Columbia. Approximately 2000 Dunne-za currently live in Alberta.

Before the 19th century the Dunne-za occupied lands further east, near the Athabasca and Clearwater Rivers, and north to Lake Athabasca as well as territory north of the upper Peace River.

Dunne-za tipi in winter near Peace River, Alberta, 1899

Archaeological evidence from Charlie Lake Cave in north-eastern British Columbia has established that the Peace River area has been occupied for at least 10,500 years by cultures of First Nations peoples. Besides tools, two buried ravens were found at the site and these are the oldest traces of rituals in Canada.

In the late 18th century Euro-Canadians opened the Peace Rivera area to fur trading. This led to competition between First Nations groups and the Cree, who had earlier access to guns and traditionally lived south and east of the Upper Peace River, were able to push the Dunne-za to the northwest.

The Dunne-za were signatories to Treaty 8 and continue to have a strong cultural and economic presence in the North Peace area.

First Nations Groups of The Boreal Forest continued

The **Denesuline** (or Chipewyan) peoples are an aboriginal Dene ethnolinguistic group of the Athabaskan language family. They are part of the Northern Athabascan group of peoples and come from what is now Western Canada.

Denesuline peoples live in the western Canadian Shield region, including parts of the Northwest Territories and the northern parts of the provinces of Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Approximately 6,952 Denesuline live in Alberta.

The Denesuline are Dene, and share many cultural and linguistic similarities with neighbouring Dene communities. They are also closely associated with the northern Cree and Métis, who may share their communities and also speak Denesuline.

Distribution of Na-Dene languages pre-contact.

Denesuline women curing hides
Canadian Encylopedia

The word ‘Dene’ means “people” and serves many purposes. It is a collective term of people historically known as Athapaskans. It may refer to the collective group as well as the specific language.

Traditional Denesuline socio-territorial organization was based on hunting the barren-ground caribou. Hunting groups consisted of two or more related families which joined to form larger local and regional bands, coalescing or dispersing with the migration of the caribou.

Political power was based on a leader’s ability, wisdom and generosity and was non-coercive in nature. Spiritual power was received in dream visions and exercised by shamans and reflected a worldview closely intertwined with the natural world.

With the arrival of the fur trade some Denesuline began to hunt and trap in the full boreal forest and their territories extended to the west and south. Some even moved as far south as the northern edge of parkland territory where they hunted bison. By the late 19th century most contemporary Denesuline communities had settled in their current territories.

The Denesuline established formal relations with the Canadian government through treaties beginning in 1876. Their ways of life were threatened during the 20th century when they faced an increasing number of competing land uses. As a result, it became increasingly difficult for the Denesuline to support themselves through traditional hunting and trapping economics,

First Nations Groups of The Boreal Forest continued

especially after World War II when government policies encouraged Aboriginal peoples to resettle in permanent administrative settlements. Contemporary Denesuline communities, however, are regaining control over their traditional lands by pursuing land claims and self-government agreements with Canada's federal government.

The **Cree (Nehiyaw)** are one of the largest groups of First Nations in North America with over 200,000 living in Canada. The Cree are generally divided into eight groups based on dialect and region. In Alberta there are two groups: the Plains Cree who occupy the parkland and plains region of the province and the Woodland Cree who occupy the boreal forest region. The Woodland Cree are the largest indigenous group in northern Alberta. Prior to the 18th century their territory extended west of Hudson Bay as far north as Churchill. They acted as middlemen in the fur trade between the fur companies and the western tribes. After acquiring guns they expanded their territory and drove other tribes further west and north. By 1800 the Cree were well established in Alberta from the Athabasca-Peace delta in the north, along the Peace River and south as far as the Saskatchewan River.

Cree camp, Vermilion, Alberta
1871

The name 'Cree' is derived from the Algonkian-language exonym *Kiristino*, which the Ojibwa used for tribes around Hudson Bay. The Cree language is the most widely spoken aboriginal language in Canada.

Historically, the basic unit of organization for Cree peoples were the *lodge*, a group of perhaps eight or a dozen related people and the *band*, a group of lodges who moved and hunted together. Bands would usually have strong ties to their neighbours through intermarriage and would assemble together at different parts of the year to hunt and socialize together. People could also be identified by their *clan*, which is a group of people claiming descent from the same common ancestor.

The Woodland Cree were one of the first Indigenous nations west of Hudson Bay to trade with European fur traders, as early as the 17th century. They became closely associated with the fur trade and adapted many aspects of their lifestyle and culture to European ways. They provided meat and pemmican to the fur trade posts and furs, either directly or indirectly from trade with other tribes.

First Nations Groups of The Boreal Forest continued

The **Métis** are descendants of mixed First Nations and European families. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada states that the Métis were historically the children of French fur traders and Nehiyaw women, or from unions of English or Scottish traders and northern Dene women. In academic circles the term Métis can be used to refer to any combination of persons of mixed Native American and European heritage while the Métis National Council defines a Métis as 'a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.'

Métis fur trader, 1870

The Métis are considered an aboriginal group under Canada's constitution but are in some respects separate from the First Nations and have different legal rights. In Alberta, unlike the rest of Canada, Métis people have had certain lands reserved for them, known as Métis Settlements. These settlements federated in 1975 and are governed by a distinct and unique Métis Government known as the Métis Settlements General Council (MSGC). The MSGC is the second largest land owner in Alberta.

Métis and Red River Carts, 1860

Métis history in Alberta began with the fur trade. The Métis were created as a people by the interactions of European fur traders with First Nations communities. Métis populations grew up around fur trading posts. Fort Edmonton, for example, had a large Métis population that was involved in the annual buffalo hunt for many years. These Métis helped to establish the nearby settlements of Lac Ste Anne (1844), St. Albert (1861), Lac la Biche (1853) and St. Paul.

In 1869 the Hudson's Bay Company sold its claim (Rupert's Land) to Canada. This exposed the area to a flood of White European and Canadian settlers and led to the Riel Rebellions in Manitoba (1870) and Saskatchewan (1885). The end of these rebellions combined with the collapse of the fur trade and buffalo meat industries forced many Alberta Métis off their lands and reduced them to poverty although Métis culture survived. As a response to Métis dispossession and impoverishment, Métis political organizations were revived in the late 1920s. These pressured the Government of Alberta for a protected homeland, the Métis Settlements.

First Nations Groups of The Boreal Forest continued

and twelve such settlements were established in 1938. In the late 1950s four were closed and residents relocated to the remaining eight, all of which are north of Edmonton. In 1975 the Alberta Federation of Métis Settlements Associations was formed as the umbrella organization for the eight settlement councils.

In 1990, after decades of negotiations and meetings, the Federation of Métis Settlements and the Province of Alberta reached an agreement, the Alberta-Metis Settlements Accord, that involved a payment to the Métis and the passage for four bills which gave the Métis title to a total of 1,250,000 acres of land in the province.

Recently many Métis people have moved to larger urban centres. In 2006 a total of 27,740 people living in the Edmonton census metropolitan area identified as Métis, accounting for 53% of the region's Aboriginal population.

Métis settlements in Alberta

Art and Art Styles: Indigenous Art in the Twentieth Century - a brief survey

While Indigenous peoples have been creating visual imagery for millennia it was not until the 1960s that their imagery was recognized by the Canadian art establishment as anything more than cultural artifacts or records. The first Indigenous artist to achieve any recognition in Canada was Norval Morrisseau who developed what has come to be termed the Woodland School of art. In 1973 Morrisseau joined artists Alex Janvier, Daphne Odjig, Carl Ray, Eddy Cobiness and Joe Sanchez, to form a group which came to be called the 'Indian Group of Seven' whose mission was to spread the word about Native woodland art. This group has had a tremendous influence on the Indigenous artists who have followed them.

Norval Morrisseau

Norval Morrisseau (1932-2007) was one of Canada's foremost aboriginal artists and founder of the Woodland Style of painting. Born near Thunder Bay, Ontario, on the Sand Point Reserve, Morrisseau was an Ojibwa shaman and self-taught artist who painted for more than 50 years, gaining an International reputation as one of Canada's original master artists. Morrisseau was brought up by both of his maternal grandparents. His grandfather was a shaman who schooled him in the traditional ways of his culture while his grandmother, a Catholic, made sure he was familiar with Christian beliefs. According to accounts, it was the conflict between the two cultures that influenced Morrisseau's outlook and became his art.

Norval Morrisseau
Self Portrait, n.d.
Serigraph on paper

Norval Morrisseau continued

Morrisseau was known for taking traditional icons expressed in his native culture in rock art and birch bark scrolls and translating these images in the Western media of easel painting and printmaking. He was also fascinated with modern European painting, which he was exposed to by his first Anglo-Canadian patrons in 1959.

Morrisseau's first exhibition was in 1962 and throughout his career he received numerous distinctions. In 1970 he became a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Art. In 1978 he was made a Member of the Order of Canada and also received honorary doctorates from McGill University in Montreal and McMaster University in Hamilton. In 1995 The Assembly of First Nations presented him with its highest honour, a presentation of an eagle feather. In 2006 Morrisseau had the only native solo art exhibition in the 127 year history of the National Gallery of Canada. Shortly before his death Morrisseau had a major solo exhibition entitled *Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist,* at the National Museum of the North American Indian in New York City. As stated by Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine following Morrisseau's death:

> *Norval Morrisseau's courageous and often controversial approach to his work was instrumental in encouraging First Nations people to know their spirituality, history and culture in order to better understand themselves.*

Norval Morrisseau could lay claim to being the creator and spiritual leader of the Woodland Indian art movement, not only in Canada but in the northeast United States. He developed his style independent of the influence of any other artist and was the first to depict Ojibwa legends and history to the non-native world. In Morrisseau's work there is little attention to figurative modelling, and no delving into the problems of perspective or pictorial depth. Instead, he presented stylized versions of what he knew: the bears, loons, fish and other animals and the people in the town around him. **The rudiments of Woodland, also called the pictographic style or x-ray style, paintings are expressive formline; a system for transparency and interconnecting lines that determine relationships in terms of spiritual power. For Morrisseau, the use of bright, contrasting colours were also a key resource in his repertory of symbols**. His manner of separating form into areas of distinct colour is reminiscent of stained glass and may have been a result of his conversion to Christianity and frequent trips to a Catholic Church when he was recovering from tuberculosis in his early 20s. He used connecting lines to depict interdependence between forms and colours. Three generations of native artists have followed in Morrisseau's footsteps, producing variations of the Morrisseau style using heavy black outlines to enclose colourful, flat shapes. As expressed by Morrisseau himself:

I want to make paintings full of colour, laughter, compassion and love....If I can do that, I can paint for 100 years.

Art History: The Indian Group of Seven

Norval Morrisseau's work showed that native artists and native art could stand shoulder to shoulder with other contemporary Canadian artists and his success inspired other artists to follow. In 1973 the Winnipeg Art Gallery held a groundbreaking exhibition entitled *Treaty Numbers 23, 287, 1171* which featured work by First Nations artists Jackson Beardy, Alex Janvier and Daphne Odjig. This breakthrough exhibition was one of the first exhibitions in Canada to address First Nations art within an aesthetic as opposed to an anthropological framework and showed that native artists truly had a unique contribution to make to the art world. The exhibition was followed, in 1973, by the foundation of the "Professional Native Indian Artists Association". Daphne Odjig was the driving force behind this group which also included Alex Janvier, Jackson Beardy, Norval Morrisseau, Eddy Cobiness, Carl Ray and Joseph Sanchez. The group, which came to be called 'The Indian Group of Seven', an informal name given by Winnipeg Free Press reporter Gary Scherbain, had as its main aims the development of a fund to enable artists to paint; the development of a marketing stategy involving prestigious commercial galleries in order to allow artists to exhibit their work; the stimulation of young artists; and the establishment of a trust fund for scholarship programs for emerging artists.

Daphne Odjig
Companions
Acrylic on Canvas

Carl Ray
A Medicine Bag, 1972
Ink, Acrylic on Paper
Art Gallery of Alberta Collection

Jackson Beardy
Untitled (Bird), 1967
Acrylic, Gouache on Board
Art Gallery of Alberta Collection

Art History: The Indian Group of Seven

While united in their aims, the members of the Indian Group of Seven followed their separate artistic visions. Carl Ray, who apprenticed under Norval Morrisseau, was strongly influenced by the Woodland Style of painting developed by Norval Morrisseau, using heavy dark outlines to render forms and shapes within forms and focusing on native legends and healing. Eddy Cobiness and Alex Janvier, while initially influenced by the Woodland style, gradually evolved to more abstract forms.

Eddy Cobiness
Hoopdancer
the Bearclaw Gallery, Edmonton

Alex Janvier
Lubicon, 1988
Acrylic on Canvas
Art Gallery of Alberta Collection

Daphne Odjig, whose work is often associated with the Woodland school, claims that she is not part of the school as her works incorporate the importance of womanhood and sense of family while others in the group were concerned with a spiritual quest. Odjig's work is also different in that she was influenced by Picasso's cubism but within an Aboriginal context, fusing together elements of aboriginal pictographs and First Nations arts with European techniques and styles of the 20th century.

The Indian Group of Seven had three shows throughout Canada and disbanded in 1975. Though the groups 'life' was brief, however, it was extremely important for moving native art into the mainstream of the Canadian art world and influencing younger native artists. As expressed by Daphne Odjig:

If my work as an artist has somehow helped to open doors between our people and the non-Native community, then I am glad. I am even more deeply pleased if it has helped to encourage the young people that have followed our generation to express their pride in our heritage more openly, more joyfully than I would have ever dared to think possible.
(Odjig: the Art of Daphne Odjig, pg. 78)

Art Styles: Abstraction

Of all the arts, abstract painting is the most difficult. It demands that you know how to draw well, that you have a heightened sensitivity for composition and for colours, and that you be a true poet. This last is essential.
Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944)

Abstract Art is a term applied to 20th century styles in reaction against the traditional European view of art as the imitation of nature. **Abstraction stresses the formal or elemental structure of a work and has been expressed in all genres or subjects of visual expression**. In the exhibition ᐊᐧᐃᐧᓯᖏᓐ wawisihcikan - adornment characteristics of abstraction are seen in the works included in the exhibition .

Carmen Miller
Hair Tie, 2021
Beading, caribou tufting on hide
Collection of the artist

Like all painting, abstract painting is not a unified practice. Rather, the term ‘abstraction’ covers two main, distinct tendencies. **The first involves the reduction of natural appearances to simplified forms**. Reduction may lead to the depiction of the essential or generic forms of things by eliminating particular and accidental variations. Reduction can also involve the creation of art which works away from the individual and particular with a view to creating an independent construct of shapes and colours having aesthetic appeal in their own right.

The second tendency in abstraction involves the construction of art objects from non-representational basic forms. These objects are not created by abstracting from natural appearances but by **building up with non-representational shapes and patterns**. In other words, in this mode, abstract works are ones without a recognizable subject and do not relate to anything external or try to ‘look like something’. Instead, the colour and form (and often the materials and support) are the subject of the abstract painting.

Whatever the tendency in abstraction, it is characteristic of most modes of abstraction that they abandon or subordinate the traditional function of art to portray perceptible reality and emphasize its function to create a new reality for the viewer’s perception. As described by Roald Nasgaard in his work Abstract Painting in Canada:

The first message of an abstract work is the immediate reality of our perception of it as an actual object in and of themselves, like other things in the world, except that they are uniquely made for concentrated aesthetic experience. (pg. 11)

The History of Abstraction: A Survey

Bison Painting, 18,000 - 13,000 years B.P.
Altimira Cave, Spain

Clay Jaguar
200 BC - 600 AD
Monte Alban, Mesoamerica

It is generally stated that abstraction in western art was developed in the early decades of the 20th century. The practice of abstracting from reality, however, is virtually as old as mankind itself. Early hunters and gatherers, as seen in the cave painting image above, created marvelous simplified or stylized images of the animals they depended on, both spiritually and in terms of sustenance, in caves throughout the world.

The artworks produced by non-European cultures, as seen in the two examples above and whether pre-historic or contemporary in nature, also provide examples of various degrees of abstraction in both two and three dimensional forms. The development of abstraction in European art in the early 20th century was, in fact, fostered by the study of such artworks by European artists such as Pablo Picasso.

The History of Abstraction: A Survey con't

Abstraction in European Art History

Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) is usually credited with making the first entirely non-representational painting in 1910. **The history of abstraction in European art, however, begins before Kandinsky in the later decades of the 19th century with the work of the French Impressionist artists** such as Claude Monet, Paul Cézanne and Georges Seurat. While the work of these artists was grounded in visible reality, their methods of working and artistic concerns began the process of breaking down the academic restrictions concerning what was acceptable subject matter in art, how artworks were produced and, most importantly, challenged the perception of what a painting actually was.

Wassily Kandinsky
Composition VII, 1913
The Tretyalov Gallery, Moscow

Paul Cézanne
Maison Arbies, 1890-1894
The Tretyalov Gallery, Moscow

Claude Monet
Haystacks (sunset), 1890-1891
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

George Seurat
A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte, 1884-1886

Radicals in their time, early Impressionists broke the rules of academic painting. They began by giving colours, freely brushed, primacy over line. They also took the act of painting out of the studio and into the modern world. Painting realistic scenes of modern life, they portrayed overall visual effects instead of details. They used short "broken" brush strokes of mixed and pure unmixed colour, not smoothly blended or shades as was customary, in order to achieve the effect of intense colour vibration.

The vibrant colour used by the Impressionist artists was adopted by their successors, the Fauve artists. The Fauves were modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong colour over the representational or realistic values retained by the Impressionists. This group, which basically operated from 1905 to 1907, was led by Henri Matisse and André Derain.

The History of Abstraction: A Survey con't

Henri Matisse
Harmony in Red, 1908

André Derain
Charing Cross Bridge, London 1906
National Gallery of Art, Washington

The paintings of the Fauve artists were characterized by seemingly wild brush work and strident colours and, in their focus on colour over line and drawing, the subjects of their paintings came to be characterized by a high degree of simplification and abstraction.

Pablo Picasso
Les Demoiselles d/ Avignon, 1907
Museum of Modern Art
New York, New York

Pablo Picasso
Portrait of Ambroise Vollard,
1910

While the Impressionists and Fauve artists are the direct ancestors of the abstract movement in 20th century art, the real creator of abstraction was Pablo Picasso. Picasso used primitive art from Africa and Oceania as a 'battering ram' against the classical conception of beauty. Picasso made his first cubist paintings, such as *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* based on Cézanne's idea that all depiction of nature can be reduced to three solids: cube, sphere and cone. Together with Georges Braque, Picasso continued his experiments and invented **facet** or **analytical cubism**. As expressed in the *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard*, Picasso created works which can no longer be read as images of the external world but as worlds of their own.

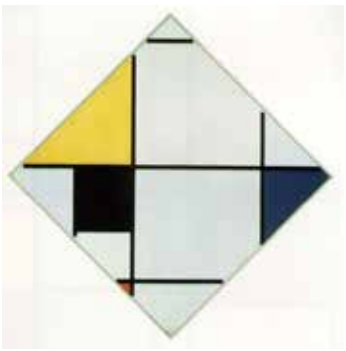
The History of Abstraction: A Survey con't

Fragmented and redefined, the images preserved remnants of Renaissance principles of perspective as **space lies behind the picture plane** and has no visible limits. By 1911 Picasso and Georges Braque developed what is known as **Synthetic Cubism** which introduced collage into art making. Through this process these artists introduced a whole new concept of space into art making.

Pablo Picasso
Still Life with a Bottle of Rum, 1911

In synthetic cubism, **the picture plane lies in front of the picture plane and the picture is recognized as essentially a flat object**. This re-definition of space, so different from the Renaissance principle of three-dimensional illusion that had dominated academic teaching for centuries, would have a profound effect on the development of abstraction in art and was a true landmark in the history of painting.

Wassily Kandinsky
Composition X, 1939



Piet Mondrian
Lozenge Composition with Yellow, Black, Blue, Red and Gray, 1921

Influenced by the practices of Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism, artists gradually developed the idea that colour, line, form and texture could be the actual subjects of a painting and formed the essential characteristics of art. Adhering to this, Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian developed the first pure abstract works in 20th century art.

The History of Abstraction: A Survey con't

For both Kandinsky and Mondrian, abstraction was a search for truths behind appearances, expressed in a pure visual vocabulary stripped of representational references.

Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) was born in Moscow. Originally trained in law and economics, Kandinsky started painting at the age of 30 and, in 1896, moved to Germany to study art full-time. After a brief return to Russia (1914-1921) Kandinsky returned to Germany where he taught at the Bauhaus school of art and architecture until it was closed by the Nazis in 1933. He then moved to France where he remained for the rest of his life.

Kandinsky's creation of purely abstract work followed a long period of development and maturation of theoretical thought based on his personal artistic experience. At first influenced by both pointillism and the Fauve artists, by 1922 geometrical elements had taken on increasing importance in his paintings. Kandinsky was also extremely influenced by music as he considered music abstract by nature as it does not try to represent the exterior world but rather to express in an immediate way the inner feelings of the human soul. He was also influenced by the theories of Theosophy expressed by H.P. Blavatsky. These theories, which had a tremendous influence on many artists during the 1920s, postulated that creation was a geometrical progression beginning with a single point. Kandinsky's mature paintings focus on geometric forms and the use of colour as something autonomous and apart from a visual description of an object or other form and through relinquishing outer appearances he hoped to more directly communicate feelings to the viewer.

The most radical abstractionist of the early 20th century was Piet Mondirian (1872-1944). Born in Amersfoort, the Netherlands, Mondrian began his career as a primary teacher. While teaching he also practiced painting and these early works, while definitely representational in nature, show the influence various artistic movements such as pointillism and fauvism had on him. Mondrian's art, like Kandinsky's, was also strongly influenced by the theosophical movement and his work from 1908 to the end of his life involved a search for the spiritual knowledge expressed by theosophist theory.

Piet Mondrian
Composition with Yellow Patch, 1930
Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf

In 1911 Mondrian moved to Paris and came under the influence of Picasso's cubism. While cubist influences can be seen in his works from 1911 to 1914, however, unlike the Cubists Mondrian attempted to reconcile his painting with his spiritual pursuits. In this pursuit he began to simplify elements in his paintings further than the cubists had done until he had developed a completely non-representational, geometric style. In this work Mondrian did not strive for pure lyrical emotion as Kandinsky did. Rather, his goal was pure reality defined as equilibrium achieved through the balance of unequal but equivalent oppositions. By 1919 Mondrian began producing the grid-based paintings for which he became renowned and this subject motivated his art practice for the rest of his life.

The History of Abstraction: A Survey con't

Conclusion:

Abstraction in the visual arts has taken many forms over the 20th and into the 21st century. Among these modes are Colour Field Painting, Lyrical Abstraction, Abstract Expressionism/Action Painting, Op Art, and Post-painterly Abstraction. Whatever the tendency in abstraction, it is characteristic of most modes of abstraction that they abandon or subordinate the traditional function of art to portray perceptible reality and emphasize its function to create a new reality for the viewer's perception.

Erik Lee
Necklace, 2021
Stirling Silver
Collection of the artist

Art Processes: First Nations Traditional Art Forms and Materials: Beading

A technique of art production used in works included in the exhibition is that of beading.

Introduction:
Prior to the fur trade a variety of natural raw materials were used to decorate and embellish clothing and personal affects. Natural resources such as bone, hair, quills, shells, rocks and plant fibre were used. To prepare these raw materials for use is a labour intensive process. However, with the introduction of trade materials, Aboriginal art forms and techniques further developed in artistic expression. Though it is possible to date artworks based on the types of trade materials incorporated into the composition it must be recognized that the cultural stream remains consistent, rarely deviating from the spiritual and conceptual knowledge passed down from previous generations of artists.

Today First Nations Art can be classified as traditional on the premise that the artwork remains free of European materials or is influenced by the cultural narrative and pedagogy as in being taught by community Elders and artists teaching consecutive generations over time.
Aboriginal art is not stagnant as it has been a medium that reflects the natural and social environments of the artist. Prior to European contact the artworks were composed of natural materials and were seen as reflections of the diverse cultural interactions among tribes. With European goods being traded and utilized there was a natural development to reflect these new influences. Beads, objects of metal, and the use of commercial dyes exemplify this adaptation in the art.

Today contemporary artists continue to add their perspectives by further developing works that stick true to traditional values and principles. Aboriginal art also reflects the measure of non-Aboriginal influences as in artwork that is based on the European perspective.
Ben R. Moses, 2007

Beadwork is the art or craft of attaching beads to one another by stringing them with a sewing needle or beading needle and thread or thin wire, or sewing them to cloth. Most cultures have employed beads for personal adornment and archaeological records show that people made and used beads as long as 5,000 years ago. Beads come in a variety of materials, shapes and sizes and are used to create jewelry or other articles of adornment and also for wall hangings, sculpture, and many other crafts and art forms.

Art Processes: First Nations Traditional Art Forms and Materials continued

Beadwork is a quintessentially Native American art form and there are as many different Native American beading traditions, designs, styles and stitches as there are nations. American Indian beads were a common trade item since ancient times and it was not surprising to see abalone shells from the west coast in Eastern Cherokee beadwork or wampum from the east coast in Chippewa beadwork.

Traditionally, Indiginous art works incorporated both geometric and organic motifs. European floral patterns, introduced by the French Ursuline nuns of Quebec in the 17th century, merged with the curvilinear imagery of First Nations peoples and by the 19th century flower-decorated beadwork was the predominate art form among all Northeastern and Great Lakes Woodlands people.

Beadwork became an important means of cultural and economic resilience for First Nations people from the 19th century to the present. Through beading Native women continued to encode cultural knowledge and some tribes developed a duality of artistic styles: one created for sale to Euro-Americans for much-needed income while another style was used for sacred ceremonial regalia. As expressed by W. Richard West Jr., president and CEO of the Autry Museum of the American West:

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries - an era of immense pressure, indeed cultural emasculation that pushed Native communities to abandon tradition, including its arts forms, and assimilate into Euro-American culture - the art of beadwork was a compelling instrument of preservation for cultural traditions and Native identity.
Cowboys and Indians, August/September, 2016, pg. 104

Generally speaking, native beadwork can be grouped into beaded leather (usually clothing, moccasins, or containers) and beaded strands (usually used for beaded necklaces but also as ornamental covering to wrap around a gourd or other ceremonial or art object). For beaded leather arts, crafts people sew the beads onto a leather or cloth backing. Each bead may be sewn on individually or they may be attached in loops or rows of beads. To make beaded strands a crafts person stitches the beads together into strings or a mesh using sinew, thread or wire. Beading strands and beading onto leather are both very complicated, time-consuming and delicate tasks.

Most Native beadwork is created for tribal use, but beadworkers also create conceptual work for the art world and there are many Native artists employing beadwork in everything from decorations on running shoes to beaded portraits of pop icons.

Art Processes: First Nations Traditional Art Forms and Materials continued

Métis Beadwork

Both the Dakota and Cree peoples referred to the Métis as the ‘Flower Beadwork People’ due to the floral decorative work seen on their clothing and other functional items ranging from gloves, moccasins and coats to artistic horse gear. Through the mission schools they attended, the Métis came in contact with the Grey Nuns from Europe. These women carried with them floral silk embroidery traditions from France and the Métis incorporated these patterns into traditional Indigenous porcupine quill work designs. By the 1830s increasingly naturalistic and colourful floral designs were evident on Métis products from the Red River region.. This was the foundation of the brilliant, colourful and symmetrical Métis floral beadwork creations seen at present.

Elaine Alexie
Untitled
Collection of the artist

Silverberry Seeds

Silverberry Willow is a hardy plant that grows along gravel river bars and dry slopes. It has silver-green foliage and fragrant yellow blossoms in the spring. The plants growing range is primarily Western/Boreal North America. It extends from Alaska, Yukon and NWT through to BC, the Prairies, east to Quebec, and south to Utah.

The Silverberry is part of the olive tree family and produces a unique berry that holds medicinal and food properties for Indigenous people. the berry is a rich source of vitamins A, C and E and is a source of essential fatty acids. The berry was added to pemmican, as a soup thickener, and was used to make soap. The bark of the willow was used to weave blankets, clothing, ropes and baskets. Medicinally, a tonic was used to treat frostbite or sunburns.

Alongside porcupine quills, the silverberry seed head can be considered one of the oldest forms of indigenous sourced material that was used throughout North America for Indigenous material culture use. The seed bead was used as adornment for necklaces, bracelets and particularly adorned onto garment materials found in Northern Athapaskan cultures. On the prairies, strung necklaces were made into rosaries among Métis communities.

Art Processes: First Nations Traditional Art Forms and Materials continued

Quillwork is an art form unique to North America. It is a form of textile embellishment traditionally practiced by First Nations people, and uses porcupine quills as an aesthetic element. Before the introduction of glass beads by Euro-North American traders, quillwork was a major decorative element to adorn rawhide and tanned-hide moccasins, clothing, bags, and other functional objects.

Blackfoot quillwork is considered a sacred art and women have to go through a ceremony of initiation before taking up this art form. This ceremony is still alive and practiced today. Quillwork initiates are transferred the right to do quillwork in this ceremony. The late Victoria McHugh, from the Siksika Nation, had the ceremonial, transferred rights that allowed the generation of Blackfoot women today to acquire this ancient art form. It is characterized by bands of rectangles creating geometrical patterns, and these patterns are also found in Blackfoot painting.

Porcupine quills suitable for artistic use are two to three inches long and may be dyed before use. Quills are naturally pale yellow to white, but they readily take dye. Dyes are derived from local plants and include a wide array of colours. For the Blackfoot, yellow, red, and blue are the most common colours used. After dyeing, the quills are flattened with specific bone tools, or by being run between one's teeth. The four most common techniques for quillwork are appliqué, embroidery, wrapping, and loom weaving. In appliqué, the quills are stitched into hide in a manner that covers the stitches. In wrapping, a single quill may be wrapped upon itself, or two quills may be intertwined.

Elaine Alexie
Quilled Dene Floral Bolo Tie (detail), 2021
Moosehide, antique and vintage seed beads, porcupine quills, sterling silver beads, leather, silver components
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Art Processes: First Nations Traditional Art Forms and Materials continued: Shells

Carmen Miller
Necklace, 2021
Beading, caribou tufting on hide, cowrie shells
Collection of the artist

Cowrie Shells refers to the shells of cowry, the common name for a group of small to large sea snails. The egg-shaped, smooth and shiny shells range in size from 5 mm up to 19 cm in length. The round side of the shell is called the Dorsal Face while the flat under side, which reveals a long, narrow slit-like opening, is called the Ventral Face. Shell colour ranges from white to multi-coloured or patterned.

Cowrie shells have historically been used as currency in many parts of the world as well as being used, in the past and present, in jewelry and for other decorative and ceremonial purposes. As money, cowry shells were important in the trade networks of Africa, South Asia and East Asia.

Dentalium Shells refers to the tooth or tush shells from scaphopod mollusks. Traditionally these shells were harvested from deep waters around the Pacific North-west coast of North America, especially off the coast of Vancouver Island. In contemporary times most dentalium shells come fro the coasts off Asia.

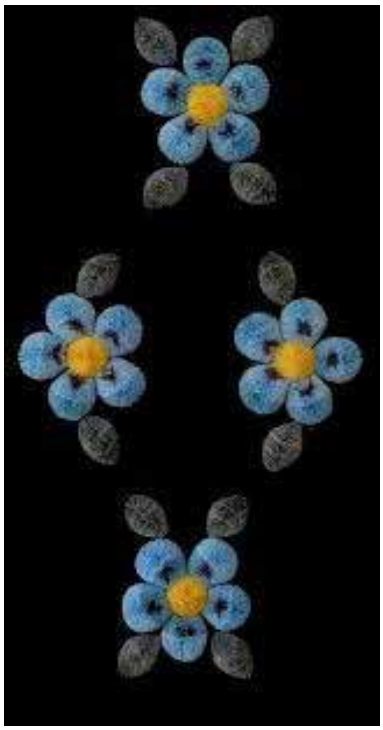
Like cowrie shells, dentalium shells were used as a trade item by Inuit and Indigenous North Americans. Among Northwest Coastal tribes, the shells were valued for both trade and adornment. Traditionally associated with wealth, the shells have been used to embellish women's capes, dresses, hair ornaments, necklaces and long, dangling earrings. From at least 1000 BCE the shells were being traded throughout America and are still used in contemporary jewelry and Indigenous regalia, often combined with beads and metal elements.

As expressed by artist Elaine Alexie, due to climate change and the destruction of ocean habitats, dentalium shells are becoming very rare (and valuable) and this demonstrates the impact of climate change.

Elaine Alexie
A'tthan, Dinvi' and moosehorn necklace/ silverberry earring set, 2021
Moose hide, moose horn, silverberries, dentalium shell, antique trade beads, silver components, sterling silver earring hooks
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Art Processes: First Nations Traditional Art Forms and Materials continued

Caribou/Moose Hair Tufting



Twisting moose and caribou hair for decorative use is an old Athapaskan art predating European contact. However, the craft of tufting did not come into existence until shortly after World War I with the earliest documented examples of Dene Tufting being from the 1920s and 1930s. Tufting produces three-dimensional images by stitching and trimming bundles of selected moose or caribou hair onto tanned hide or birchbark and is a traditional form of decoration used for costumes and special items such as bags and belts.

Moosehair is the preferred material for tufting because of its stiff texture but caribou hair is also used. Many tufters find working with caribou hair more trying as the hair is much thinner, harder to dye and shorter in length. For these reasons caribou hair tuftings are harder to find.

In tufting, hairs are picked from the pelt by hand and are sorted according to size, length and colour, then washed and soaked in preparation for dyeing. Hairs are tied into bunches and dipped into the dye or thrown into the dye pot to be dyed individually. Traditionally dyes were made from organic materials such as berries, moss, bark and leaves. Today, however, commercially powdered dyes and crepe paper are more commonly used as these products produce vibrantly coloured hairs.

Once the hairs are dyed and dried they are ready for sewing. If a pattern is used, the picture is drawn onto velvet or hide. A small tuft of hair is then held onto the pattern and a stitch is made around the tuft. This is pulled tight with a special knot on the back of the support which makes the hair stand up in a tuft. The tuft is then sculpted with small scissors. This process is repeated until the area to be covered is filled. Bundles are placed close together so no division between tufts is visible. While sewing, the sorted hairs must not dry out or they will break.

A second technique, called line work, is often used in combination with tufting to create borders and stems. To create a line approximately half a dozen hairs are held together and secured to the backing with evenly spaced diagonal stitches. Before each stitch is pulled tight the hair is given a slight twist producing a bead-like effect.

Visual Learning and Hands-On Art Activities

Erik Lee
Necklace, 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the artist

What is Visual Learning?

All art has many sides to it. The artist makes the works for people to experience. They in turn can make discoveries about both the work and the artist that help them learn and give them pleasure for a long time.
How we look at an object determines what we come to know about it. We remember information about an object far better when we are able to see (and handle) objects rather than by only reading about them. This investigation through observation (looking) is very important to understanding how objects fit into our world in the past and in the present and will help viewers reach a **considered response** to what they see. The following is a six-step method to looking at, and understanding, a work of art.

STEP 1: INITIAL, INTUITIVE RESPONSE The first 'gut level' response to a visual presentation.
What do you see and what do you think of it?

STEP 2: DESCRIPTION Naming facts - a visual inventory of the elements of design.
Questions to Guide Inquiry:
What colours do you see? What shapes are most noticeable?
What objects are most apparent? Describe the lines in the work.

STEP 3: ANALYSIS Exploring how the parts relate to each other.
Questions to Guide Inquiry:
What proportions can you see? eg. What percentage of the work is background? Foreground? Land? Sky? Why are there these differences? What effect do these differences create?
What parts seem closest to you? Farthest away? How does the artist give this impression?

STEP 4: INTERPRETATION Exploring what the work might mean or be about
Questions to Guide Inquiry:
How does this work make you feel? Why?
What word would best describe the mood of this work?
What is this painting/photograph/sculpture about?
Is the artist trying to tell a story? What might be the story in this work?

STEP 5: INFORMATION Looking beyond the work for information that may further understanding.
Questions to Guide Inquiry:
What is the artist's name? When did he/she live?
What art style and medium does the artist use?
What artist's work is this artist interested in?
What art was being made at the same time as this artist was working?
What was happening in history at the time this artist was working?
What social/political/economic/cultural issues is this artist interested in?

STEP 6: PERSONALIZATION What do I think about this work? (Reaching a considered response).

Elements of Design Tour

The following pages provide definitions and examples of the elements and principles of art that are used by artists in the images/objects found in the exhibition**.** Teacher/facilitator questions for inquiry are in **bold** while possible answers are in *italics*.

The elements of art are components of a work of art that can be isolated and defined. They are the building blocks used to create a work of art.

Elements of Design Tour

***LINE*: An element of art that is used to define shape, contours and outlines. It is also used to suggest mass and volume and can be used to indicate direction and movement.**

See: *Ring* by Erik Lee

What types of lines are there? How can you describe a line? What are some of the characteristics of a line?
Width: thick, thin, tapering, uneven
Length: long, short, continuous, broken
Feeling: sharp, jagged, graceful, smooth
Focus: sharp, blurry, fuzzy, choppy
Direction: horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curving, perpendicular, oblique, parallel, radial, zigzag

Erik Lee
Ring, 2021
Sterling Silver
Collection of the artist

Describe the lines you see in this image. Follow the lines in the air with your finger. What quality do the lines have? How do the lines operate in the image?
In this image we see a thick horizontal line which runs through the center of the object dividing it into two and thick diagonal/zig zag lines.

The diagonal lines form a zig zag pattern in each half of the object and divide the object/ring into repeated triangular shapes.

Generally speaking, lines and shapes are 'read' from left to right so the repetition of the triangular lines moves the viewer's eye in a steady progression from left to right. The use of thick lines to make the shapes is also important, giving the shapes a mass, solidity and stability that more graceful or thin lines would not.

Elements of Design Tour

SHAPE: **When a line crosses itself or intersects with another line to enclose a space it creates a shape. Shape is two-dimensional. It has height and width but no depth.**

See: ***Hair Tie*** by Carmen Miller

What kind of shapes can you think of?
Geometric: circles, squares, rectangles and triangles. We see them in architecture and manufactured items.
Organic shapes: a leaf, seashell, flower. We see them in nature with characteristics that are free flowing, informal and irregular.
Static shapes: shapes that appear stable and resting.
Dynamic shapes: Shapes that appear moving and active.

Carmen Miller
Hair Tie, 2021
Beading, caribou tufting on hide
Collection of the artist

What shapes do you see in this image?
The composition is composed of geometric and organic shapes.

How do the shapes operate in this image?
The geometric form of a circle is used to create the overall form of the object and, because it is repeated in both the outer form and the inner form draws the viewer's eye to the center of the work. In the center, meanwhile, organic shapes predominate and curving lines are used to create flower and leaf shapes.

What quality do the shapes have? Does the quality of the shapes contribute to the meaning or story suggested in the work?
The geometric shapes used in this work not only direct the viewer's eye but also provide a sense of calmness and stability in the work. The colourful organic shapes (flowers/leaves) provide focus in the work. While the geometric shapes appear static, the interior organic shapes are much more dynamic in nature.

Elements of Design Tour

COLOUR: **Colour comes from light that is reflected off objects. Colour has three main characteristics: Hue, or its name (red, blue, etc.) Value: (how light or dark the colour is) and Intensity (how bright or dull the colour is)**

See: ***Clutch Purse*** by Carmen Miller

What are primary colours? Do you see any? Point to them in the drawing. What secondary colours do you see?
Colour is made of primary colours, red, blue and yellow. Secondary colours are created from primary colours and include green, orange and purple. This image is made up of both primary colours, or tints and tones of primary colours, and secondary colours. Primary colours seen are red and blue while the secondary colours of green and orange are also used.

Where is your eye directed to first? Why? Are there any colours that stand out more than others?
While the viewer's eye is drawn to the overall shape and size of the object, the design elements of the flowers really pop out due to the colours used. The bright orange and red flowers stand out most. These are warm colours and so stand out against the cooler blues and greens.

What are complementary colours? How have they been used to draw attention?
Complementary colours are those across from each other on the colour wheel and are placed next to each other to create the most contrast and to create focus in a work. Orange and blue are complementary colours so placing the orange flower beside the blue flower makes the orange stand out. In the same way, red is the complement of green, so placing the red flower next to elements that are green in colour focuses attention on the red flower.

Elements of Design Tour

SPACE: **The area between and around objects. It can also refer to the feeling of depth in a two-dimensional artwork.**

See: ***Ditsuu A'Tan Ky'uu Gaonahtan - Grandmothers teachings through flowers signature necklace*** by Elaine Alexie

What is space? What dimensions does it have?
Space includes the background, middle ground and foreground. It can refer to the distances or areas around, between or within components of a piece. It may have two dimensions (length and width) or three dimensions including height or depth.

Elaine Alexie
Ditsuu A'Tan Ky'uu Gaonahtan - Grandmothers teachings through flowers signature necklace, 2021
Mixed Media
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

What do you see in this work? What is closest to you? Farthest away? How do you know this?
In this work we see an arrangement of flower forms on a background. The space represented is two dimensional, having length and width. Forms are equal distance from each other and the composition is formally balanced with one central object and then repeated/mirrored objects on each side.

In what other way has the artist created a sense of space?
The artist also uses colour to create this sense of space. In painting, warm colours stand out and appear closer to the viewer than cool colours. The flower shapes are all created with warm colours. This provides focus and also makes the flower forms pop out from the background.

Elements of Design Tour

TEXTURE: **Texture is the surface quality of an object that can be seen or felt. Texture can also be implied on a two-dimensional surface through mark making and paint handling.**

See: ***Dinvi' trade bead necklace and earrings set***
by Elaine Alexie

What is texture? How do you describe how something feels? What are the two kinds of texture you can think of in artwork?
Texture can be real, like the actual texture of an object. Texture can be rough, smooth, hard, soft, glossy etc. Texture can also be implied. This happens when a two-dimensional piece of art is made to look like a certain texture.

Elaine Alexie
Dinvi' trade bead necklace and earrings set, 2021
Tanned caribou hide, silverberries, vintage trade beads, sterling silver earring hooks
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Allow your eyes to 'feel' the different area within the work and explain the textures. What kind of texture do you think the artist uses in this work - real or implied? What about the work gives you this idea?
This work uses real textures. The work is entirely composed of natural materials (leather, silverberries, beads) and each of these materials has its own real feel or texture.

The work has an implied 'rough' surface appearance (though it is actually very smooth). What about the work/it's manner of creation gives you the idea that the surface could be rough?
The individual components of the work each have their own textures. The tanned hide is very soft while the silverberry seeds are hard. If touched, the silverberry seeds are also rough to the touch and 'dull' while the trade beads are smooth and glossy.

Reading Pictures Program

Grades 4-12/adults

Objectives:

The purposes of this program are to:

1/ Introduce participants to Art and what artists do – this includes examinations of art styles; art elements; the possible aims and meaning(s) in an art work and how to deduce those meanings and aims.
2/ Introduce visitors to the current exhibition – the aim of the exhibition and the kind of exhibition/ artwork found. - the artist(s) - his/her background(s)
- his/her place in art history
3/ Engage participants in a deeper investigation of artworks.

Teacher/Facilitator Introduction to Program:

This program is called **Reading Pictures**. What do you think this might involve?

-generate as many ideas as possible concerning what viewers might think 'Reading Pictures' might involve or what this phrase might mean.

Before we can 'read' art, however, we should have some understanding what we're talking about.

What is Art? If you had to define this term, how would you define it?

Art can be defined as creative expression - and artistic practice is an aspect and expression of a peoples' culture or the artist's identity.

The discipline of Art, or the creation of a piece of art, however, is much more than simple 'creative expression' by an 'artist' or an isolated component of culture.

How many of you would describe yourselves as artists?

You may not believe it, but everyday you engage in some sort of artistic endeavor.

How many of you got up this morning and thought about what you were going to wear today? Why did you choose the clothes you did? Why do you wear your hair that way? How many of you have tattoos or plan to get a tattoo some day? What kind of tattoo would you choose? Why.....? How many of you own digital cameras or have cameras on cell phones? How many of you take pictures and e-mail them to other people?

Reading Pictures Program continued

Art is all around us and we are all involved in artistic endeavors to some degree. The photographs we take, the colour and styles of the clothes we wear, the ways we build and decorate our homes, gardens and public buildings, the style of our cell phones or the vehicles we drive, the images we see and are attracted to in advertising or the text or symbols on our bumper stickers – all of these things (and 9 billion others) utilize artistic principles. They say something about our personal selves and reflect upon and influence the economic, political, cultural, historical and geographic concerns of our society.

Art, therefore, is not just something some people in a society do – it is something that affects and informs everyone within a society.

Today we're going to look at art - paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures – and see what art can tell us about the world we live in – both the past, the present and possibly the future – and what art can tell us about ourselves.

Art is a language like any other and it can be read.

Art can be read in two ways. It can be looked at **intuitively** – what do you see? What do you like or not like? How does it make you feel and why? – or it can be read **formally** by looking at what are called the Elements of Design – the tools artists use or consider when creating a piece of work.

What do you think is meant by the elements of design? What does an artist use to create a work of art?

Today we're going to examine how to read art – we're going to see how art can affect us emotionally... and how an artist can inform us about our world, and ourselves, through what he or she creates.

Tour Program:

–Proceed to one of the works in the exhibition and discuss the following:
a) The nature of the work - what kind of work is it and what exhibition is it a part of?
b) Examine the work itself – What do visitors see?
– How do you initially feel about what you see? Why do you feel this way? What do you like? What don't you like? Why?
–What is the work made of?
–How would you describe the style? What does this mean?

Reading Pictures Program continued

–What is the compositional structure? How are the shapes and colours etc. arranged? Why are they arranged this way?
–How does the work make them feel? What is the mood of the work? What gives them this idea? Discuss the element(s) of design which are emphasized in the work in question.
–What might the artist be trying to do in the work? What might the artist be saying or what might the work 'mean'?

c) Summarize the information.

• At each work chosen, go through the same or similar process, linking the work to the type of exhibition it is a part of. Also, with each stop, discuss a different Element of Design and develop participants visual learning skills.

At the 1st stop, determine with the participants the most important Element of Design used and focus the discussion on how this element works within the art work. Do the same with each subsequent art work and make sure to cover all the elements of design on the tour.

Stop #1: LINE
Stop #2: SHAPE
Stop #3: COLOUR
Stop #4: TEXTURE
Stop #5: SPACE
Stop #6: ALL TOGETHER – How do the elements work together to create a certain mood or story? What would you say is the mood of this work? Why? What is the story or meaning or meaning of this work? Why?

Work sheet activity – 30 minutes

•Divide participants into groups of two or three to each do this activity. Give them 30 minutes to complete the questions then bring them all together and have each group present one of their pieces to the entire group.

Presentations – 30 minutes

•Each group to present on one of their chosen works.

Visual Learning Activity Worksheet * Photocopy the following worksheet so each participant has their own copy.

Reading Pictures Program continued

Visual Learning Worksheet

Instructions: Choose two very different pieces of artwork in the exhibition and answer the following questions in as much detail as you can.

1. What is the title of the work and who created it?

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What do you see and what do you think of it? (What is your **initial reaction** to the work?) Why do you feel this way?

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. What colours do you see and how does the use of colour affect the way you 'read' the work? Why do you think the artist chose these colours – or lack of colour – for this presentation?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. What shapes and objects do you notice most? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Reading Pictures Program continued

5. How are the shapes/objects arranged or composed? How does this affect your feelings towards or about the work? What feeling does this composition give to the work?

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. How would you describe the mood of this work? (How does it make you feel?) What do you see that makes you describe the mood in this way?

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. What do you think the artist's purpose was in creating this work? What 'story' might he or she be telling? What aspects of the artwork give you this idea?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8. What do you think about this work after answering the above questions? Has your opinion of the work changed in any way? Why do you feel this way?

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. How might this work relate to your own life experiences? Have you ever been in a similar situation/place and how did being there make you feel?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Perusing Paintings: An Art-full Scavenger Hunt

In teaching art, game-playing can enhance learning. If students are engaged in learning, through a variety of methods, then it goes beyond game-playing. Through game-playing we are trying to get students to use higher-order thinking skills by getting them to be active participants in learning. *Blooms's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, which follows, is as applicable to teaching art as any other discipline.

1. *knowledge*: recall of facts
2. *comprehension*: participation in a discussion
3. *application*: applying abstract information in practical situations
4. *analysis*: separating an entity into its parts
5. *synthesis*: creating a new whole from many parts, as in developing a complex work of art
6. *evaluation*: making judgements on criteria

A scavenger hunt based on art works is a fun and engaging way to get students of any age to really look at the art works and begin to discern what the artist(s) is/are doing in the works. **The simple template provided, however, would be most suitable for grade 1-3 students.**

Instruction:
Using the exhibition works provided, give students a list of things they should search for that are in the particular works of art. The students could work with a partner or in teams. Include a blank for the name of the artwork, the name of the artist, and the year the work was created. Following the hunt, gather students together in the exhibition area and check the answers and discuss the particular works in more detail.

Sample List:

Scavenger Hunt Item	Title of Artwork	Name of Artist	Year Work Created
someone wearing a hat			
a specific animal			
landscape			
a bright red object			
a night scene			
a house			

*This activity was adapted from *A Survival Kit for the Elementary/Middle School Art Teacher* by Helen D. Hume.

An Art-full Scavenger Hunt Template

Scavenger Hunt Item	Title of Artwork	Name of Artist	Year Work Created

28 From Realism to Abstraction

Observing and Thinking Creatively

Abstract art usually uses bright colors, sharp edges, geometric shapes, and interesting contrasts to create a mood. Sometimes abstract art simply shows an artist's emotional response to an object or idea. Details may be minimized, proportions **distorted**, and unusual color schemes used. **Nonobjective** art occurs when abstraction departs completely from realism.

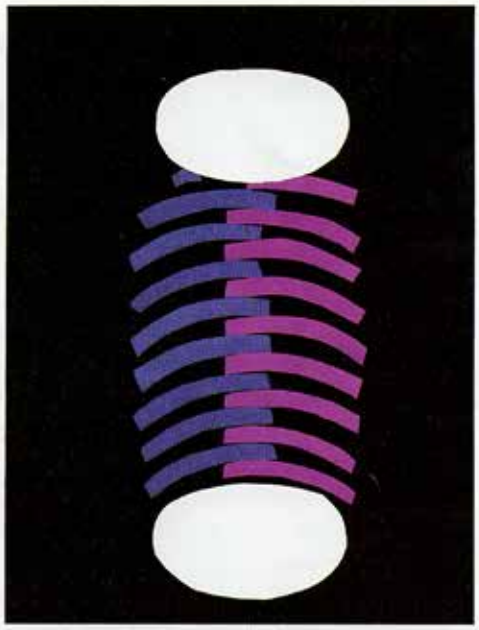
Henri Matisse was a French artist who enjoyed changing the usual form of an object. His versions emphasized the pure idea of the object, and are a type of abstract art. To create the cutouts for the snail shown here, he first picked up a real snail and examined it closely. Then he drew it from every angle possible, noting its texture, color, and construction.

Observe the cut out paper shapes Matisse used in his snail of many colors. Can you see how the simple blue rectangle represents the foot of the snail? Notice which parts of a snail Matisse omitted, and which parts he thought were essential.

In this lesson, you will create an abstract cutout design of an object.

Henri Matisse, The Snail, 1952, Tate Gallery, London.

Abstracting from the Real continued



Instructions for Creating Art

1. Choose an object with an interesting shape and study it. Sketch it from several angles. Examine how it is built. Does it have a center? What basic shapes compose it? Observe the texture and colors of your object.

2. Now draw the general outer shape of your object. What idea does it give you? Next, draw only the inside parts of your object, without any outside lines. Think about what color reminds you of the feeling or idea of the object. Notice curved and straight lines, light and dark values, and small and large shapes.

3. When you find a shape that seems to capture the idea of your object, practice distorting or changing it to make a more pure, simple shape.

4. Choose one or more colors for your shape, and cut it out of colored paper. Mount the shapes on a sheet of a different color, and display your abstract cutout design. Can your classmates guess what the real object was?

Art Materials

A variety of objects such as a shell, spoon, corncob, flower, leaf, model, toy, piece of fruit, etc.

Sketch paper

Pencil and eraser

Colored construction paper

Scissors

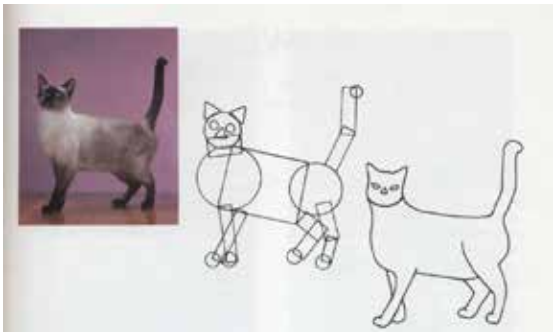
Glue or paste

Learning Outcomes

1. Name two ways of making *abstract* art.
2. Describe how you distorted the shape you made of an object.
3. What parts of your object did you leave out of your cutout design? How did you decide which parts to keep and which parts to omit?

Basic Shapes - Grades 3-5

Carmen Miller
Hair Tie, 2021
Beading, caribou tufting on hide
Collection of the artist



Art in Action, pg. 12

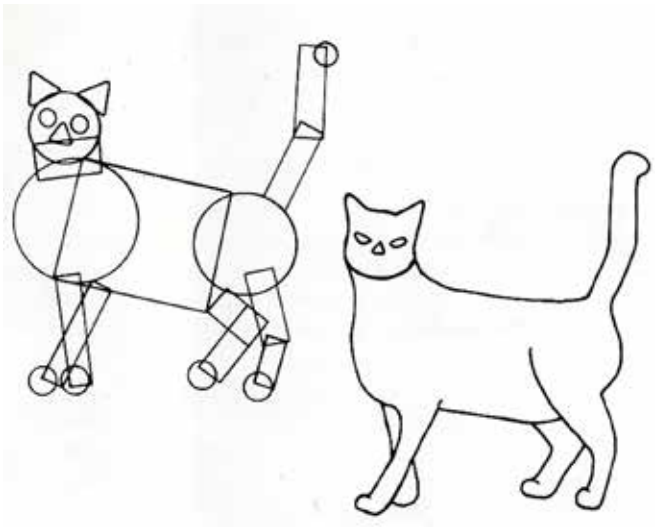
Almost all things are made up of four basic shapes: circles, triangles, squares and rectangles. Shapes and variation of shapes - such as oblongs and ovals - create objects. The works of artists in the exhibition are created by reducing objects to their basic shapes and using colour and line to define objects. In this lesson students will practice reducing objects to their basic shapes and then filling in the areas with colours 'natural' to the central object and complementary to the background.

Materials:
- drawing paper
- pencil and eraser
- magazines
- paints and brushes
- mixing trays

Instructions:
1/ Have students look through magazines for pictures of objects made up of several shapes.

Basic Shapes continued - Grades 3-5

2/ Direct students to choose **one** object and determine the basic shapes which make up that object.
3/ Have students draw their one object using the basic shapes which make up the object.
4/ Students to simplify their drawing further - removing any overlapping/extraneous lines so that the object is broken into simplified shapes/forms. *see works by Jason Carter for clarification
5/ Students to decide on colour scheme for work. Review the colour wheel and the concept of complementary colours.
- what is the dominant colour of your object? - use tints/tones of that colour to paint the object, keeping shapes separate through the use of heavy black lines.
- what is the complementary colour of your main object's colouring? - paint the background area the complement of the objects colour.



Art in Action, pg. 12

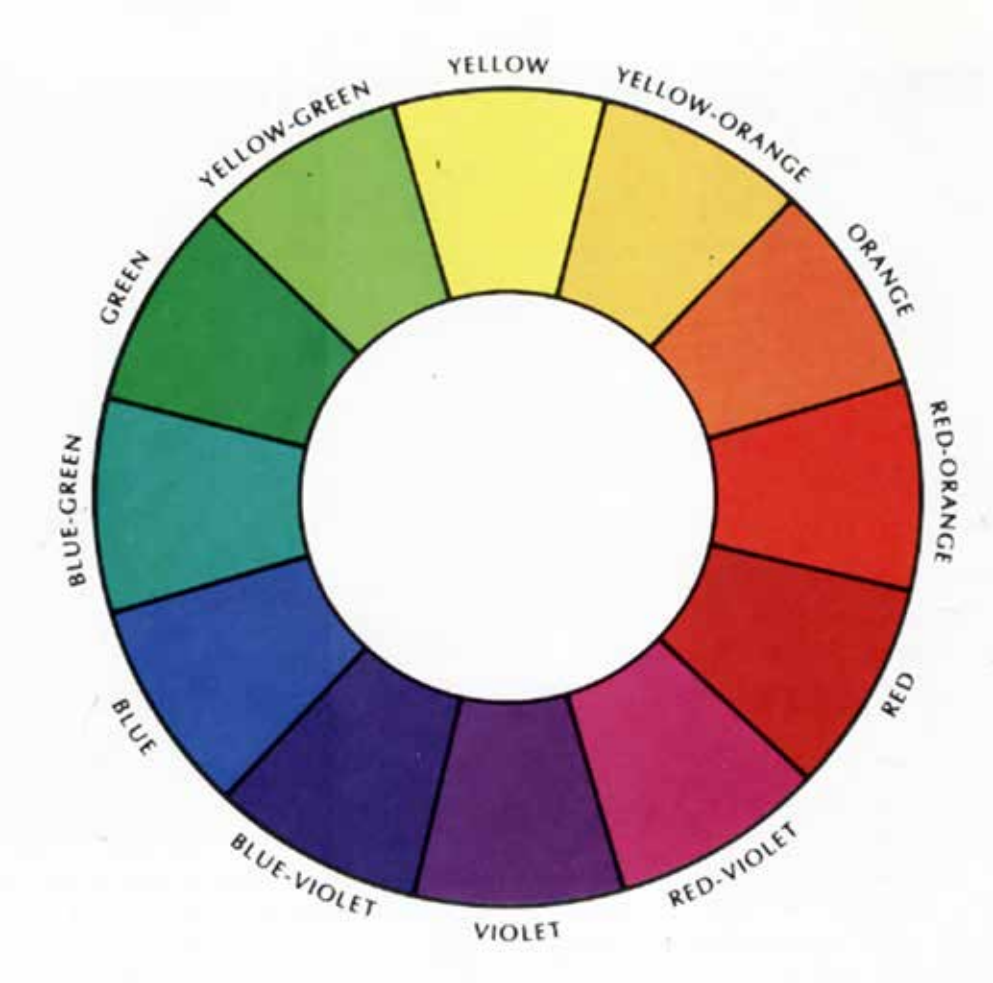
Extension (for older students)

- when students have completed their first painting have them re-draw the basic shapes of their object again, but this time have them soften the edges, change shapes and add connecting lines where necessary so their drawing resembles the original magazine image.
- have students paint this second work using 'natural' colours for both their object and for the background.
- display both of students' drawings and then discuss.

Discussion/Evaluation:

1/ Which shapes did you use most often in your drawing(s)?
2/ Explain how identifying the basic shapes in your object helped you make the second drawing.
3/ Which of your paintings appeals to you most? Why?

Experiments in Colour - Grades 3-9



When artists create a composition, they plan their colour combinations very carefully. Colour can serve many functions in a work of art. It can be used to create the illusion of space; it can be used to provide focus and emphasis; it can be used to create movement; and it can be used to create a certain mood. In the works in the exhibition the artists use colour to serve all of these functions. In the following project students will examine the use of colour relationships to create the illusion of space and mood within a painting.

Materials:

Colour Wheel Chart
Paper
Paints and brushes
Mixing trays
Water container
Paper towels
Pencils/erasers
Still life items or landscape drawings
Magazines/ photographic references

Experiments in Colour continued

Carmen Miller
Clutch Purse, 2021
Beading, caribou tufting on hide
Collection of the artist

Methodology:

1/ Through an examination of the colour wheel provided, discuss with students the concepts of **complementary colours** and **split-complements**.

Questions to guide discussion:

- What is the lightest colour on the colour wheel?
  - yellow
- What is the darkest colour on the colour wheel?
  - violet
- What is the relationship of these two colours? - the colours are **opposite** each other.

Colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel are called **complementary colours**.

- What are the colours next to violet?
  - red-violet and blue-violet

These colours are called **split complements** because they are split, or separated, by the true complement of yellow. Complements can be split one step further to become a **triad**, three colours **equally spaced** on the colour wheel.

Complementary colours can be used to create focus, emphasis, and the illusion of space. Brighter (warm) colours in the colour wheel tend to appear in front of - or come forward on the picture plane - compared to darker (cool) colours.

Instructions for Creating Art

1/ Distribute paper, pencils and erasers to students
2/ Instruct students to make several sketches of ideas for their painting - they may base their work on a still-life arrangement or create a landscape based on magazine or photographic sources
3/ Have students choose a sketch they like and then plan their colours by first examining the colour wheel. Students to first choose their **dominant or main colour** and then pick the **split complements or triad** to that colour.
4/ Students to use their colour scheme to paint their painting.

Experiments in Colour continued

Questions for discussion

1/ What are the split complements and triad colour schemes used in your work?
2/ What is the colour relationship of the colours used in your painting?
3/ Why have you used these particular colours?

Bead Painting

The following bead projects are inspired by the use of beading found in the exhibition
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Carmen Miller
Split Toe Moccasins, 2021
Beaded, hand sewn tanned moose hide
Collection of the artist

All Grades

Objectives:
- to familiarise students with native art/crafts
- to simulate a beaded work using paint and paper
- to become familiar with designs and imagery traditionally used by First Nations people. These are geometric patters, flowers and animals
- review compositional elements as seen in art work (repetition, balance/symmetry, colour, line, texture)

Materials:
- black construction paper
- paint
- pencils with eraser ends (used as stamps)
- newsprint for thumbnail sketches

Methodology:
1. After a discussion about suitable imagery have the students work up thumbnail sketches of different compositions. Have the students (with teacher assistance) choose an image.

2. Traditionally First Nations artisans worked on hide or, later, black velvet - this can be simulated by using black construction paper for this project. Have the students lightly redraw their chosen design onto the paper.

3. Using the eraser end of the pencil dip it in the paint and stamp in the image as if sewing on beads. Do not use too many different colours and keep the choices in line with traditional bead work.

Patterning with Beads

Grades 2 - 4

Objectives:
This project is intended to honor tradition, concepts, values and expressions of First Nations people. Beading traditions were passed down from generation to generation and patterns were often that of the family or the area where they lived. This project is based on mathematics, repetition and limited colour.

Materials:
- various colours of 'crow' beads - make sure the hole in the beads will accommodate pipe cleaners
- matching coloured pencils
- graph paper
- black or white pipe cleaners
- 4 inch x 6 inch pieces of white foam board

Methodology:
1. Discuss what a patter ins - repetitious, geometric, symmetrical or asymmetric. Look for examples in students' environment to illustrate

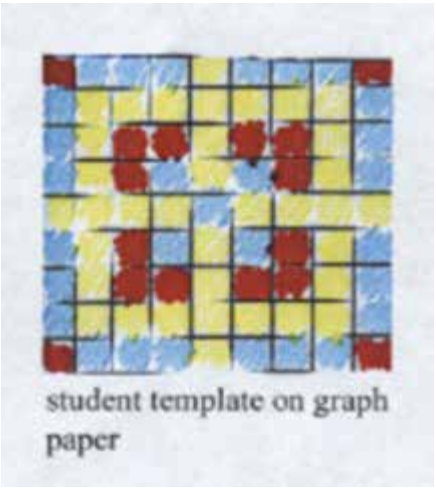
2. Give each student: - a pre-selected number and colours of beads
- 9 pipe cleaners
- corresponding coloured pencils and a sheet of graph paper (9 x 9 squares)

3. Have the students work out several different patterns from their selection of coloured beads.
- is their pattern different from their neighbors?
- how many different patterns can they make?
- is there a focal point?
- is the pattern the same on both sides (symmetrical) or not (asymmetric)?

4. Transfer the pattern to the graph paper - colour each square according to the design in the appropriate colour of bead selection.

5. Thread 9 beads onto each pipe cleaner corresponding to the template. Complete transferring all the beads to the pipe cleaners.

6. On the foam board place the finished beading to match the template. Fold under each end of the pipe cleaners to secure to the board.


student template on graph paper

Brick Stitch Beaded Earrings

Beadwork
In beadwork, very small, usually uniformly colored, beads are transformed into intricate articles or embellishments. Each bead is just an element in the larger pattern and the overall design creates the impact, rather than the individual bead. The artistry and skill lie in the design, construction, and execution of the article. For centuries, people all over the world have created complex patterns using only beads and thread.
Caroline Crabtree and Pam Stallebrass, **BEADWORK a World Guide**, Rizzoli International Publications, Inc. New York. P8

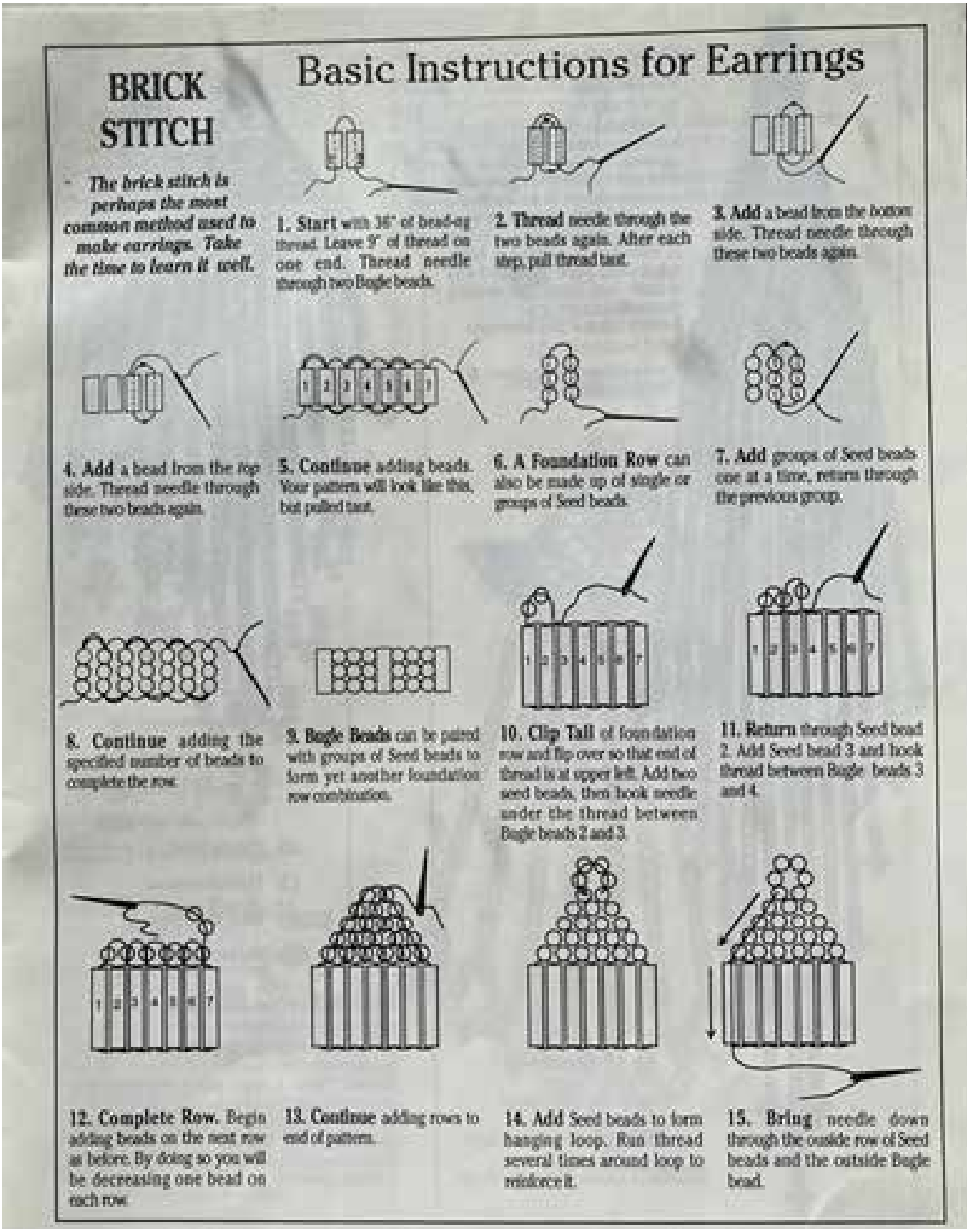
Learn the brick stitch to make a pair of earrings by following the illustrations provided:

Supplies required:
Beading thread
Beading needle(s)
Bee's wax (to detangle and strengthen the thread)
Scissors
Seed beads (assorted colors)

Suzanne McNeill, More Steps to Beading, Fort Worth, TX, p. 4/7

Project submitted by MJ Belcourt

Brick Stitch Beaded Earrings page 2



Brick Stitch Beaded Earrings page 3

Mi’kmaq Quill Work Designs

The following activity is inspired by design work of Elaine Alexie in the exhibition ᐊᐧᐃᐧᓯᐦᒋᑲᓇ wawisihcikan - adornment. While the following project is based on Mi’kmaq quill work designs, it can be adapted where students create their own abstract design.

Quillwork is a traditional art in which porcupine quills were used to embellish clothing, accessories and containers of birch bark. Porcupine quills are naturally white with black tips. Once removed from a hunted porcupine, the quills are cleaned, sorted by sized and then are used either naturally or dyed in various colors. Sometimes the quills need to be flattened and most often moistened prior to use. The artisans continuing this traditional handicraft have been making birch bark quill boxes. To insert the quills into decorative patterns, the bark is first perforated with an awl. The quills are threaded through the holes, and the moistened quills stiffen into place as they dry. The ends of the quills on the underside of the work are either folded over or snipped off, depending on how small the holes are and how tightly the quills are held.

A common decorative pattern on birch bark boxes is the Mi’kmaq Eight Pointed Star. This star has been used for centuries as a symbol of the sun and has several meanings. Seven of the points represent the seven districts of the Mi’kmaq nation, while the eight was included in the 18th century to represent an alliance then established with Great Britain. The star also represents the four cardinal directions (North, South, East, West) and all those in between. The four colors, Red, Black, Yellow and White, represent the “four races of people”. When the star is made with the four colors, it represents togetherness and unity with all nations. It was a common symbol in 19th century quillwork, and continues to be popular in contemporary Mi’kmaq artwork and design.

Make a Mi’kmaq Quill Box Inspired Craft

This craft is one way to explore the Mi’kmaq culture with kids. After looking at various examples and a close up of porcupine quills, have them make their own quillwork box to hold their t reasures.

Quill Work Designs continued

This craft is one way to explore the Mi'kmaq culture with kids. After looking at various examples and a close up of porcupine quills, have them make their own quillwork box to hold their treasures.

What you need:

- One box. The one we used is 6″ x 6″
- Toothpicks. To create the 8 pointed star pattern, you will need at least 16. Then it depends on what patterns you want to create. I recommend having extras just in case.
- Acrylic paint and paintbrush. Any color you'd like, but we used the 4 colors to represent the 4 nations: black, red, yellow and white.
- Clear drying white glue.

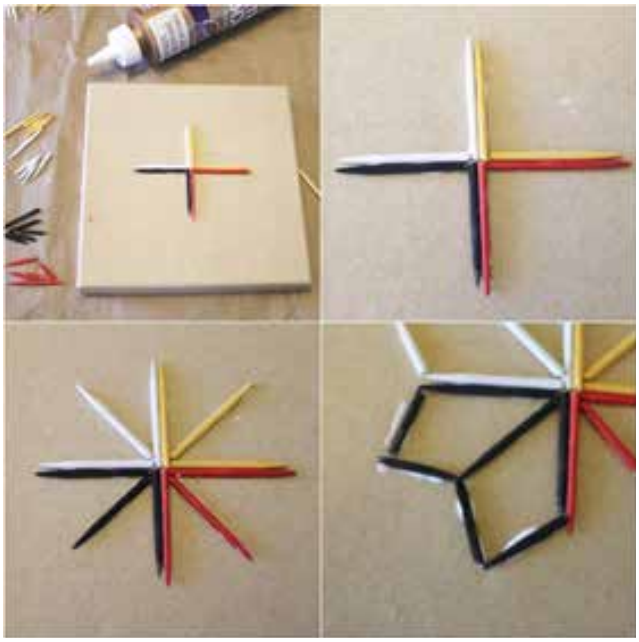
Directions:

1. You can start off by painting a bunch of toothpicks (what we did) and determine your pattern from there, or design first so you know how many toothpicks you'll need. Be sure to paint a couple of extra toothpicks for each color, just in case. The wood absorbs the paint fairly quickly so they don't take too long to dry. By the time we got to our fourth color, the first was dry. Do make sure they are dry before using them. This is a great task to share – with each person choosing one color to paint. It's also a great time to talk about the symbolism of the four colors (as above).

2. Prepare the toothpicks for the eight pointed star design. For each color (2 points of the star), you need 4 painted toothpicks. To "cut" them to size, we simply used our hands to bend and break them. They break rather easily, and you don't need to be precise. With the four toothpicks of each color, break two in half and save the three best pieces. For the other two, break them in approximately three equal pieces. Save the four smaller pieces that turned out the nicest. Once "cut" to size, for each color you will want 3 longer pieces and 4 smaller pieces, as pictured below.

Quill Work Designs continued

3. To make the eight pointed star design, start by creating a cross with four right angles using the longer pieces, as pictured below in the top images. To glue the toothpicks, run a bead of glue along the length of the stick. It's very likely glue will pool around the edges, and you can clean that up by gently scraping it away with a regular toothpick. Or leave it to dry clear. Then take the third longer piece and glue it diagonally in the center of each right angle, as pictured bottom left. Finish the points with the smaller pieces. I recommend placing two at a time first to align them, then glue them in place in order to get the angle right. And there you have it. Feel free to embellish the lid any way you like.



Quill Work Designs continued

4. Create a design on the sides of the box. Be sure the toothpicks do not get in the way of the closed lid. With the striped pattern we did, rather than bead the glue along each toothpick, we only did it for the bottom stick and then dabbed glue on the box. The toothpicks were then placed on over the other in the glue. It's easier than one at a time.

And you have a completed "quillwork" box, to hold your treasures.

From: https://multiculturalkidblogs.com/2014/11/06/exploring-the-mikmaq-culture...

Elaine Alexie
Quilled Dene Floral Bolo Tie (detail showing quill work), 2021
Moosehide, antique and vintage seed beads, porcupine quills, sterling silver beads, leather, silver components
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Faux - Caribou Hair Tufting

Origins

The technique of hair tufting was a new art form developed in the early 1900s by Katherine Bouvier née Beaulieu and Madeleine Lafferty née Bouvier, Metis women of Fort Providence. Hair tufting is a decorative art form that utilizes a technique in which three-dimensional flowers and leaves are created by tightly pulling small bunches of moose hair or caribou hair under a loop stitch and fastening it off. The hairs are then fanned out on all sides of the stitch and scissor-trimmed into smooth rounded tufts.

(Lafferty, Richard Jr., “On the Origins of Moose Hair Tufting.” Gabriel Dumont Institute, Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture. http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/02315)

Project Description
Create your own faux caribou hair tufting using mini pompoms

Supply List
• Template
• Stiff felt
• Soft felt
• Pipe cleaner
• Pompoms (variety of size - optional)
• Glue
• Yogurt lid (for glue)
• Scissors or wire snips

Directions
Prep all material before gluing:
• Cut a 5x7 piece of stiff felt.
• Use the template and cut out the leaves from the soft felt (variety of colors optional)
• Use scissors or wire snips to cut the pipe cleaners to desired length
• Select mini pompoms for the flower petals

Faux - Caribou Hair Tufting continued

• Template can be followed or create your design
• Once all your materials are prepared it's time to glue the stems (pipe cleaners), flower petals (pom poms) and leaves (soft felt) onto the stiff felt backing. Remember a little glue goes a long way.

Supplies:

Faux - Caribou Hair Tufting continued

Design Template:

Project Design by MJ Belcourt Moses

Metal Art

The earliest American metalworkers cold-hammered copper nuggets into thin, flat sheets, which were rolled into beads or cut and shaped into pendants, and bracelets. These were used for trade or given as gifts.

The Great Spirit's most valued gift was the sun, acknowledged by the tribes through ritual, sacred imagery, and shining artifacts that captured and reflected the sun's own luminosity.
Sherr Dubin, Lois. **North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment**; Harry N. Abrams, Inc. New York. P58

Project: Create your own sun pendent using aluminum foil

Supplies:

Aluminum foil
Thin cardboard (cereal box)
White glue
Hot glue gun/glue stick (optional)
Pencil, eraser, marker, white marker
Scissors
Hole punch
Shoe polish
Felt
Newspaper

Metal Art continued

Directions:
1/ Cut desired shape out of thin cardboard.

2/ On the opposite side draw design. Use the one provided or create your own.

Metal Art continued

3/ Appy glue on design using white glue or hot glue. Allow to dry.

4/ Once glue is dry, apply white glue to the entire design, apply to a double ply aluminium foil.

5/ Rub glued design with fingers first then use a Q-tip to define design.

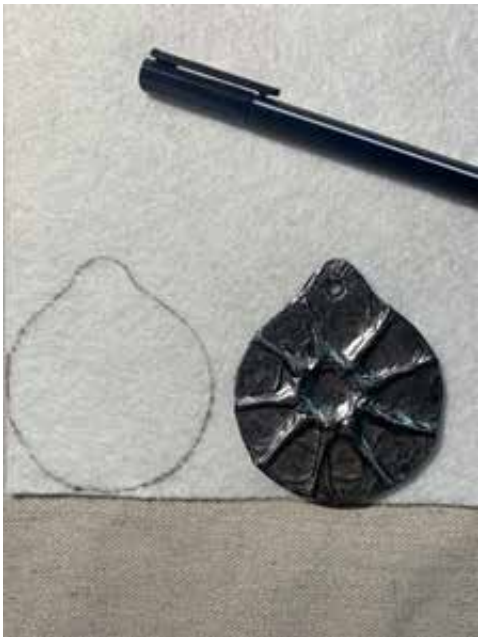
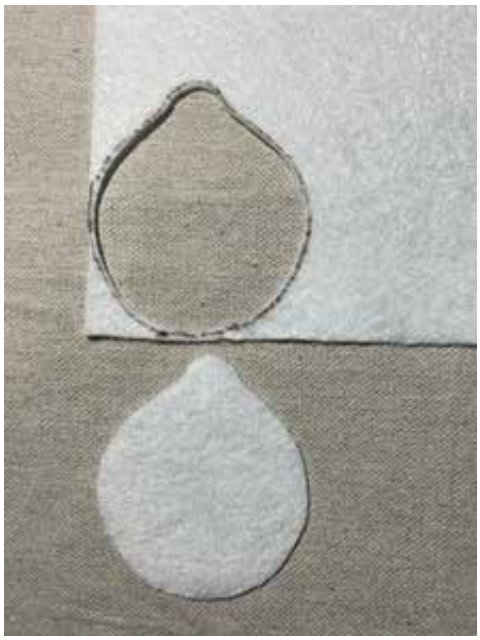
Metal Art continued

6/ Trim aluminium, apply white glue to back of design as shown, press and glue foil down.



7/ Punch hole using hole punch.

Trace design onto felt (color of your choice) cut inside the line to fit backing.

Metal Art continued

8/ Glue felt to back of pendent.

9/ To create a patina, use black liquid shoe polish, apply two coats. Allow to dry in-between coats. Use paper towel to remove excess.

A sealant or hairspray can be used to seal patina. Allow to dry. Enjoy your metal art piece.

Project Design by MJ Belcourt Moses

GLOSSARY

Elaine Alexie
Ditsuu A'Tan Ky'uu Gaonahtan - Grandmothers teachings through flowers signature necklace, 2021
Antique/vintage micro seed beads, caribou hide, vintage trade beads, antique torse beads, silver components, silverberry, dentalium shell, 24 k gold
Elaine Alexie - Private Collection

Glossary

Aboriginal/First Nations: The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

Abstraction: Is a term applied to 20th century styles in reaction against the traditional European view of art as the imitation of nature. Abstraction stresses the formal or elemental structure of a work and has been expressed in all genres or subjects of visual expression.

Collage: A work of art created by gluing bits of paper, fabric, scraps, photographs, or other materials to a flat surface.

Complementary colour: Colours that are directly opposite each other on the colour wheel, for example, blue and orange. These colours when placed next to each other produce the highest contrast.

Composition: The arrangement of lines, colours and forms so as to achieve a unified whole; the resulting state or product is referred to as a composition.

Contemporary artists: Those whose peak of activity can be situated somewhere between the 1970's (the advent of post-modernism) and the present day.

Cool colours: Blues, greens and purples are considered cool colours. In aerial perspective, cool colours are said to move away from you or appear more distant.

Elements of design: The basic components which make up any visual image: line, shape, colour, texture and space.

Exhibition: A public display of art objects including painting, sculpture, prints, installation, etc.

Geometric shapes: Any shape or form having more mathematical than organic design. Examples of geometric shapes include: spheres, cones, cubes, squares, triangles.

Gradation: A principle of design that refers to the use of a series of gradual/transitional changes in the use of the elements of art with a given work of art; for example, a transition from lighter to darker colours or a gradation of large shapes to smaller ones.

Iconography: A set of specified or traditional symbolic forms associated with the subject or theme of a stylized work of art.

Mythology: The body of myths (sacred stories) of a particular culture, or of humankind as a whole; the study and interpretation of such myths.

Organic shapes: An irregular shape; refers to shapes or forms having irregular edges or objects resembling things existing in nature

Glossary continued

Positive shapes: Are the objects themselves. They are surrounded in a painting by what are called the negative shapes or spaces.

Primary colours: The three colours from which all other colours are derived - red, yellow and blue.

Realism/Naturalism: A style of art in which artists try to show objects, scenes, and people as they actually appear.

Shade: Add black to a colour to make a shade. Mix the pure colour with increasing quantities of black making the colour darker in small increments. If you add gray to a colour, you produce a tone.

Symbolism: The practice of representing things by means of symbols or of attributing symbolic meanings or significance to objects, events, or relationships.

Tint: Add white to a colour to create a tint. Mix the pure colour with increasing quantities of white so that the colour lightens.

Warm colours: Yellow and reds of the colour spectrum, associated with fire, heat and sun. In aerial perspective warm colours are said to come towards you.

Woodland Style: Is a genre of graphic design and painting among First Nations artists from the Great Lakes area - including northern Ontario and southwestern Manitoba. Developed by Norval Morrisseau, this visionary style emphasizes outlines and x-ray views of people, animals, and plant life using vivid colour.

Credits

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

MJ Belcourt - curator
The Artists

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Art Gallery of Alberta

SOURCE MATERIALS:

Art in Action, Guy Hubbard, Coronado Publishers Inc., United States, 1987
Beadwork - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beadwork
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Cowrie Shells - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cowrie
Dentalium Shells - https://wn.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dentalium_shell

Credits

This exhibition was developed and is managed by the Art Gallery of Alberta for The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Shane Golby – Curator/Program Manager
AFA Travelling Exhibition Program, Region 2
Elicia Weaver –TREX Technician

Front Cover Image:

Left Image: Elaine Alexie, *Dinvi' trade bead necklace and earrings*, 2021, Tanned caribou hide, silverberries, vintage trade beads, Elaine Alexie - Private Collection
Top Right Image: Carmen Miller, *Split Toe Moccasins*, 2021, Beaded, hand sewn tanned moose hide, Collection of the artist
Bottom Right Image: Erik Lee, *Bracelet Cuff*, 2021, Sterling Silver, Collection of the artist