



Indigenous History Month: Week 1: Art & Resurgence

The presence and use of art in Indigenous societies is evident across Turtle Island since time immemorial. Plains Peoples painted their tipis based on family stories that were passed on for generations. The symbols used in Story Robes and Pictographs hold meaningful experiences for specific tribes. The designs used for moccasins and clothing are unique to each individual Indigenous group. Basket making varies across Turtle Island based on the resources available to the People around them. Coastal Peoples used designs on their lodges to recognise the clan system they were part of.

With the impact of European peoples, the ways that Indigenous Peoples could express artistic creation was amplified. Weavers used coloured threads to create meaningful designs in Metis sashes. Colourful glass beads were used to express specific tribal designs onto clothing. A plethora of media was introduced to creative Indigenous Peoples and art began to flourish.

For a period of time in Canadian history, systematically racist policy did not allow Indigenous creativity. In recent decades, due to important inquiries like the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the current resurgence of Indigenous art and artists is compelling conversation and furthering the presence of indigeneity in the Canadian conversation. Indigenous art is revolution.

Here is a list of amazing and influential Canadian Indigenous artists and artwork to increase your awareness of indigeneity in art.

[Norval Morriseau](#)

[Daphne Odjig](#)

[Kenojuak Ashevak](#)

[Christi Belcourt](#)

[Alex Janvier](#)

[Alano Edzerza](#)

[Bill Reid](#)

[Roy Henry Vickers](#)

[Insurgence/Resurgence](#)

[Indigenous Art Resurgence](#)

[Shawn Hunt](#)

[Indigenous Arts Collective of Canada](#)

[Aboriginal Artists in Canada](#)

[Annie Pootoogook](#)

[Brian Jungen](#)

[Rebecca Belmore](#)

[Sage Nowak](#)

[Indigenous Art Collection](#)

BC Curriculum Connections

Big Ideas: Artists often challenge the status quo and open us to new perspectives and experiences. Individual and collective expression can be achieved through the arts.

Core Competencies:

- **Creative Thinking:** I can develop a body of creative work over time in an area of interest or passion.
- **Personal/Social Responsibility:** I have pride in who I am. I understand that I am a part of larger communities. I understand the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation.
- **Communication:** I communicate purposefully, using forms and strategies I have practiced.

FPPL Connections: Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge. Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

How does knowledge of Indigenous art link to Equity for Indigenous students?

The inclusion of Indigenous art and culture in curricula empowers Indigenous students to develop interest in their own artistic endeavours. Educators who include Indigenous art in curricula will be more likely to support their Indigenous students to pursue their passions.

Indigenous voice in Indigenous art tells stories that were taken away through systematic policy that was created to assimilate. Upholding these voices and creating platforms is essential to the pursuit of equity.

How does Indigenous art confront implicit bias?

Indigenous art often disrupts the status quo, and through this process opens learners and educators to multiple ways of knowing and being in the world. This may happen through the confrontation of outdated and inaccurate stereotypes, the challenging of racist policies and politics, and the resurgence of traditional art forms blended with modern techniques.

How does Indigenous art confront privilege?

Indigenous art confronts privilege through the disruption of commonly held Western beliefs.

How does Indigenous art inform antiracist perspective?

Indigenous art informs antiracist perspectives through the upholding of Indigenous knowledges as not only valid, but beautiful, informative, and empowering. Youth with the opportunity to learn about Indigenous art in their classrooms will be able to impact future conversations.

Possible Classroom Uses: Discussion of Indigenous Perspective in Media Arts, Inquiry into different Indigenous art styles and variances across Turtle Island, Inquiry into systemic racist policy affecting Indigenous voice, Study of the importance of Indigenous perspective and voice in art, Understanding and appreciation of Metis Dot art.