



Interpretive Guide & Hands-on Activities

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Travelling Exhibition Program

...bring a folding chair

It just seems natural to exclude the black experience from this prairie space. But history says otherwise. Because they were here.

Bertrand Bickersteth

Alberta

aa
Alberta
Foundation
for the
Arts

asa
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:

Shane Golby, Curator/Manager

Travelling Exhibition Program

Ph: 780.428.3830; **Fax:** 780.445.0130 **Email:** shane.golby@youraga.ca

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.

Table of Contents

This package contains:

Curatorial Statement	Page 1
Visual Inventory - List of Works	Pages 2-3
Visual Inventory - Images	Pages 4-8

Talking Art

Art and Cross-Curriculum Connections	Pages 10-19
Artist Biographies/Statements	Pages 20-24
Artist Interviews	Pages 25-32
Artist Artwork Descriptions	Pages 33-38
Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview	Pages 39-47

Visual Learning and Hands-on Projects

What is Visual Learning?	Page 49
Elements of Design Tour	Pages 50-55
Perusing Paintings: An Art-full Scavenger Hunt	Pages 56-57
Exhibition Related Art Projects	Pages 58-82
Glossary	Pages 83-85
Credits	Pages 86-87

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts

The Art Gallery of Alberta



Curatorial Statement

...bring a folding chair

If they don't give a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.

Shirley Chisholm (1924-2005)
American educator and politician

Canada is a nation largely built through immigration from all parts of the world. Recognizing this, in 1971 Canada became the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy. Through this policy and global perceptions of Canada as a favourable place to settle, more than 250 ethnic groups were identified in the Canadian census of 2016 as compared to only 25 at the beginning of the 20th century. Also, according to this most recent census, nearly 22% of Canadians identified themselves as immigrants. Despite perceptions, however, Canada has not always been – and it is argued by some that it is still not - the 'Promised Land', especially for racial minorities. As expressed by Toronto based writer and scholar Yaniya Lee,

...stories, past and present, that stray from conceptualizing Canadian identity as inherently white and European are often omitted from the national cultural discourse.

(FADER magazine, How Canada Forgot Its Black Artists, Yaniya Lee, 2016)

People of African and Caribbean heritage have been in what is now Canada since the earliest days of colonization. Their inclusion in the political, economic and cultural landscapes of the country, however, has been limited. The visual arts have been one realm where Black Canadians have been very under-represented. Though there are some exceptions to this, as indicated by Yaniya Lee

Black artistic achievement has consistently been edited into the margins, leaving Canadian cultural imaginary overwhelmingly white.

Over the past two decades this narrative has slowly begun to change. In 1996 the Federal Government of Canada declared February to be Black History Month. A decade later the province of Alberta became the fourth province in Canada to officially recognize this observance. Providing an opportunity for people to gain insight into the experiences of Black Canadians and Albertans and the vital role they have played throughout history and continue to play today, Black History Month also allows for an examination of the issues people of colour face in Canadian/Albertan communities and invites all citizens to take steps to end racism and create inclusive environments.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition ...bring a folding chair is inspired by annual Black History Month celebrations and recognizes the significant contributions Black Canadians, and Black artists in particular, make to Alberta. With art works exploring history, heritage, identity and contemporary concerns, the artists in this exhibition 'bring a folding chair' to the table of Canadian society and the art scene in Alberta and, in sitting at the table, give voice to our common humanity.

This exhibition was curated by Shane Golby 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.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Visual Inventory - List of Works

Braxton Garneau

Cariwest, 2021

Oil on canvas

16 inches x 20 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Braxton Garneau

Swim, 2021

Oil on canvas

16 inches x 20 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Braxton Garneau

Dine, 2021

Oil on canvas

16 inches x 20 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Braxton Garneau

Amber Valley, 2021

Oil on canvas

16 inches x 20 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Braxton Garneau

Ticket, 2021

Oil on canvas

16 inches x 20 inches

Courtesy of the artist

AJA Louden

Claiming A Chair, 2021

Mixed media on panel

20 inches x 27 7/8 inches

Private Collection

AJA Louden

I Am From Here, 2021

Mixed media on panel

15 inches x 15 inches

Private Collection

AJA Louden

Mythmaking 101, 2021

Aerosol and acrylic on panel

27 7/8 inches x 27 7/8 inches

Private Collection

AJA Louden

Not A Ball Player (Deflating Stereotypes)

2021

Mixed media on panel

27 7/8 inches x 27 7/8 inches

Private Collection

AJA Louden

The Story of Dapper Dan, 2021

Mixed media on panel

20 1/8 inches x 24 inches

Private Collection

Elsa Robinson

Honouring the Ancestors, 2021

Mixed media textile

20 inches x 20 inches

Collection of the artist

Elsa Robinson

My Relations, 2021

Mixed media textile

20 inches x 20 inches

Collection of the artist

Elsa Robinson

Masquerade, 2021

Mixed media textile

20 inches x 20 inches

Collection of the artist

Elsa Robinson

Reflection, 2021

Mixed media textile

20 inches x 20 inches

Collection of the artist

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Visual Inventory - List of Works

Elsa Robinson

My Coat of Arms, 2021

Mixed media textile

20 inches x 20 inches

Collection of the artist

Fetsum Teclémariam

Immigrant, 2021

Oil on canvas

36 inches x 24 inches

Collection of the artist

Fetsum Teclémariam

Unlimited Travel, 2020

Oil on canvas

16 inches x 12 inches

Collection of the artist

Fetsum Teclémariam

Keep them inside, 2021

Oil on canvas

16 inches x 12 inches

Collection of the artist

Fetsum Teclémariam

Unity, 2019

Charcoal on paper

17 inches x 14 inches

Collection of the artist

Fetsum Teclémariam

Quit, 2018

Charcoal on paper

21 inches x 27 inches

Collection of the artist

Total works: 20 art works

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Visual Inventory - Images



Braxton Garneau
Cariwest, 2021
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



Braxton Garneau
Swim, 2021
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



Braxton Garneau
Dine, 2021
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



Braxton Garneau
Amber Valley, 2021
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Visual Inventory - Images



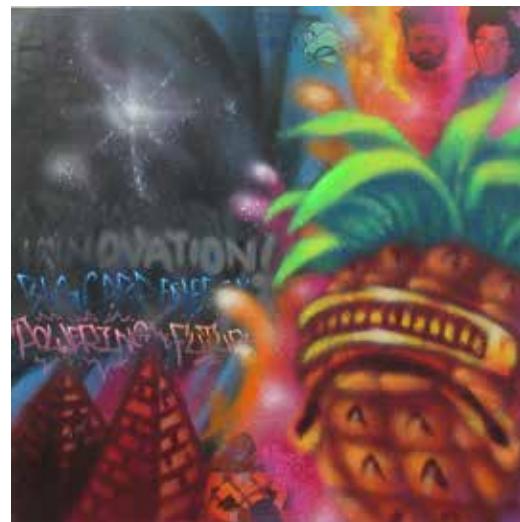
Braxton Garneau
Ticket, 2021
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



AJA Louden
Claiming A Chair, 2021
Mixed media on panel
Private Collection



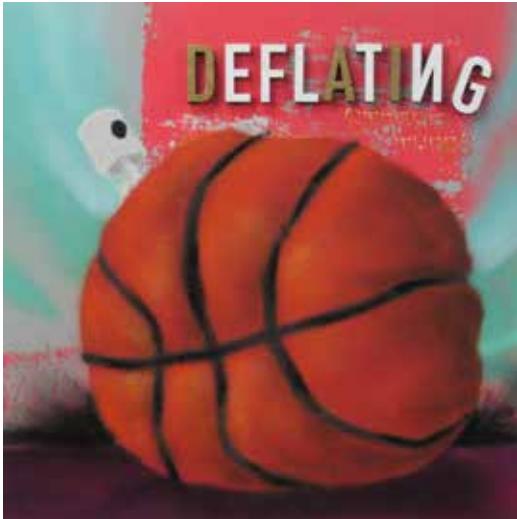
AJA Louden
I Am From Here, 2021
Mixed media on panel
Private Collection



AJA Louden
Mythmaking 101, 2021
Mixed media on panel
Private Collection

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Visual Inventory - Images



AJA Louden
Not A Ball Player (Deflating Stereotypes), 2021
Mixed media on panel
Private Collection



AJA Louden
The Story of Dapper Dan, 2021
Mixed media on panel
Private Collection



Elsa Robinson
Honouring the Ancestors, 2021
Mixed media textile
Collection of the artist



Elsa Robinson
My Relations, 2021
Mixed media textile
Collection of the artist

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
Visual Inventory - Images



Elsa Robinson
Masquerade, 2021
Mixed media textile
Collection of the artist



Elsa Robinson
Reflection, 2021
Mixed media textile
Collection of the artist



Elsa Robinson
My Coat of Arms, 2021
Mixed media textile
Collection of the artist



Fetsum Tecliemarium
Immigrant, 2021
Oil on canvas
Collection of the artist

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Visual Inventory - Images



Fetsum Teclemariam
Unity 2019
Charcoal on paper
Collection of the artist



Fetsum Teclemariam
Unlimited Travel, 2020
Oil on canvas
Collection of the artist



Fetsum Teclemariam
Keep Them Inside, 2021
Oil on canvas
Collection of the artist



Fetsum Teclemariam
Quit, 2018
Charcoal on paper
Collection of the artist

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Talking Art

(Black) history is not a separate history. It's integral and integrated into the fabric of Canada.

Clement Virgo, Canadian Film and Television Director

Only education opens the mind.

Ron Mapp, Edmonton



Braxton Garneau
Dine, 2021
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

CONTENTS

Art and Cross-Curriculum Connections	Pages 10-19
Artist Biographies/Statements	Pages 20-24
Artist interviews	Pages 25-32
Artist Artwork Descriptions	Pages 33-38
Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview	Pages 39-47

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

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 ...bring a folding chair. 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.

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.

Art Curriculum Connections continued

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

- 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.

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 1: Students will record or document activities, people and discoveries.

Concepts

- B. Special events, such as field trips, visits and festive occasions can be recorded visually.
- C. Family groups and people relationships can be recorded visually.
- D. Knowledge gained from study or experimentation can be recorded visually.

PURPOSE 2: Students will illustrate or tell a story.

Concepts

- A. A narrative can be retold or interpreted visually.

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.

Art Curriculum Connections continued

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.

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 Curriculum Connections continued

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.

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.

Art Curriculum Connections continued

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.

Impact of Images

Question sources of images that are personally relevant or significant to them in contemporary culture.

Concepts

B. Imagery can depict important aspects of the student's own life.

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, Social Studies and Language Arts 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.

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 than 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
- 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

Knowledge and Understanding

Students will:

4.2.2 assess, critically, how the cultural and linguistic heritage and diversity of Alberta has evolved over time.

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 music, art, narratives and literature contributed to the vitality of the culture, language and identity of diverse Alberta communities over time?

LANGUAGE ARTS

K.4.3 Students will use drawings to illustrate ideas and information and talk about them.

2.1 Use knowledge of context, pictures, letters, words, sentences...in a variety of oral, print and other media texts to construct and confirm meaning

5.2.2 Experience oral, print and other media texts from a variety of cultural traditions and genres, such as historical fiction, myths, biographies, and poetry

6.4.3 Demonstrate attentive listening and viewing. Students will identify the tone, mood and emotion conveyed in oral and visual presentations

Artist Biographies/Statements

Braxton Garneau

Biography

Braxton Garneau is an emerging artist living in Edmonton, Alberta. He received his diploma in Fine Art from MacEwan University in 2017 and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Art in Art and Design from the University of Alberta in 2020. He has participated in several group exhibitions including *Nice to Meet You* in FAB Gallery at the University of Alberta, the *5 Artists 1 Love* exhibition at the Art Gallery of Alberta, and a self-titled solo exhibition at Parallel Space.

Statement

Art has an unlimited capacity for affective storing telling. It is able to distill emotions, experiences, and systems of oppression into sensations that all audiences can experience and empathize with.

My work is an existential analysis of the “Black experience” and its relationship to my own identity. I aim to confront the continued social and cultural vulnerabilities experienced throughout the African Diaspora. Critiquing the historical “gaze” I address the notion of mastery, the privilege of viewership, and the way black bodies have been denied agency throughout history. Working heavily with the figure I employ painting, printmaking, and installation in an effort to make real my thoughts about my own connectedness to culture. Through my practice, I explore my own questions of identity as well as its influences and limitations within Canadian society.

AJA Louden

AJA Louden is a muralist, designer and educator working out of Treaty 6 territory in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Born to a family tree with roots split between Jamaica and Canada, Louden is a child of contrast. He grew up in a rural community near a big city, and alternated his time between skateboarding, drawing, and feeding goats and horses. Whether it's his bold, detailed freehand spray-painted portraits of figures as divergent as Jimi Hendrix and Richard Nixon, or his work using hand lettering, stylewriting and sign painting to celebrate the beauty of language and the written word, AJA uses painting as a lens through which he may more clearly see, and as a tool to help others be seen.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Artist Biographies/Statements continued

Elsa Robinson

Elsa Robinson is a Jamaican-Canadian multi-media artist and a passionate arts educator. In her work, she combines elements of her cultural heritages and in so doing, seeks to honour her two homes and all her relations. She aims to speak across all cultures, engage conversation and effect a sense of oneness within the human community.

Her decades-long devotion to artistic practice has imbued her work with vibrancy, versatility and an intuitive spiritual poignancy through which she transmits her deep love and care for humanity.

Elsa first worked as a self-taught artist, and today she holds the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Art and Design from the University of Alberta and the degree of Master of Fine Arts from the Vermont College of Fine Arts.

I have arrived at this place not through perfection but from forging through the fire of my own imperfections to find my own truth. My work is the gift from my heart that aims to remind us of what we already know is true; to show us the things we don't always see; and to offer building blocks that we can use to create a better world for us now and for the future.

If when you meet the art you identify a part of yourself, you find a space for contemplation, you feel strength, peace, joy and beauty, then the work has accomplished its role - teaching us that we are a part of the common cord of humanity. Let the art invite you to move beyond the illusion of separateness and realize that we are so much more the same than we are different.

Elsa Robinson

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Artist Biographies/Statements continued

Fetsum Teclemariam

Biography

Born in 1972 in Keren, Eritrea. Fetsum was a mathematics teacher and self-taught artist until he left Eritrea to seek asylum in 2007. He travelled through Sudan, Egypt and the Sinai Desert to Israel, where he was given asylum between 2007-2013. In Israel, Fetsum studied art and is a graduate of "Hatahana" school for figurative drawing and painting, Tel Aviv. His work was shown and purchased by several collectors in Israel and he was given a solo show at the Hanina Gallery of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv. He immigrated to Canada in 2013 and was reunited with his family. Fetsum lives and works in Edmonton. Teclemariam paints mainly from observation, in the classic tradition.

Artist Statement

My paintings are visual proverbs. Using the figure, still life objects, and landscapes as a means of self expression, I communicate the cultural heritage and emotions of the places that I come from and the experience of the culture where I live now. I grew up in a community in Africa where I was not allowed to express my thoughts, concerns, and feelings in public – speaking out had terrible consequences. As a result, I started to express my anger, frustrations, sense of betrayal, joy and beauty through my paintings and still do. The marks that I make with my brushes and charcoal are connected to my feelings, and express and communicate a situation. I depict both ugly realities and joyful feelings through the strokes, and by so doing address the paradox of human life and my own thoughts and feelings. Using oil as a medium, I am able to have more layers on the canvas which allows me to capture the experience of having multiple feelings at the same time as well as capture feelings that come in sequence. My paintings express my feelings of the physical environment around me and the people who live in it, yet they are not an exclusive presentation of self. Hence, I invite my audience to search for connections to themselves in my paintings and examine how they relate to themselves and to their surroundings.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Artist Biographies/Statements continued

Fetsum Tecliemariam

Born in 1972 in Keren, Eritrea
Lives and works in Edmonton, AB, Canada

Education

- 2016 Visual Arts Project Development, Harcourt House, Edmonton, AB, Canada
2010 Master Class for Painting and Drawing, Hatahana Studio School, Tel Aviv, Israel

Solo Exhibitions

- 2018 Life Through Painting Part 2, The City of Edmonton Library Woodcroft Branch, Edmonton, AB, Canada
2017 Life Through Painting Part 1, William Hawrelak Park, Edmonton, AB, Canada
Black History Month, Edmonton City Hall, Edmonton, AB, Canada
Black History Month, Concordia University, Edmonton, AB, Canada
2011 Indoor and Outdoor Painting, Hanina Galley, Tel Aviv, Israel
2004 Topography, Religion and Culture, Keren Hotel Gallery, Keren, Eritrea

Group Exhibitions

- 2018 5 Artists 1 Love, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada
5 Artists 1 Love, Augustana Campus University of Alberta, Camrose, AB, Canada
5 Artists 1 Love, Scott Gallery, Edmonton, AB, Canada
2012 Hatahana Merkezit Municipality Galley, Tel Aviv, Israel
Haifa University Gallery, Haifa, Israel
2011 Hatahana Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel

Commissions

- 2005 St Michael Church, Keren, Eritrea
2005 Wolde Bairay & Hiwet Private Collection, Keren, Eritrea
2003 Holy Savior Asmara Church, Asmara, Eritrea
1999 Asmara University, Animal Husbandry Department, Asmara, Eritrea

Collections

- Malue Woldezghi, Edmonton, AB, Canada
Shiff Collection, Marina Hotel, Tel Aviv, Israel
Shiff Collection, Tel Aviv, Israel

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Artist Biographies/Statements continued

Naama Kedem Collection, Tel Aviv, Israel

Miki Belkin Collection, Tel Aviv, Israel

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Tel Aviv, Israel

Mary De Jode, London, UK

Sarina Hotel Collection, Keren, Eritrea

Teaching Experience

2014 - present Drawing and Painting, Private Studio, Edmonton, AB, Canada

2013 - 2014 Visual Arts Instructor, Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton,
Edmonton, AB, Canada

2011 - 2013 Drawing and Painting Instructor for Youth, Eri-shan Studio, Tel Aviv,
Israel

Residencies & Scholarships

2008 - 2010 Scholarship, Hatahana Studio School, Tel Aviv, Israel

Press & Publications

Asmara Show, Interview, Daniel Sium, 2018 ([Link](#))

Radio Blina, Interview, February 11, 2017 ([Link](#))

Tigryna Program, Interview, July 2017

Art at the Marina Hotel, Magazine, Tel Aviv, 2013

Meazin Newspaper 2013: No. 4, Page 12, Tel Aviv, Israel

The Refugee Voice: A Matter of Color, June 2012, Page 26-27, Tel Aviv, Israel

Mestiyat Magazine, September 10, 2010, Page 10, Tel Aviv, Israel

Eritrean Television (Eri-TV), Interview, May 12, 2005, Asmara, Eritrea

Ministry Information, Bilen Radio Program, Interview, July 21, 2004, Asmara, Eritrea

Artist Interviews

Braxton Garneau

Braxton Garneau was born and raised in Edmonton. Primarily a ‘representational’ and figurative artist, he has loved art ever since he was a young child, stating that it was the one thing he could focus on. As a child he enjoyed nothing more than spending time drawing, copying comics, and sculpting out of play-dough.

In high school he became really interested in art and began to think of it as a possible career. Braxton credits this ‘awakening’ to his art teacher. As described by the artist

I had this amazing teacher who really inspired me. She got me so excited and literally changed my life. I had never thought about art as a ‘future’ till then but being able to share my passion with someone else was really important.

From high school Braxton went on to receive a diploma in Fine Art from MacEwan University in Edmonton and then, in 2020, completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts program at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. While at MacEwan Braxton focused on painting while at the U of A he specialized in inter-media (a hybrid of digital media, sculpture, installation and conceptual art) and printmaking. At present his practice primarily involves painting and printmaking.

As expressed by this artist, his art practice allows for two main things. First, it enables him to share things that he might not be able to do verbally and in sharing, have an effect on peoples’ lives. As he states:

I think it’s beautiful to share experiences that not everyone has access to. Art provides exposure: the more someone is exposed to people that don’t look like them or have the same experiences or ideas, the more a person is able to empathize. Art allows for conversations that may not regularly come up.

Secondly, art allows Braxton to examine his own life:

My art is also a way for me to distill my own experiences and it’s through art that I digest information.

As mentioned, Braxton’s art practice is primarily focused on representational/figurative work. This interest is partly based on his belief that the human body is formally very beautiful and immediately relatable. His focus on the figure, however, is also built on his interest in questions of identity. As described by the artist:

...this also relates to my interest in identity. We identify with people first on how they look. We’re very visual people and how people interact with us is often based on how we look. It’s difficult to discuss identity without taking this into consideration. The older I get the more I’m aware of my ‘blackness’...and my identity so it has become a stronger theme in my work. A lot of my (personal) experiences have been informed by how I look and I’m becoming more aware of this and the consequences of living in the skin I live in.

Artist Interviews

For the exhibition **...bring a folding chair** Braxton Garneau aims to share the history and experiences of Black Canadians, specifically in Alberta. Inspired by archival research concerning places like Amber Valley in Alberta, Braxton's portraits will be a 'response' to the archives. As he expresses

I want my work to be telling the story of black people in Alberta; to place myself in their shoes and let them tell their stories through me. Highlighting that history excites me.

Relating to the title of the exhibition (and the quote which inspired it), Braxton states

We've always been at the table, but the story hasn't always been recognized or appreciated and acknowledged. My work is about being heard and being seen and the more we tell these unique stories, the more they become everyone's story.

Artist Interviews

AJA Louden

AJA Louden was born in Calgary and raised outside of Cochrane, Alberta. According to Louden, his earliest memories have to do with art:

As soon as I could hold a pencil I was scribbling and drawing and as a child I spent a lot of time on my own and used drawing to occupy myself and explore my imagination.

Despite his interest in art Louden decided on a career in science and after high school moved to Edmonton to study biology at the University of Alberta. By his second year at University, however, he realized that science was not for him and so he dropped out and became employed as a line cook and then Kitchen Manager at an Edmonton restaurant. While working in this position he heard about the design program at what is now MacEwan University and so went back to school, ultimately graduating with a diploma in design. Since then his career has moved forward to a point where, about four years ago, he was able to leave his work with a design studio and become a full-time artist. As an artist he focuses on public art commissions around Alberta, murals, free-lance design work, and teaching and workshops.

Louden brings a lot of energy to both his art and his pursuit of art as a career. While at University he met his wife, who is also an artist, and from her he learned about 'painting' which helped to foster his interest in painting murals. After his studies at MacEwan he participated in such events as Edmonton's summer Art Walk festivals and the Works Festival. Through such activities he was introduced to other mural artists, both local, national and international, and became involved in national and international mural festivals such as Art Basel in Miami Beach, Florida. Over the years he has completed numerous mural projects in Edmonton as well as undertaken projects in Calgary and throughout smaller communities in Alberta.



AJA Louden mural, Edmonton (detail)

AJA Louden's artistic aims change from project to project. As a 'commercial artist' creating a commissioned work he must consider the 'desires' of the client. At the same time, however, he also strives for 'artistic freedom' in what he creates. As stated by the artist:

I don't always need to have a clear message or idea but like to let things unfold spontaneously. I'm also often speaking about or dealing with issues of identity and try to integrate my personal concerns with commercial projects: trying to be creative while being commercially viable.

Artist Interviews

In both his commercial work and more personal projects words, letters and phrases are significantly featured. This use of ‘word as image’ derives from his background in graffiti. More recently he has become more interested in the ‘how’ of art making and the idea of the painting as an object itself rather than just an image. As such, he has become more considerate of the materials he uses and the affect this has on the finished product.

AJA Louden is one of four artists featured in the travelling exhibition **...bring a folding chair**. As he indicates, the title of this exhibition is a useful prompt to what he considers in his work and in his art practice. As he expresses:

(The title) talks about me showing up with my own seat: as a person showing up not expecting or needing a place set for me but showing up with my own seat. People who look like me have been hidden...the Black story has been hidden. Personally, (my way of) finding a way to make a career has been through street art and subverting the stereotypical views of this; converting my passion for a ‘subversive’ art form into a career is my way of bringing a seat to the table. There is a public perception that graffiti is a criminal activity done by people of colour. (Through my work) I’m reclaiming that narrative and it’s a way of bringing a chair to the table. More specific to my own practice, representing faces of people of colour and speaking to the experiences of people of colour – either people in positions of power or as central figures – (is my way) of making sure that our stories as people of colour are seen as part of the public story or narrative. Bringing a seat to the table involves just showing up: being visible and being heard.

Speaking to this particular TREX exhibition and Black Lives Matter protests in North America and elsewhere, Louden eloquently and forcefully states:

I’m tired of asking for a place as we’ve asked for years. Now I’m just bringing my chair.

Artist Interviews

Elsa Robinson

As described in her artist biography, artist Elsa Robinson has two homes. She was born in Toronto and lived there for around three years while her father was studying for his Phd. When he graduated the family moved to Edmonton while her father worked at the University of Alberta. After about one and a half years, however, the family moved back to Jamaica and Elsa spent her childhood and teenage years there. She returned to live in Edmonton about thirty-six years ago.

Robinson states that she was always interested in art. As a young child art was one of her favorite subjects, while in high school art was one of the subjects she concentrated on. When she attended teacher's college in Kingston, she majored in Special Education and did her minor in Art. As she describes it,

...art has been following me throughout (my life)....Art is essential to my being: it is like breathing to me (and) I'm a whole person when I'm doing things connected to art.

Robinson describes herself as a multi-media artist. She is fascinated by mixed media and, drawing upon and influenced by her cultural heritage, is engaged in an art practice which includes sculpture, fabric art, collage and painting. In speaking of collage, Robinson views this process as a political statement. As related by this artist, the art market and the art supply market are dominated by specific companies which, through their advertising, dictate how art should look or be produced. For Robinson, this is a form of 'economic strangulation' as the costs associated with these supplies are often prohibitive. With collage, on the other hand, Robinson is making art using materials, such as paper and fabric, that are more accessible. At present Robinson has begun to concentrate more on the fibre arts of crochet, 'quilt making', embroidery and beading. These methods connect her to her cultural traditions and the feminist art movement, allowing her to celebrate the strength of African people in surviving the African diaspora and the strength of women in using simple materials to create.

For Robinson, art is a way for her to communicate on a 'spiritual level', using the elements of art such as colours and shapes to communicate spiritual values, questions and concepts on whatever level the viewer receives them. In expressing her aims as an artist she states:

What I'd like the viewer to get, first, is joy: an experience with beauty and how that makes a person feel.

While her work is a way for her to communicate her ideas, Robinson also strives to engage the viewers of her works to observe the possible questions and statements within a work. As she states:

I want the viewer to have their own experience and hopefully have a moment of reflection on the things they perceive. I want my works to trigger all sorts of thoughts and emotions which brings them (the viewer) closer to themselves and what makes them who they are. Anything that brings them closer to that 'core-self' brings them closer to the humanity we all share. My art is for humanity and about healing: this is why I make art.

Artist Interviews

As expressed by Elsa Robinson, her art is for humanity and she discounts all notions of 'race' both in her work and in her life:

I'm not a black Canadian. There's no such thing as a white Canadian or a black Canadian: these are not ethnic/cultural signifiers. We use the colour to describe a physical characteristic; it is not an ethnic or cultural description. Rather, I'm a Jamaican-Canadian who's also a black woman.

The oversimplification into black and white is a product of racism and racism establishes the myth of race. The whole question of race is a divisive and destructive element. The art I make tries to speak to humanity rather than race. It's our humanity that matters and that's the most important thing.

For Robinson the title of the TREX exhibition **...bring a folding chair** speaks to the fact that she is seen as a black woman and what it means to be walking in her skin colour in Alberta and whether or not she has been 'invited to the party'.

I am in a position where I am constantly analyzing the 'invitation' and am constantly adjusting my thoughts and actions in response to the invitation I perceive in any moment. The title (of the exhibition) says to me 'even though I wasn't invited to the party, come to the party and establish my presence at it'. By making the work and presenting it I am establishing myself in the community: I am at the party.

In speaking of her works submitted for the TREX exhibition, Robinson relates that both colour and shape are integral to the meaning of the works. For the artist, the colour black represents strength, mystery and creation (life in the womb begins in darkness). Gold, meanwhile, represents purity, value, wealth and richness. In creating her works, which speak to herself as a black woman, she thus decided to pair the two colours. As she describes it:

Being black in Alberta means being who I am and bringing that excellence into who I am and where I am.

The shape of her works is also important to the overall meaning. As described by the artist, a square boxes people in and that leads to assumptions and prejudices. A diamond, on the other hand, represents strength and value. As expressed by the artist:

The square represents all those institutional prejudices and racism. I take that life and I bring myself as a human being to it and turn it into a diamond. I take all of that and I make diamonds and my reality that I choose to share is diamonds: that is a manifestation of my strength, integrity and my value as a human being.

As indicated by the artist, her art works address her skill and strength in successfully staying present at the 'party', regardless of the nature of the invitation. Robinson's artwork also challenges her to become what she wishes for humanity. As she describes it, at the end of the day there's only one race, the human race, and we have to get it together.

Artist Interviews

Fetsum Teclamariam

Fetsum Teclamariam was born in Eritrea in 1972. Born into a traditional farming family, Teclamariam developed his drawing and painting skills from direct observation of nature. Although always interested in art, however, there were no art schools in Eritrea and so, in University, he studied Mathematics and Physics and graduated as a Math teacher. While he pursued his art practice on 'the side' and received some recognition for his efforts, it wasn't until the 2000s that he began to pursue art as his primary career.

Teclamariam's personal history is one of conflict, crisis and deprivation until he arrived in Canada as a refugee in 2013. While in Eritrea he became targeted by the Eritrean government because of the critical political nature of his artwork. In 2007 he was forced to flee the country, leaving behind his wife and young child, and crossed the desert on foot to seek asylum in Sudan. Feeling insecure in this country due to culture shock and its own instability, he then moved north to Egypt and then across the Sinai Peninsula to Israel finally feeling, on his arrival there, at peace for the first time since leaving Eritrea.

Fetsum Teclamariam lived in Israel from 2007 to 2013. While feeling safe, his time in Israel was not easy. As he had no friends or family in the country and no employment, he spent many months living, basically, as a street person in Tel Aviv. He managed, however, to acquire some brushes, paint and canvas and started painting

...even though I had no house, place to stay, or even food for the next day.

When he had lived in Eritrea Teclamariam had participated in an art exhibition organized by the British Consulate. Wanting to further his art career he decided to approach the British Consulate in Tel Aviv to see if they could assist him. Through a circuitous chain of events he eventually found the Hatahana School for Figurative Drawing and Painting in Tel Aviv which granted him a full scholarship for almost four years. He graduated from the school in 2010 with a Master Class for Painting and Drawing.

Teclamariam continued to live in Israel until 2013. His wife, meanwhile, had remained in Eritrea, been imprisoned and then subjected to house arrest. She, too, finally escaped to Sudan where she applied for family reunification and refugee status in Canada. The family was accepted and in 2013 Fetsum Teclamariam and his wife and son were reunited in Toronto before moving on to Edmonton.

As an artist Teclamariam is inspired by the natural world and what he sees around him. As he states

Nature is the biggest teacher. Nature is very wise and if you love it, it will give everything that is there.

From his study of the natural world Teclamariam has learned simplicity and to be naive or innocent in his practice. He strives to see and appreciate the beauty in everything around him and, though he often focuses on the natural world as a subject in his works, he does not limit

Artist Interviews

himself to this. For him, beauty is everywhere and his work is influenced by many concerns such the urban and natural topography of where he lives, his cultural heritage and the concerns of the society he is in.

In speaking of the exhibition ...bring a folding chair and the fact of being an artist of African heritage in Alberta, Teclamarium draws a parallel between being a refugee in Canada, racial relations and the act of painting itself. As expressed by the artist:

When I'm mixing the colours for my paintings, something becomes beautiful through a connection with the other colours around it. A colour by itself is nothing. For example, in order for white to 'shine' it needs another colour either in front or behind it. This is natural and if you block yourself from this simplicity you get stuck. Beauty comes from the harmony of colours, just as the beauty in life comes from mixing and learning from each other.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Braxton Garneau: Artwork Descriptions - Black History in Alberta

Amber Valley

The community of Amber Valley (originally Pine Creek), Alberta was founded in 1910 by African American families from Oklahoma, Texas and other nearby states. Seeking a life away from segregationist Jim Crow laws, racial hostility and violence in the US, they came in response to the Canadian government's offer of free land in the western part of the country. Amber Valley is located about 170 kilometres north of Edmonton and 24 kilometres east of the town of Athabasca. It was one of several Alberta communities settled by Black people in the early 20th century.

Source: Oyeniran, Channon. "Amber Valley". The Canadian Encyclopedia, 25 June 2019, Historica Canada. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/amber-valley>.

Ticket

"Whether a man be black or white... no one has the right to draw the colour or any other line to subject him either to indignity or inconvenience".

-Calgary News-Telegram Editorial, 1914

Charles Daniels was a black Calgarian who challenged racial discrimination in the city's theater scene at a time when the civil rights movement was practically unheard of.

On February 3, 1914, Daniels arranged to buy two tickets to see King Lear at the Sherman Grand Theater. He knew from his ticket exactly where he'd be sitting for the performance: seat H3. However, when he went to the show that night, his ticket was denied and he was directed to sit in the "coloured" section, which was in the balcony, rather than the seat he had purchased.

Daniels refused and protested. He spoke to the manager and was told he was not allowed to sit in the front rows.

The theatre offered him a refund as an alternative. He refused and left.

Soon after, he launched a court case against the theatre arguing that he deserved a seat since he was "sober and well behaved." Charles was awarded \$1000 in damages.

Source: Mohamed Bashir. "Calgary's Unknown Civil rights Champion". The Sprawl, 7 September 2018, <https://www.sprawlcalgary.com/calgarys-unknown-civil-rights-hero>

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Braxton Garneau: Artworkd Descriptions - Black History in Alberta

Swim

The opening of two new city swimming pools the summer of 1924 was marred by an ugly public dispute over a little known city order barring black Edmontonians from using city pools. City council was forced to face the contentious issue of mixed bathing after two black citizens entered Oliver Pool, prompting all white bathers to leave. Council had been struggling with the issue since July after a little black boy who wanted to go swimming with some white friends at Borden Park Pool was refused admission. An order issued in June 1923 by the city commissioners who led the civic administration, excluded "blacks" from using city swimming pools. At that point there was only Queen Elizabeth Pool.

Source: Zdeb Chris. "1924: Racism colours the opening of two new city swimming pools". Edmonton Journal, 28 August 2018, <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/aug-28-1924-racism-colours-the-opening-of-two-new-city-swimming-pools>

Dine

Since the mid 1800s, the Black community has had a long and rich history in Alberta contributing in many ways, including the setting up of our ranching industry. And yet, even in 1944, many restaurants in Edmonton discriminated against Black people and banned them from their restaurants.

That's the year Hatti Melton opened Hatti's Harlem Chicken Inn in downtown Edmonton, serving up her own recipes of fried chicken, biscuits, hot tamales steak and more. It was more than just a restaurant; it was a hub for the Black community. Hatti's Harlem Chicken Inn had a reputation that extended to out-of-town visitors. Hatti's was known as the Black gathering spot for travellers, celebrities and athletes.

For Hatti, it was more than just a business. It was a way for her to provide jobs to women in her community who, because of racial discrimination, otherwise wouldn't be able to find work outside of being a maid. It was also a way for Hatti to provide food for people who couldn't afford it.

Source: <https://www.edmontoncommonwealthwalkway.com/storyline/childrens/10>

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Braxton Garneau: Artwork Descriptions - Black History in Alberta

Cariwest

The Cariwest Festival, staged annually by the Western Carnival Development Association since 1985, is made up of all the rich and diverse traditions of the Caribbean Carnival and is a celebration of freedom and self-expression. This Carnival fosters freedom of expression through music, costume design, creative dance and street theatre. Edmonton's Cariwest Festival is the largest such festival in western Canada.

Source: <https://cityarchives.edmonton.ca/cariwest-festival>



Braxton Garneau
Cariwest, 2021
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist

AJA Louden: Artwork Descriptions

Mythmaking 101 (Nerd Black)

This is a portrait of my son, Piney P, as Geordie LaForge. Steve Urkel, Donald Glover, and myself as a young nerd are also depicted. Growing up it felt like I was always on the outside looking in - I didn't often see myself represented in the world. Geordie LaForge, and other Black Nerds, continue to be important symbols and archetypes. By authoring our own stories, writing our own myths, we can better see and be seen.

The Story of Dapper Dan

Dapper Dan is a fashion designer from Harlem, New York. He became famous for creating his own bootleg versions of clothing from popular fashion brands. Dan's versions were different, made to fit the fashion and culture of his neighbourhood, inspired in part by travelling to Africa. Dan's clothes often featured giant logos and bold style choices. Dan was sued over copyright by brands like Gucci for illegally using their logo, and took his business underground. Many years later, Gucci started using Dan's bootleg designs for their clothes. Called out by the public for suing Dan but then using his designs, in 2017 Gucci admitted their error and partnered with Dapper Dan to design a men's luxury clothing line. Dapper Dan's story is a microcosm of Hip Hop's story – artists with no resources and questionable legality, denigrated at first, driven underground, re-appropriated by pop culture, then finally celebrated as the underdogs who still managed to win.

Not a Ball Player

Growing up in small town Alberta, everyone thought I played basketball. I did not fit their perceptions however. I was interested in science, drawing, and martial arts - I am tall and black and at the time had glasses, read books constantly, and couldn't shoot a jump shot to save my life. It felt like adults were disappointed when they found out I wouldn't be the next Michael Jordan. Now, as a full time artist and muralist, my height helps me in different ways. I'm still bad at basketball.

I Am From Here

It's common and natural to be curious about where someone is from. Growing up racialized in small town Alberta, when I told people I was from here, they often followed up with 'No, but where are you *really* from?' - a question they only asked people who weren't white or who had accents. This subtle re-questioning of my answer often unintentionally dug at my sense of belonging. It happened so often, I began to wonder - maybe I'm from somewhere else? I am from here.

Claiming A Chair

When they won't give us a seat at our table, we'll show up anyway with folding chairs.

Elsa Robinson: Artwork Descriptions

"Bring a Folding Chair" – Conversation with Elsa Robinson

My name is Elsa Yvonne Robinson. I am the daughter of Ruddy Robinson and Pansy Robinson. I am an artist. I am a teacher. I am a mother. I am a sister. I am an aunt. I am a cousin. I am a friend. If you look carefully, you will learn more about me in these images. You may even find a part of yourself looking back at you. The artist in me combines aspects of my culture, my spirituality, and my family to create these mixed-media images. I use beadwork and embroidery to reference the power of the women in my family and in my culture from whom I have inherited my strength. Black signifies power, courage, strength, mystery and beauty. Gold represents purity, truth, beauty and immense value. I use my ingenuity to transform the limited 'box' that society tries to place on me. I am Black Gold dancing in Diamond. Welcome to our conversation!

I would like to thank the Edmonton Arts Council for its support in completing this project.

Honouring the Ancestors

Size: 20" x 20"

Medium: Recycled cotton and polyester fabrics, glass beads, cotton thread, lace, gold trim and osnaburg on birch panel

Date: 2020

This small quilt is made using a traditional style of quilt-making that I learned from a grandmother in Jamaica. The colours of the beads - red, green, gold and black - represent Pan Africanism and the strength of people of Africa and the African Diaspora. The off-white fabric in the background is osnaburg. This is the fabric that was made into clothing for enslaved Africans. Using this fabric is my way of honouring my Jamaican and African Ancestors on whose shoulders I stand. All of my images presented in this show are backed by a piece of osnaburg.

My Relations

Size: 20" x 20"

Medium: Glass beads, cotton thread, recycled lace and polyester fabric, burlap, acrylic yarn and osnaburg on birch panel

Date: 2020

I am connected to the Divine Source of all life, to my people and to the powers of the natural world. Being conscious of these connections allows me to grow and to thrive brilliantly.

Reflection

Size: 20" x 20"

Medium: Glass beads, cotton embroidery thread, cotton fabric, acrylic paint, satin ribbon and osnaburg on birch panel

Date: 2021

It is good to take time to look within - to the depths of my soul - where all the answers to my most important questions are waiting to be revealed.

Elsa Robinson: Artwork Descriptions

Masquerade

Size: 20" x 20"

Medium: Glass beads, metallic thread, sequins, satin, lace, polyester trim and osnaburg on birch panel

Date: 2021

The ancient spirits are embodied in the masquerades. They enter community and remind us of who we are. They bless and transform us with their magical energy and positive messages. They help us to carve paths of wholeness.

My Coat of Arms

Size: 20" x 20"

Medium: Glass beads, metallic thread, satin, velvet, acrylic yarn and osnaburg on birch panel

Date: 2021

I arm myself with the knowledge of my history and my spiritual inheritance and embrace my versatility and intelligence as I move thorough the terrain of this life.



Elsa Robinson
My Coat of Arms, 2021
Mixed media textile
Collection of the artist

Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview

'Black Canadians' is a designation used for people of full or partial African descent. The majority of Black Canadians are of Caribbean origin, though the population also includes African American immigrants and their descendants and many native African immigrants. Black Canadians form the third-largest visible minority group in Canada, after South Asian and Chinese Canadians.

Black people have been in Canada since the earliest days of European exploration. According to most accounts, the first recorded Black person in Canada was Mathieu da Costa. da Costa, of partial African ancestry, was a member of Samuel de Champlain's exploring party of 1609 and served as an interpreter between the French and Indigenous nations. Originally employed by the Portuguese as a translator, by 1607 he was working for the Dutch and then, by 1608, French documents record da Costa working for the leaders of Port Royal. In 1608 he was hired by Pierre Du Gua de Monts and it is assumed that he accompanied Du Gua de Monts and Samuel de Champlain on one or more of their voyages to Acadia and the St. Lawrence region.

The first known African-American to arrive in what is now Alberta, meanwhile, was a man named Joseph Lewis. Born in Manchester, New Hampshire, in 1772, Lewis joined the Hudson's Bay Company as a 'steersman' in 1796. Around 1799 he served under Peter Fidler when Fidler founded Greenwich House near Lac La Biche. He was probably with Fidler, too, on his mapping trip to Lesser Slave Lake. In 1806 he married an Indigenous woman and had three children with her. In 1810 he travelled with Joseph Howse on a major mapping expedition over the Rockies west to the Columbia River. Lewis left the Hudson's Bay Company in 1814 and began working freelance till his death in 1820. After his death his children eventually moved to the Red River area in Manitoba and married into Manitoba's Métis community.

As a group, black people arrived in Canada in several waves. As both French and English began to settle in what became Canada, slaves from both Africa and the West Indies were imported to the new colonies. Following the American Revolutionary War (1765-1783), approximately 3,000 Black Loyalists were evacuated by the British from New York to Nova Scotia. These Black loyalists were former slaves who had joined the British in the fight against the American forces because of the British crown's promises of freedom. The British kept their promises and gave these loyalists land grants and supplies to help them resettle. Life in Nova Scotia, however, proved difficult due to the harsh climate and racial discrimination from other Loyalist settlers. These problems resulted in the 1784 Shelburne riots, the first recorded race riots in Canadian history. In 1792 the British government offered Black Loyalists the chance to resettle in the new colony of Sierra Leone in west Africa and nearly 1200 left Nova Scotia and moved permanently overseas.



Samuel de Champlain monument
Vermont, United States

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview

The next large group of blacks to migrate to British North America came from Jamaica.

Known as the Maroons, they arrived in Halifax in 1796. The Maroons were originally from Jamaica where they were communities of escaped slaves. Beginning in the 1650s they had waged war with the British administration of Jamaica which finally led to one group, the Trelawny Town Maroons, being exiled from Jamaica in 1796. In that year three ships brought 543 men, women and children from Jamaica to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Some of the land and farms vacated by the Black Loyalists who had moved to Sierra Leon were provided to the Maroons and additional homes, a school and church were built. This second settlement effort, however, was as unsuccessful as the first. The Maroons found the climate extremely harsh and there were many cultural differences that could not be overcome. As a result the majority of Maroons wanted to leave Nova Scotia and return to Jamaica. That desire, however, was not allowed but those who wished to leave were finally allowed to do so and in 1800 551 Maroons left Halifax for Freetown, Sierra Leone.

During the 1800s the reputation of ‘Canada’ as a safe haven for Black people grew. The War of 1812 saw a large influx of escaping Black slaves into Nova Scotia and Halifax as a result of British policies. During the war Vice Admiral Warren, commander of Britain’s Halifax Station, was ordered to receive aboard his ships any blacks who sought his assistance. His successor, Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane, was ordered to encourage emigrations of African-American slaves. In 1814 Cochrane issued the following proclamation:

Whereas it has been represented to me that many persons now resident in the United States have expressed a desire to withdraw therefrom with a view to entering into his Majesty's service, or of being received as free settlers into some of His Majesty's colonies.

This is therefore to give notice that all persons who may be disposed to migrate from the United States, will with their families, be received on board of His Majesty's ships or vessels of War, or at the military posts that may be established upon or near the coast of the United States, when they will have their choice of either entering into His Majesty's sea or land forces, or of being sent as free settlers to the British possessions in North America or the West Indies where they will meet with due encouragement.

Alex Cochrane

Approximately 4000 African slaves escaped the United States by way of the British Royal Navy during the War of 1812, the largest group emancipation of African Americans prior to the American Civil War. Around 2000 of these settled in Nova Scotia while around 400 settled in New Brunswick and the descendants of these former slaves formed the core of African Canadians.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview continued



Harriet Tubman

*I'm on my way to Canada,
That cold and distant land.
The dire effects of slavery, I can no longer stand
Farewell, old master, Don't come after me,
I'm on my way to Canada, Where coloured men are free*
Song of the Free

Throughout the 1800s, and especially before the American Civil War (1861-1865), a steady stream of Black Americans, both free and enslaved, made their way north to freedom in what is now Canada. Slaves arrived mainly by way of what was known as the 'underground railroad'. The 'underground railroad' was created in the early 19th century by a group of abolitionists, mainly based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The term 'underground railroad' began to be used in the 1830s to describe a complex, clandestine network of people and safe houses that helped enslaved people in Southern plantations to reach freedom in the north. Those who helped the fugitives included free Blacks, fellow enslaved

persons, White and Indigenous sympathizers, inhabitants of urban centers and farmers, men and women, Americans and Canadians, and members of religious groups such as Quakers, Methodists and Baptists. Railroad terminology and symbols were used to mask the activities of the abolitionists. The routes travelled to get to freedom, for example, were called 'lines' and at the end of the line was 'heaven' or 'the Promised Land', which was free land in Canada. Escaping slaves were termed passengers, cargo, packages or freight while those who guided the fugitives were called conductors, one of the most famous of these being Harriet Tubman (1822-1913). Travelling by way of the 'underground railroad', it is estimated that between 30,000 and 40,000 fugitives made their way to freedom in British North America. The refugee slaves who settled in Canada did so primarily in south western Ontario as well as in Nova Scotia.

While escaped slaves from the southern United States settled mainly in the Ontario region, another group of American blacks travelled north and settled in what is now British Columbia. In 1858 a group of black people in San Francisco approached the governor of the British colony of Vancouver Island, James Douglas, about the possibility of settling in his jurisdiction. Britain had abolished slavery in the British empire in 1834 and Douglas, who came from mixed Caribbean heritage, agreed to their request. Later in 1858 an estimated 600 to 800 black Americans migrated to Victoria, settling on Vancouver Island and Salt Spring Island.

Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview continued

While the American Civil War resulted in the end of slavery in the United States, racial discrimination, harsh conditions and poverty led many southern American blacks to try their fortune elsewhere. The western plains of America and north into Canada afforded opportunities that could not be found elsewhere and many American blacks moved to these areas in the late 19th century and early years of the 20th century.

One such adventurer, famous in the annals of Alberta's history, was the cowboy and rancher John Ware (1845-1905). Described as Canada's 'most famous black cowboy', Ware was born into slavery on a plantation in South Carolina. After the Civil War he drifted to Texas where he learned the skills of a rancher and became a cowboy. In 1882 he met Tom Lynch in Idaho. Lynch had come south from Canada to purchase a herd for cattle for Sir Hugh Allan's North-West Cattle Company, commonly known as the Bar U Ranch, located southwest of Calgary, Alberta. Ware was hired to help move 3,000 head of cattle north and he remained at the Bar U until 1884 when he moved to the new Quorn Ranch on Sheep Creek west of Okotoks. In 1885 he participated in a huge cattle round-up out of Fort Macleod and, as described by the Macleod Gazette at the time:

John is not only one of the best natured and most obliging fellows in the country, but he is one of the shrewdest cow men, and the man is considered pretty lucky who has him to look after his interest. The horse is not running on the prairie which John cannot ride.

In 1885 Ware registered his own cattle brand and established his own ranch in 1898 near the Quorn Ranch. Due to increasing settlement in the region he sold this property in 1902 and purchased an isolated homestead on the Red Deer River northeast of Brooks. Unfortunately, this venture was short-lived. Ware's wife died of typhoid in April of 1905 and six months later John Ware himself died when his horse stumbled in a badger hole and fell on him. His funeral in Calgary was reported to be one of the largest held in the early days of the city and geographical features (John Ware Ridge, Mount Ware, Ware Creek) and buildings, such as John Ware Junior High School in Calgary, have been named after him to honour his achievements.



John Ware and family, 1897

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ware_\(cowboy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ware_(cowboy))

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview continued



Amber Valley, Alberta

Lone settlers like John Ware were not the only black pioneers who struck out for the north western plains of Canada. Hundreds of African Americans, fleeing racial violence and segregation in Oklahoma and the American west, left the United States and settled in Alberta. One settlement established by these refugees was Amber Valley, established in 1909 not far from present-day Athabasca.

In the early 1900s the Canadian government advertised for settlers to purchase 160 acres of land and homestead in Alberta. Invited black settlers came from Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois and Mississippi between 1908 and 1914. Many looked to Canada as the 'Promised Land' and saw the prairies as a land of tolerance and opportunity. Approximately 300 settlers from Oklahoma moved to the region of Amber Valley, originally known as Pine Creek. Though the climate was harsh and the anti-black racism they had hoped to escape was prominent in the government of the day, these new immigrants managed to build a thriving community, not only in Amber Valley but in other locations in Alberta such as Wildwood, Breton and Campsie near Barrhead.

Amber Valley was the largest community of black people in Alberta until the 1930s. A post office was opened in 1931 and the community also had a two-room schoolhouse. Amber Valley also hosted a famous all-black baseball team. By the 1940s, however, the community began to decline as children of the original settlers began moving to cities such as Edmonton and Calgary in search of better opportunities.

While the Canadian government never proposed direct legislation against black immigrants, once black settlers started arriving in larger number Canadian governments, both national and provincial, began to rely upon indirect methods to discourage the newcomers making the journey north. Strict economic and physical standards were put in place to restrict their movement north. Finally, agents hired by the Canadian government were sent to Oklahoma to persuade potential immigrants that the soil in Alberta was too poor. These informal policies had an effect and by 1912 black immigration from America to Alberta had all but ended.

Up until the 1960s Canada's immigration policies concerning Black people, and the treatment of such immigrants, were mixed. Between the 1920s to 1960s, except when they were specifically wanted to fill a Canadian need, very few individuals of non-European origin were admitted to the country. Despite this, there was a small wave of Black Caribbean immigrants in the 1920s to work in the steel mills of Cape Breton. The years following the Second World War also saw an increase in immigration from the Caribbean due to the demand for unskilled labour. In 1948 the Canadian government passed the National Act which was designed to attract cheap labourers from British colonies and throughout the 1940s and 1950s over 12,000 people immigrated to Canada from the Caribbean.

Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview continued

Immigration from the Caribbean increased in the 1960s due to changes in Canadian laws. While employers were demanding more skilled workers, politicians were sensitive to the large 'ethnic vote' for whom immigration policy was a concern. In 1960 the government of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker passed the Canadian Bill of Rights which declared that Canada rejected discrimination by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex. The Bill of Rights made changes to Canada's immigration rules necessary and the 1962 Immigration Act eliminated all racial rules from the immigration laws. This coincided with the dissolution of British rule in the Caribbean so that, by the mid-1960s, approximately 15,000 Caribbean immigrants moved to Canada, settling primarily in Toronto. West Indian immigrant numbers, gradually increasing annually after 1962, more than doubled from 1966 to 1967 and tripled again by the mid-1970s. The 1971 census showed 68,000 West Indian-born residents in Canada and the decade of the 1970s saw the arrival of about 140,000 more. Immigration from the Caribbean continued throughout the 1980s and 90s, resulting in Afro-Caribbeans becoming the predominant black population in Canada. At the same time, increasing numbers of new immigrants from Africa have been coming to Canada. Many have been refugees but there are also many skilled and professional workers pursuing better economic conditions. About 150,000 people from Africa immigrated to Canada between 1950 and 1995.

Canada has long been seen as a haven and refuge for Black immigrants from around the world. In a 2013 survey of 80 countries, carried out by the World Values Survey, Canada ranked among the most racially tolerant societies in the world. This tolerance, however, was not always the case and Canada was not immune to racial discrimination.

Canada's treatment of its black citizens differs greatly from that seen in the United States, but Black Canadians have faced their own challenges. Unlike what was seen in the United States, after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834 any Black man born a British subject, or who became a British subject, was eligible to vote. Also unlike America, there were no 'Jim Crow' laws and so no mandated restrictions for Black citizens. Segregation, however, did exist, especially in federal and provincial education policies. The Common School Act of 1850, for example, imposed segregation in schools in Ontario while the Education Act of 1865 did the same in Nova Scotia. Such discriminatory practices extended to post secondary institutions as well.

Besides Education, there were restrictions based on race in immigration. Under Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, and at the urging of provincial governments, the federal government sought to restrict immigration by black persons in the Immigration Act of 1910. Designed to keep Canada British and Anglophone, an Order-in-Council to the Act stated:

His excellency in Council, in virtue of the provisions of Sub-section (c) of Section 38 of the Immigration Act, is pleased to Order and it is hereby Ordered as follows: For a period of one year from and after the date hereof the landing in Canada shall be and the same is prohibited of any immigrants belonging to the Negro race, which race is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada.

Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview continued

Among those who campaigned for the Act were the Edmonton Board of trade, the Orange Lodge, and the Edmonton chapter of the Order of the Daughters of the Empire.

British and American cultural views of Black people played a strong role in racial discrimination from the 1920s onwards. In 1915 the U.S. film *The Birth of a Nation* was released in Canada. This film promoted the stereotype of the Black man as a beast with superhuman strength and an innate desire to ravage white women. The film led to a revival of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States, with Klan members being seen as heroic white knights of the South, and their expansion into Canada. In Canada the Klan, a white supremacist organization, directed its attacks



Klansmen, Kingston Ontario, 1927

against any group which did not subscribe to its philosophies. As a result, not only Black citizens but Indigenous and Asian Canadians were targeted as well as the Catholic Church. The Klan, which had 5000 members in the Toronto area alone by 1925, realized its greatest popularity in Saskatchewan where, at its height, it had 25,000 members.

Another example of cultural discrimination was seen in the work of the progressive feminist, Emily Murphy. While famous for advocating for the rights of women - or specifically white women - Murphy gave voice to racism in other aspects of her work. In 1922 her book *The Black Candle* was published. Hugely popular, this work was designed to appeal to the racial fears of white Canadians and blamed many of the drug addiction problems of white Canadians on 'Negro drug dealers' and Chinese opium dealers. Murphy accused Black and Chinese Canadians of trying to destroy white supremacy by getting white Canadians addicted to drugs. Murphy was very successful in her aims. In 1923 Chinese immigration to Canada was stopped via the Chinese Exclusion Act. Marijuana was also banned out of the fear prompted by Murphy that marijuana was a drug used by Black Canadians to corrupt white Canadians.

Racial segregation, while never really official, affected all aspects of life for Black Canadians. In 1923, for example, the Edmonton city council passed an ordinance which barred Blacks from city swimming pools. A year before a Black woman named Lulu Anderson was denied admission to the Metropolitan Theatre in Edmonton. Anderson sued the theatre but the provincial courts ruled in favour of the theatre owners. Such discrimination even extended to cemeteries and across the country are found cemeteries which either had a 'coloured section' or outright refused black burial in them.

Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview continued

The Great Depression of the 1930s hit rural Canadians very hard and had a major impact on Black Canadians. Most Blacks at the time were farmers and lived in rural communities. With the Depression, many of their villages and hamlets were abandoned as the inhabitants moved to the cities to find work. This brought them face to face with informal 'Jim Crow' restrictions which governed restaurants, bars, hotels and theatres while many landlords refused to rent to Black tenants. One effect of the negative treatment accorded to Black Canadians, however, was a dramatic increase in the number of Black organizations which attempted to deal with the impacts of racism and economic hardship and lobbied against racist legislation.

Various anti-discrimination laws from the 1940s on gradually eased the many restrictions on Black Canadians. In 1944, for example, Ontario enacted the Racial Discrimination Act, which prohibited the publication or display of any notice, sign, symbol, emblem or other representation that indicated racial discrimination. In 1947 Toronto passed an anti-discrimination law that prohibited places that required city licences to practice racial or religious discrimination. The same year Saskatchewan became the first province in Canada to enact a Bill of Rights. At the federal level, the Canadian parliament passed a Bill of Rights in 1960, the first federal law to protect human rights and freedoms. In 1982 the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, entrenched in the new Constitution Act, provided for more comprehensive human rights legislation.

Despite the above changes, however, discrimination on the basis of colour continues to plague race relations in Canada. According to Statistics Canada's Ethnic Diversity Survey of 2003, when asked about the five-year period from 1998 to 2002, nearly one-third of respondents who identified as Black reported that they had encountered some form of racial discrimination or unfair treatment 'sometimes' or 'often'.

While Canada does not have a spotless record

concerning race relations, it is still seen as viable country

to immigrate to. According to the 2016 Canadian census, since 1996 the Black population in Canada has doubled in size, going from 573,860 persons in 1996 to 1,198,540 persons in 2016. Both international migration and natural increase have contributed to this growth, with about 1/2 of the Black population being landed immigrants or permanent residents.

Prior to 1990, the majority of Black immigrants came from the Caribbean and Bermuda. Before 1981 this group made up 83% of Black immigrants. Between 2011 and 2016, however, this changed and currently the majority of Black immigrants (65.1%) have come from Africa. Black newcomers now come from about 125 different countries and represent more than 200 ethnic or



Photo Credit: Jean Augustine

Liberal MLA, Canadian Parliament (1993-2006)

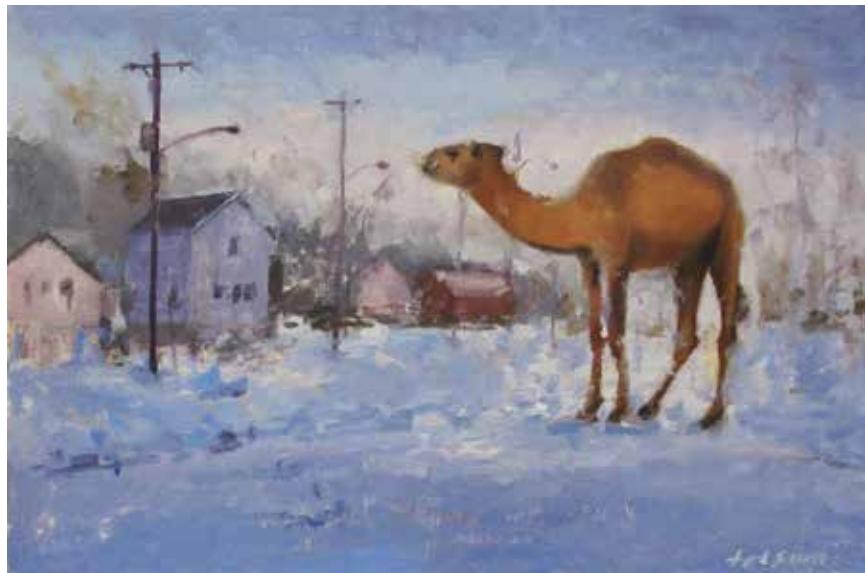
First woman from a visible minority elected to Parliament

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Black History in Canada and Alberta: An Overview continued

or cultural groups.

Of these new immigrants, about 3 in 10 came to Canada as refugees while the largest share (40.3%) were admitted to the country under economic programs.



Fetsum Teclémariam

Immigrant, 2021

Oil on canvas

Collection of the artist

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Visual Learning and Hands-On Art Activities

We shouldn't settle for boring, monotone history. Like Joseph Lewis, we need the courage to explore new territory, to steer in new directions, to bridge our continental divides.

Paula Simons, Edmonton Journal (<https://EDMONTONJOURNAL.COM/AUTHOR/PAULA-SIMONS-EDMONTON-JOURNAL>)



Elsa Robinson
Reflection, 2021
Mixed media textile
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).

© Virginia Stephen

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

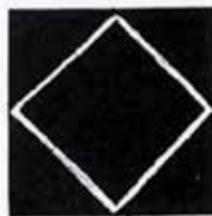
Elements of Design Tour

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

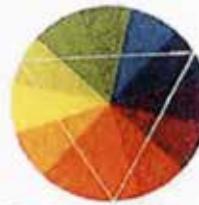
The elements of art are components of a work of art that can be isolated and defined. They are the building blocks used to create a work of art.



LINE!



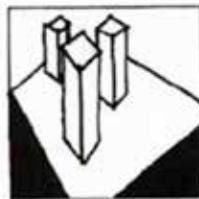
SHAPE!



COLOUR!



TEXTURE!



SPACE!

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: *Cariwest* by Braxton Garneau

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



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?

This image uses both curving lines and geometric lines. These lines create shapes and also direct the eye throughout the composition.

Geometric lines are used to create shapes and help direct movement within the composition. Slightly curved diagonal lines and straight lines outline and create the shape of the large colourful feathers on the figure's head dress and direct the viewer's eyes to the sides and top of the canvas. This is repeated in the shorter diagonal lines outlined on the golden semicircular shape of the main part of the head dress. Short straight lines, both vertical and horizontal, meanwhile, are used to create the actual shape of the feathers.

Curving lines are also used to create shape and to direct movement. Curving lines, for example, create the shape of the figure's eyes and these curving lines are repeated in the thick lines of the figure's eyebrows and then the yellow outline on the head dress. The repetition of these lines lead the viewer's eye up the canvas to the feathers which then take the viewer's eye to the top of the composition.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

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: *Reflection* by Elsa Robinson

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.



What shapes do you see in this image?

The composition is composed of both geometric and organic shapes.

How do the shapes operate in this image?

Geometric shapes -the overall diamond/square of the 'frames' and the interior triangles - form the structure or frame the image. The interior image (face) is composed of organic, flowing lines.

What quality do the shapes have? Does the quality of the shapes contribute to the meaning or story suggested in the work?

Geometric shapes are those that are man-made. In this image the geometric shape of the composition contrasts the flowing lines and organic from of the face.

The man-made shapes appear static and stable while the organic shape appears more dynamic and the contrast between the two creates a very vibrant work. Conceptually, the organic face within the stable structure of the triangles and diamond may speak to a person who is stable or strong in character.

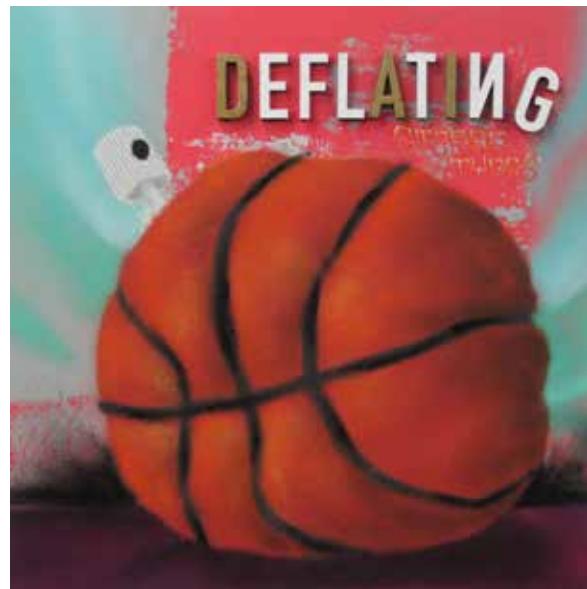
Elements of Design Tour

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: *Not a Ball Player (Deflating Stereotypes)*
by AJA Louden

**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 tints of red while the secondary colours of green, purple and orange dominate the work.



Where is your eye directed to first? Why? Are there any colours that stand out more than others?

The viewer's eye is probably first directed to the large orange basketball. This is both because of the size of the object and the fact that the colour of the ball stands out against all the colours around it. The eye may, however, also go first to the white lettering as they also stand out against everything else. If a viewer's eyes go first to the ball, they will then go to the letters and this creates a sense of depth in the work as the letters, even though they are three-dimensional and are thus further forward than the ball, seem to be further back due to their smaller size.

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. Red and green are complementary colours so the artist, by placing them beside each other, draws the viewer's eye into the background of the composition and directs attention to the letters.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

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: *Immigrant* by Fetsum Teclamariam

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.



What do you see in this work? What is closest to you? Farthest away? How do you know this?

In this work we see a camel and an urban winter street scene. The camel is placed about 1/3 of the way up the composition while telephone poles and houses retreat in a diagonal line back into the composition. The artist uses linear perspective and size relationships to create a sense of space. The camel dominates the space both by size and colour and so appears closer to the viewer while the buildings and telephone poles become smaller as they move along a diagonal line into the composition and so appear further and further away from the viewer.

In what other way has the artist created a sense of space?

The artist also uses aerial perspective to create a sense of space. The telephone poles, for example, become lighter in colour the small and further away they become while most of the buildings become lighter in colour as well. The one exception to this is the red building in the middle of the painting. While 'small' in size, its colour is important as it pulls the viewer's eye into the center of the work and the far distance of the scene. The colour of the camel is also important as its brown colour is complementary to the blue tones of the snow and so directs the viewer's eye to it and then back into the picture.

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: *To My Relations* by Elsa Robinson

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.



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?

The artist uses real texture in this work. The work is composed of collaged pieces of cloth and beads and what appears to be metal pieces. If one looks closely, they can see that the collaged cloth is of different textures, ranging from very smooth and soft satin to patterned pieces which would feel much rougher. Various textures in the gold beads/metal are seen as well. There are tiny round beads on the tree trunk, which would probably feel smooth, while there are rougher, 'gritty' circular shapes in the leaves and sharper looking leaf shapes scattered throughout. The beads and other gold pieces, meanwhile, would be much harder than the fabric pieces they are attached to.

Why do you think the artist chose this manner of presentation or chose to make the work look this way?

Answers will vary but keep in mind that this is like a family tree - what could the different materials, patterns and textures then mean?

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

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.

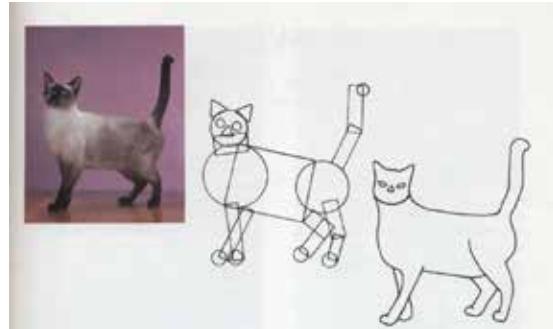
The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

An Art-full Scavenger Hunt Template

Basic Shapes - Grades 3-5



Fetsum Tecliemariam
Keep Them Inside, 2021
Oil on canvas
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. 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.

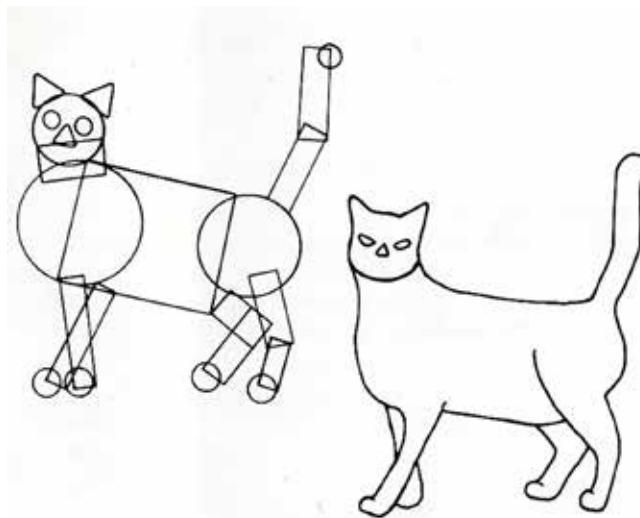
3/ Have students draw their one object using the basic shapes which make up the object.

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.

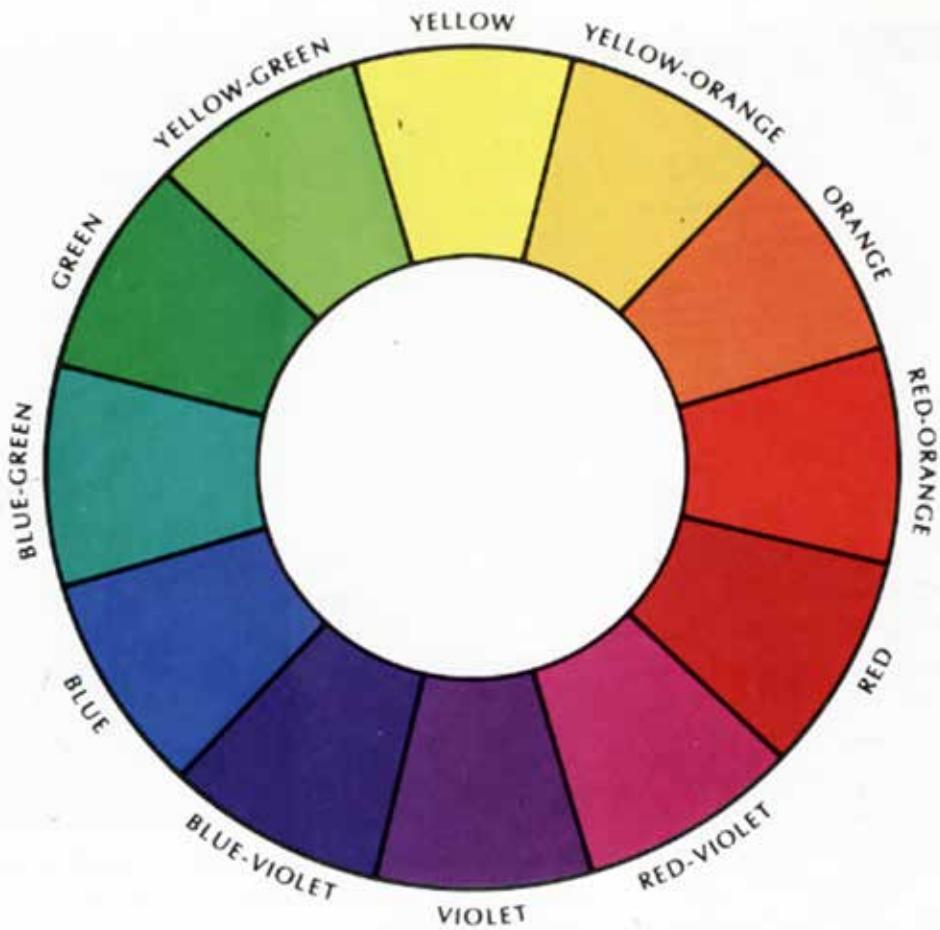
Discussion/Evaluation:

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



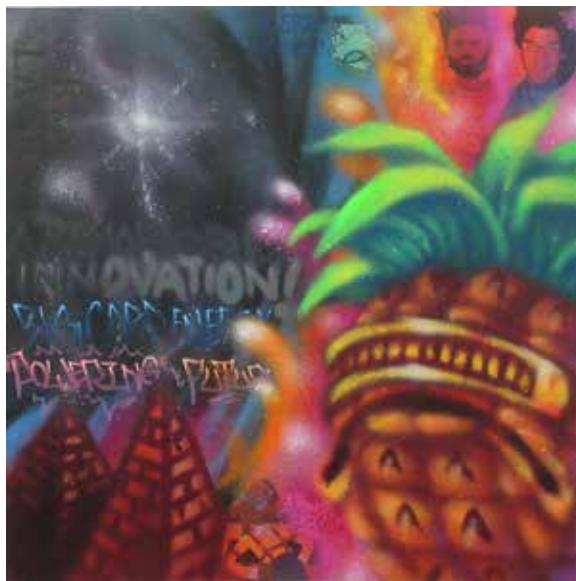
When artists create a composition, they plan their colour combinations very carefully. Colour can serve many functions in a work of art. It can be used to create the illusion of space; it can be used to provide focus and emphasis; it can be used to create movement; and it can be used to create a certain 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



AJA Louden
Mythmaking 101, 2021
Mixed media on panel
Private Collection

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?

Contour Drawing

An artistic technique used in the exhibition ...bring a folding chair is that of Contour Drawing. The French word *contour*, meaning ‘outline’, is used to describe drawings where the artist sketches the outline of a subject. The purpose of a contour drawing is to emphasize the mass and volume of a subject rather than its details. Contour drawing is a foundation for any drawing or painting and the object of contour drawing is to capture the life, action, or expression of the subject. The following activities provide students with practice in contour drawing.

LESSON 3 **Contour Figure Drawing** Intermediate/Advanced

Purpose: To eliminate stereotyped features of drawing by a closer visual contact with the human figure.

Materials: Pencils, white drawing paper, black felt markers.

Procedure: Select students to pose in front of class. Simple and plain clothing is desirable so that the focus is on the figure instead of incidentals. Have students focus their eyes on a particular spot on the model and place their pencils on an appropriate spot on the paper. The eye and the hand serve the same purpose. There should be complete coordination between the eye, the hand, and the mind. Encourage students to stop drawing at any time, but to draw only when the eye is on the model. Have students continue this stop-and-go method until the posed model is completely drawn. Complete coordination will prevail only after sustained and consistent practice.

Evaluation: Based on clarity of line, number of lines that connect at the proper points, and emotional content. Based also on eventual duplication of the figure to its nearest likeness.

LESSON 4 **Contour Drawing of Heads** Advanced

Purpose: To continue the contour process into a selected aspect of the figure.

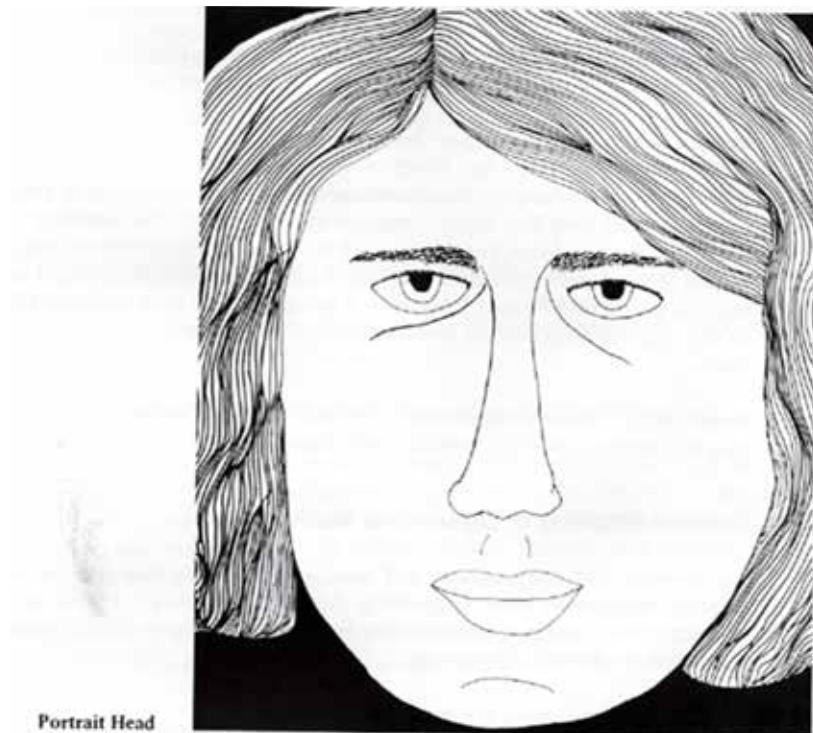
Materials: Pencils, white drawing paper, ball-point pens, black fine-line felt markers.

Procedure: Concentration becomes more intense. To enable emotional portrayal, have student models display different facial expressions as they pose. Again, have students unite the eye and hand as they draw first the head shape, then the inner and outer contours of the hair. Then have them appropriately position the pencil inside the already-drawn head and draw each eye separately, using the stop-go method. Expression of the nose and mouth follow.

Evaluation: Based on the honesty of line and detailed exhibit of the personality and emotional content of each pose, and, of course, the legitimate distortion that should exhibit itself within each pose. The convincing appearance of each contour drawing should always be considered.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Contour Drawing continued



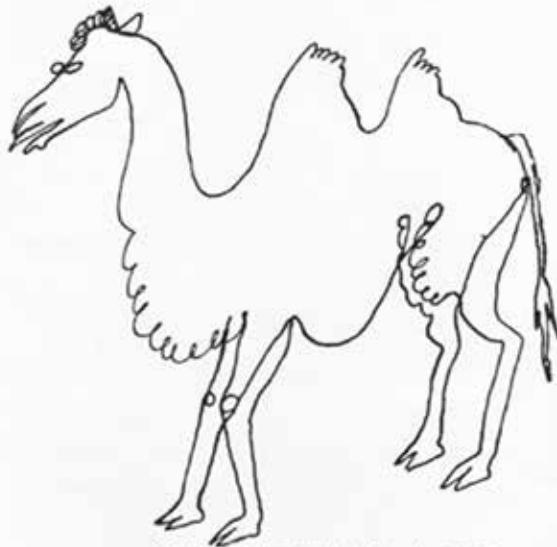
Outside shapes - Contour Drawing

2 Contour Drawing

Observing and Thinking Creatively

Can you imagine what things would be like if there were no **textures** or **colors**, only **lines** and **shapes**? The world would be very different without roughness and smoothness, brightness and darkness, or hardness and softness. When a person draws, however, one of the best ways to begin is by looking first at **contours**, or edges and outlines.

When Swiss painter Paul Klee taught art in Germany, he told his students, "Take a walk with a line." He wanted them to explore what could be done with just a simple line. And that's just what Alexander Calder seemed to do in his line drawing of a camel. Notice the playful feeling of this drawing. Calder allowed the line to ramble as it revealed the basic shape of the camel.

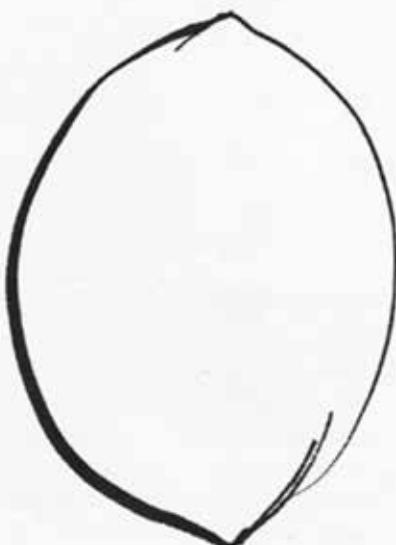


Alexander Calder, Calder's Animals, 1931, drawings for Aesop's Fables. Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library; Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Donald Sultan's clean, precise drawing of a lemon reveals only its barest outline. The crisp simplicity of line demonstrates his great drawing skill and control.

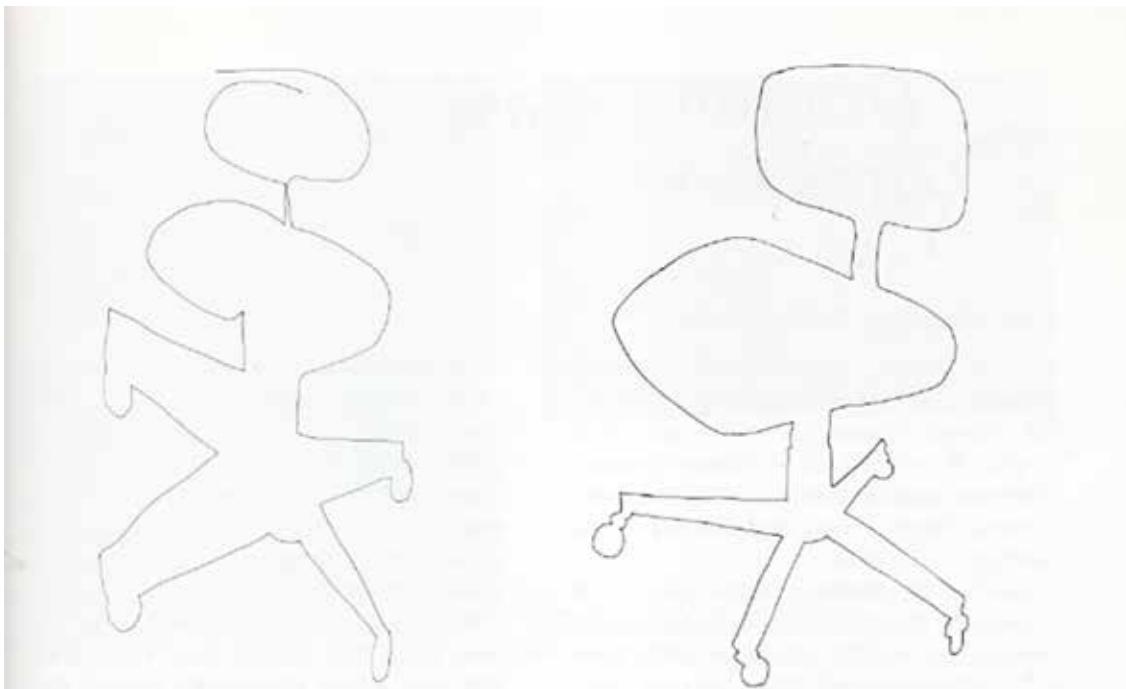
Lines can reveal moods and ideas. A thick, heavy line is much more **emphatic** than a thin, light line. If you examine an object closely, you may be surprised at all the hidden lines you find.

In this lesson, you will make a **contour drawing**, a drawing of an object using one continuous line to show outline and details. Contour drawing requires concentration and should be done slowly and deliberately as you observe and draw. You will not look at your paper as you draw; your brain will guide your hand as you look at the object.



Donald Sultan, Lemon, Jan. 17, 1984, charcoal on paper, 17½" x 19½". Blum Helman Gallery, Inc.

Outside shapes continued



Instructions for Creating Art

1. Make a paper "mask" with a piece of paper large enough to cover your hand. Carefully punch a hole in the center and slide the paper halfway down your pen. As you hold your pen beneath the paper, you will not be able to watch yourself draw.
2. Place an object before you and observe it carefully. Slowly draw the outlines of the object. Let your hand move on the paper at the same pace your eye moves over the object as you draw each contour, curve, and edge. It is expected that some of your lines will overlap other lines.
3. Now remove the mask from your pen and look at your drawing. It will show the basic shapes of the object, and because the lines ramble, it may appear messy to you. But doing a blind contour drawing will help you improve your next drawing.
4. This time, draw the object's outlines without using the paper mask. Draw slowly and carefully, and look at both the object and your drawing.
5. When your second drawing is complete, compare the two drawings. Which has more accuracy? Which best captures the feeling of the object?

Art Materials	
Paper	Pen, pencil, or colored markers
Scissors (to cut paper mask)	

Learning Outcomes

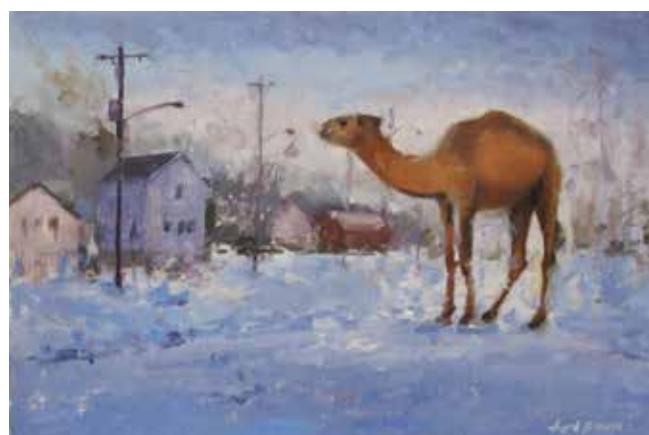
1. What is a *contour drawing*?
2. How did doing a blind contour drawing help you make your second drawing?
3. Which parts of each of your drawings turned out best?

Using Perspective and Tone

Some of the works in the exhibition ...bring a folding chair examine how contemporary artists in Alberta represent the landscape and the methods and media they use to do so. In the exhibition artist Fetsum Teclamariam focuses on the use of charcoal and careful gradations from light to dark to create his portrait/figure works while he uses perspective techniques for his landscape paintings. The following activities introduce and give students practice in using black, white and gradations of these in creating their own art works as well as practice in using perspective.



Fetsum Teclamariam
Quit, 2018
Charcoal on paper
Collection of the artist



Fetsum Teclamariam
Immigrant, 2021
Oil on canvas
Collection of the artist

Exteriors: One Point Perspective Project

Background Do you know what an exterior is? Exterior refers to something that is outside. Can you name the term for something that is inside? Very often artists who draw a landscape or an exterior view need to show **depth**, the distance from front to back or top to bottom.

The feeling of space or depth can be shown in several ways. Objects can overlap other objects, so that one appears to be behind the other. Distance can be shown by drawing objects in the distance much smaller than objects close to you. Distance can also be shown by drawing shadows of objects and making faraway objects appear hazy.

Using lines to show depth is called **linear perspective**. Parallel straight lines go away from you until they seem to meet and disappear. The place where they seem to meet is the **vanishing point**. This point is on the **horizon line**, where earth and sky meet. It is sometimes called the eye-level line.

Materials

drawing paper
coloured pencils/
pastels

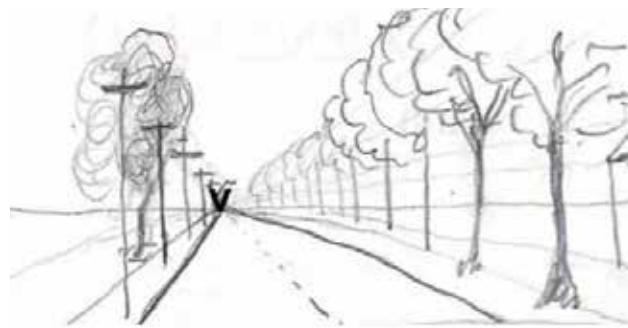
pencils
pastels

eraser
rulers

paints
brushes



Childe Hassam
Boston Common at Twilight
Oil on canvas
Museum of Fine Arts Boston



Line drawing to show perspective

Look at Childe Hassam's picture, *Boston Common at Twilight*. Notice how the trees and posts are set in a line that goes to a point about one-third of the way into the picture. The line drawing shows how this perspective was achieved.

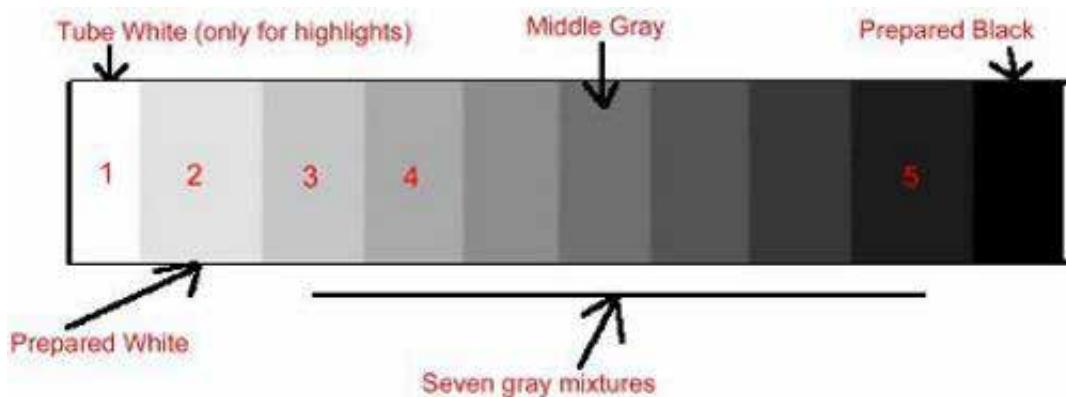
In this lesson you will draw an exterior vanishing point using one point perspective. You will increase your awareness of depth and your ability to work with a ruler.

Instructions

1. Use a ruler to draw a line across the top part of your paper, about 2 or 3 inches from the top. In the centre of the line, place a dot to represent the vanishing point. Using the ruler, draw two straight lines, one from each side at the bottom of your paper to the dot. Your sketch should look similar to the line drawing shown in this lesson.
2. Now imagine that you are looking down a roadway, walk, or railroad that goes as far as you can see. Draw some objects along the sides of the roadway. Be sure to make the objects smaller as they appear farther down the road.
3. When you achieve a good feeling of distance, colour your sketch. Colour can also show distance. Objects which are closer are usually brighter, larger, and more detailed than those in the distance.
4. Display your one point perspective drawing with others in your class. Which ones show the feeling of distance best?

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Making the Grade - an introduction to working with light and dark



Fetsum Teclémariam

Unity 2019

Charcoal on paper

Collection of the artist

Working with Black and White

4 Value Scale: A Study of Light and Dark

Observing and Thinking Creatively

Light and dark is not a simple matter of black and white. There are countless shades or **values** in between. The gradual change from dark to light is called **gradation**. Artists use gradation to make objects appear **three-dimensional**—to have **height**, **width**, and **depth**. The part of an object closest to the light source has the lightest value, and the parts farther away have darker values.

Look at the artwork in this lesson. Observe how Allston used gradual changes in shade, or value, to show roundness and depth in the fingers of *Belshazzar's Left Hand*. If there were no variations in shade, the hand would

look very flat. Notice the technique Allston has used to give depth to the folds he has drawn.

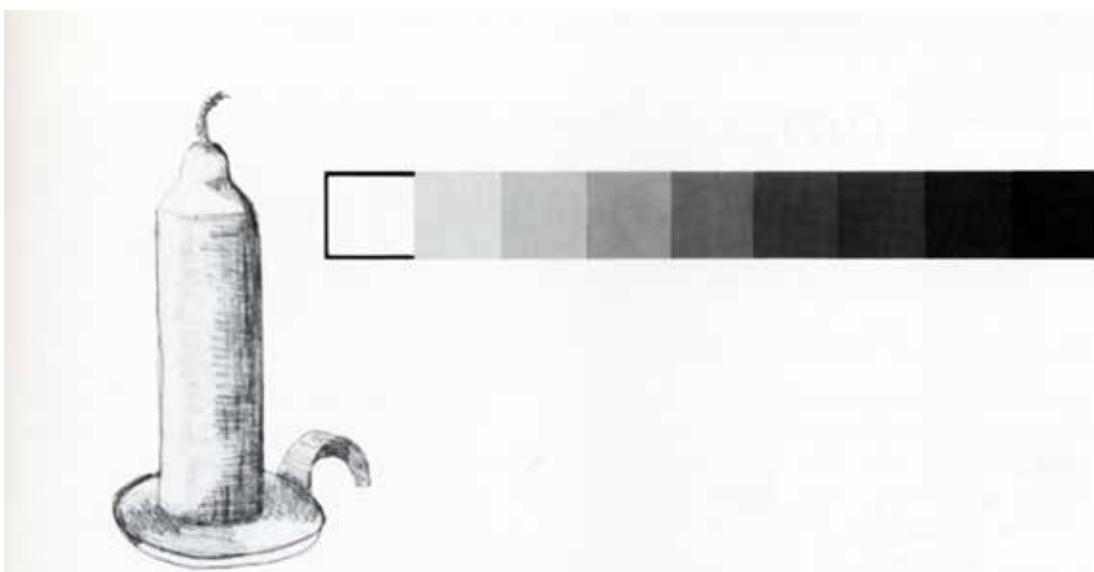
Allston drew this picture with black and white chalk. The bone structure of Belshazzar's hand is accented by the use of light values next to dark. What effect is created by the use of white?

In this lesson, you will create a value scale and a drawing that shows different values of an object. This exercise will help you become more aware of the variety of shades that can be used in drawing to show roundness, depth, and texture.



Washington Allston, *Belshazzar's Left Hand*, 19th century, drawing, black and white chalk on faded blue paper, 9 ½" x 12 ½". Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University. On Loan from the Washington Allston Trust.

Working with Black and White continued



Instructions for Creating Art

1. Divide a piece of white paper with lines to make nine 1"×4" rectangles.
2. Label the rectangles off to the side from the top down in the following order: white, high light, light, low light, medium, high dark, dark, low dark, and black.
3. You may use a soft pencil or charcoal to make your value scale. Begin shading from the middle rectangle, rather than from the top down. This helps prevent duplication of values or arriving at black at the seventh or eighth rectangle.
4. Now use the side of your pencil to shade the bottom black rectangle a very dark, solid black. Then fill in medium, the light and dark, and finally the remaining four rectangles.
5. Remember that it is easier to make an area darker than lighter. However, if you must lighten an area, don't erase. Instead, use your eraser like a sponge and press down and lift off some of the value. If the area is left spotty, pencil it in evenly.
6. Except for white, each rectangle should be filled in evenly. For darker areas, use your pencil to go over and over the area until you reach the right value. Hold the paper up to the light to see if the values change at even rates.
7. Now choose an object with round contours and draw it. Carefully shade in the dark and light areas so that the roundness is shown.

Art Materials

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 9" × 12" white
paper | Cover sheet |
| Pencil or charcoal
and eraser | |

Learning Outcomes

1. What is *gradation*?
2. How do artists use values to create a sense of three-dimensions in drawings and paintings?
3. What part of your shaded object was most difficult to create? Why?

Fade Away Charcoal Drawings

Grades 7-12

Objectives:

Through the studio activity students will:

- a) gain an understanding of the concept of working *en plein air*, or outside, as opposed to inside a studio
- b) gain an understanding of the concepts of linear and aerial perspective through the examination of tone and shading
- c) experiment with the use of charcoal as a drawing medium

Materials:

- vine charcoal sticks
- easels (if these are not available, plywood squares could be substituted - as long as students have a surface on which to attach their drawing paper)
- drawing paper (cartridge paper or heavier paper such as Mayfair)
- eraser
- paper toweling; kleenex; soft rags; Q-tips (for blending and smudging)
- viewfinders
- hairspray or fixative (optional)

Methodology:

1/ Discussion/Viewing - examine the works of Jennifer Annesley in the exhibition

Plate Tectonics to explore the techniques of **perspective - the representation, on a two-dimensional surface, of three-dimensional space.**

- **aerial perspective:** when objects are close to the foreground, or the front/bottom of the drawing, they are darker and are depicted with more detail
- **linear perspective:** when objects recede into the background they converge and disappear into a vanishing point to indicate distance. Objects also become smaller and less detailed the further they are away from the foreground.

2/ In studio, demonstrate the use of charcoal to students. Note: there are many ways artists can work with charcoal. One method is to:

- a) **cover entire surface** of paper with a rapid 'fill' of charcoal.
- b) use a Kleenex, rag etc. to rub the charcoal into the paper and achieve **an even mid-grey** colouring or tone.

Fade Away Charcoal Drawings continued

- c) use a white rubber eraser and charcoal sticks to draw in and fill in objects. The eraser is an excellent tool to remove grey and achieve highlights in objects, while the charcoal is used to put colour back in the drawing and achieve richer tones and shadows. To blend areas together, Q-tips are also an excellent and inexpensive art tool.
- d) demonstrate the use of view-finders and how what students see through the center opening is what they will draw/record on their papers.

3. Distribute drawing materials, viewfinders, drawing boards to students.

4. Go outside and have students locate a scene to draw. Whatever view they choose must provide a good example of **linear perspective**.

5. In drawing, students work with charcoal using line, sizes of objects, and tones to show linear and aerial perspective in their work.

* note: charcoal smudges very easily and so careful handling of work is necessary. To 'fix' the charcoal to the paper, finished work can be given a light spray with art fixative or hairspray.



Warspite Railway Line
Student drawing

Abstracting from the Real

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.

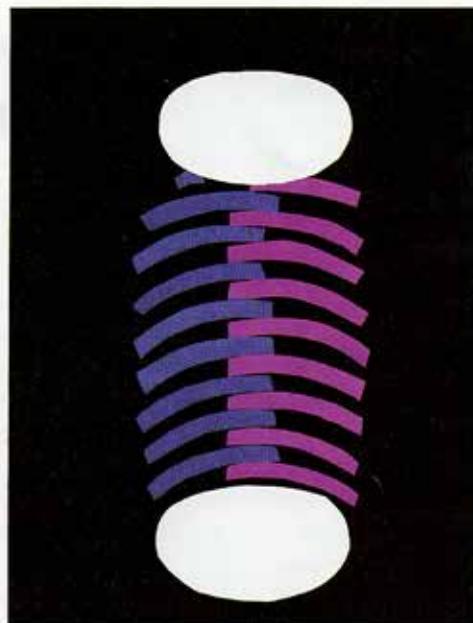
In this lesson, you will create an abstract cutout design of an object.



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

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

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.	Pencil and eraser
	Colored construction paper
	Scissors
	Glue or paste

Sketch paper



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?

Colour Me a Story

Grades 3-9

Many of the artworks in the exhibition ...bring a folding chair focus on stories and story-telling. In this activity students will design and create mixed media works on paper inspired by the exhibition and conversations surrounding it. Students will be challenged to tell their own stories in styles reminiscent of artists in the exhibition. They will think in terms of perspective, colour selection and enhanced narrative while working in a 2D format.

Supplies:

- pencils & erasers
- rinse buckets & brushes
- watercolour paint
- thin markers/sharpies
- 2x Mayfair
- mixing trays/watercolour & ink trays

Objectives

Through the studio project the students will:

1. Discuss "what is a narrative". What does it mean "to narrate"?
2. Discuss and review what a protagonist and an antagonist are. Reminding the students to keep the protagonist (themselves – their story) in mind as the focal point of their work
3. Discuss the elements of design; line, shape, colour, texture
4. Discuss simple aerial perspective
5. Discuss the concept of "mixed media"

Procedure

- 1.a. Keep in mind the protagonist or focal point (person, place or thing) in their story
b. There are 3 steps to this project: pencil drawing, marker drawing and watercolour painting
c. Have students focus on a season. Choose SEASONAL COLOURS = brighter colours for spring and summer, muted colours for autumn
d. Keep in mind perspective: foreground / middle ground / background =
-Things in the foreground are large, bright and in focus
- Things in the background tend to be smaller, duller and are overlapped or partially blocked by closer items
2. In class distribute paper and pencils and erasers to students.
- 2.a. Pencil Drawing: Have students do a light sketch on the paper. This sketch will tell their story. They will also be going over their drawing in pen and then in watercolour – so draw lightly = easy to erase lines.

Introduction and drawing = 25 minutes

Colour Me a Story continued

3. Marker Drawing: While students are doing their pencil drawings, hand out the thin sharpies
Remind students they are not to touch or use the markers until asked to do so.

When everyone is ready, have students retrace their drawings in pen.

When their whole drawing is “re-drawn” in pen they can count to 5 – then erase all pencil marks
(this waiting ensures no ink will get smeared!)

Re-draw & erase = 10 minutes

4. While students are re-drawing in ink, hand out the brushes, rinse water and watercolour paints

5. Watercolour Painting: Remind students to choose SEASONAL Colours – they are invited to dilute their paints on a mixing tray.

Again, choosing clear bright colours for the foreground and dull or diluted colours for the background

Painting = 15 minutes... then clean-up

If time allows/studio ended early have a critique – have students choose a work that is not their own and discuss 2 things they like about it:

- Talk about the colour choices. Do they make us “feel like winter”/like summer etc.?
- Talk about the colours the artist selected: dark, bright, cool, hot, dull, bright
- Talk about the mood or atmosphere of the work: dark, sad, happy, loud, quiet
- Does this artwork convey a story or narrative? Are we able to “read it” ourselves? What are our visual clues?

The Human Figure in Action

This project is inspired by the works of Braxton Garneau in the exhibition ...bring a folding chair.

Observing and Thinking Creatively

Representing human figures in action has been a part of art through the centuries. What do you suppose the first example might have been? Perhaps you have seen pictures of cave drawings that show a figure throwing a spear. The best way to learn to draw something is to actually look at the thing you are drawing. An artist must become aware of proportions, the relationship of the size of one part to another. Have you ever seen a drawing of a person that had one arm or leg longer than the other? Learning to measure proportions will make your drawings look more realistic.

It is a good idea to draw the basic shape of a thing and then fill in the details. When human figures are being drawn, it may be helpful to draw a simple line "skeleton" to make sure proportions are accurate and that the curves and angles of the arms and legs are correct.

Observe the position of Degas' *Ballerina*. Notice how the arms, legs, feet, and hands bend. Drawing sketches of a model who turns his or her arms, legs, hands, head, and torso every possible way will help you learn how bodies move.

In this lesson, you will draw a human figure in action. You will increase your awareness of how bodies move, body proportions, and how clothes affect body shape.



Edgar Degas, Ballerina, Courtesy of the San Diego Museum of Art.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
The Human Figure in Action continued



Instructions for Creating Art

1. Choose a partner and decide who will model first. The first model should take an action position. The second student should then quickly sketch the outline of the model's pose. Check to see that the **proportions** look accurate. How wide are the shoulders? How long are the arms and legs? When the first sketch has been completed, change places.

2. When you have made your penciled outline, decide which body parts are hidden by arms and which parts overlap. Draw in the lines which separate parts.

3. Look at the **color** and **texture** of the clothing of the student you drew. Have the student assume the original pose again and see how the clothing looks. Sketch in the student's clothing. If the student is pretending to hold something in the pose, such as a ball, tool, or other object, add that to your picture.

4. Now, color your picture with the **medium** of your choice. Display your finished picture with others in your class. All the figures could be cut out, grouped together, overlapped to form a group **mural**. How many people can you recognize from these pictures?

Art Materials

12" x 18" white construction paper
Pencil and eraser
Scissors

Choice of media:
Paints and brushes, colored markers, crayons, etc.



Learning Outcomes

1. What is the meaning of *proportion*?
2. Explain how you showed the texture and effects of clothing in your drawing.
3. How does your drawing show the feeling of action?

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

My World Stencil Project - Grades 7-12

This activity is a further take on the use of stencils in images created by AJA Louden in the exhibition *...bring a folding chair*. Please note that the following project uses very low tech. materials/methodologies. If silk-screens are available this project can be adapted into a silkscreening project.

In this project students will find and produce a photographic image upon which they will put their own 'imprint', claiming the space as their own, much like AJA Louden has claimed his own space in his works.

Objectives

Students will, through the studio activity, gain an understanding of:

- a) what a print is (multiple images)
- b) how to create a stencil print image
- c) discuss concepts of symbols; identity
- d) combine photographic imagery with graffiti methods to create a mixed-media work

Materials

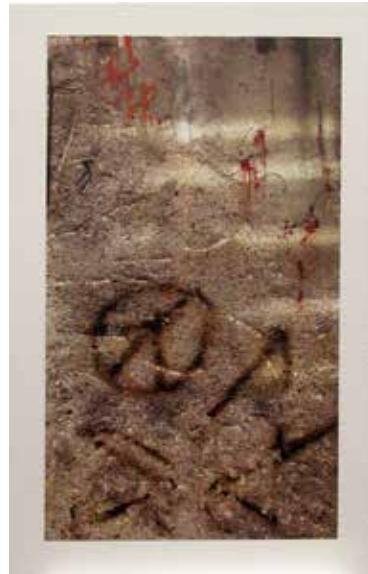
- access to computers/photocopier to create and adjust photographic images
- heavier card stock (for stencil making)
- fine x-acto knives/scissors
- heavier paper/matt board (for photographic backing)
- paint (tempera or acrylic paint)
- sponges, brushes or rags for paint application

Methodology

Step 1: Have students find and photograph a place in their community. This could be a wall, a sign post, a mail box etc.
- some place which will serve as the 'canvas' for their stencil imagery.

Once the photograph is taken, have students adjust it using photoshop and print the image at about 11 x 17 inches and 325 dpi.

Paste the printed image onto heavier cardstock/bristol board/matt board to fit. (using glue or spray adhesive)



Mounted original wall photographic image

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

My World Stencil Project continued

Step 2: Have students design a simple image which represents themselves or has meaning to them in some way.

Have students draw the symbolic image onto card stock and then, carefully using a fine x-acto knife, cut out the center of their design to create a stencil.



Step 3: Apply the stencil (good side up) onto the prepared photographic image from step 1.

Step 4: Have students consider the colour(s) they wish their image to be. Colour choice should reflect mood of their symbol as well as consider the colour of their background photographic image.

Using sponges, rags or a paint brush have students carefully dab paint into the open areas of their stencil.

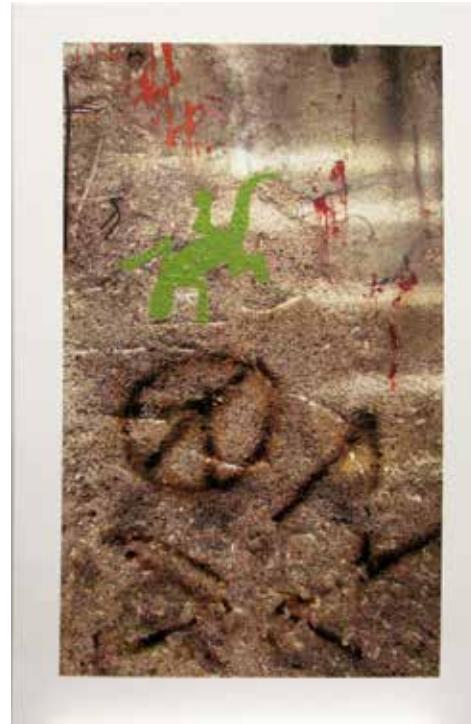
The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

My World Stencil Project continued

Step 5: Once paint applied have students carefully remove/peel the stencil from the photographic image/backing to reveal their completed print.

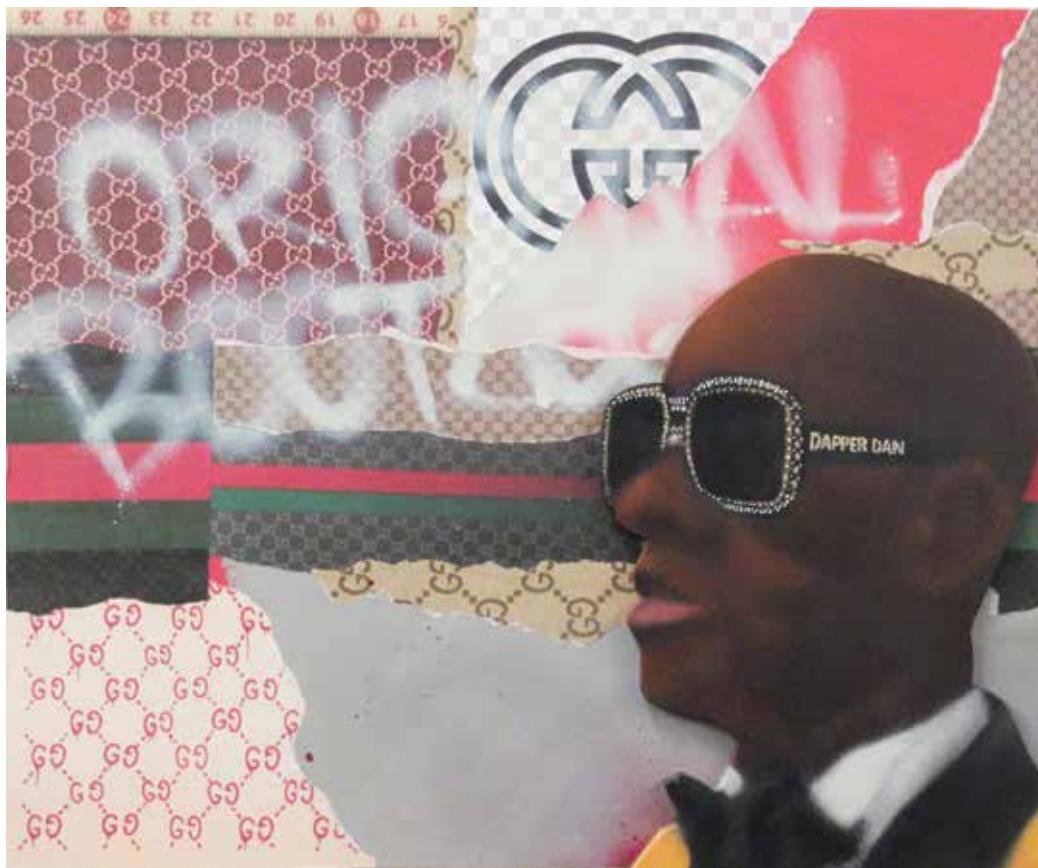
If necessary, have students use a small brush and paint to touch up any blotted areas of the print.

Evaluate the finished print in terms of neatness of work and relationship of colour to symbol and overall design.



Completed image - painted lizard stencil design on photographic image

GLOSSARY



AJA Louden
The Story of Dapper Dan, 2021
Mixed media on panel
Private Collection

Glossary

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.

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

Pop Art: A 20th century art style focusing on mass-produced urban culture: movies, advertising, science fiction. In the USA Pop Art was initially regarded as a reaction from Abstract Expressionism because its exponents brought back figural imagery and made use of hard-edged, quasi-photographic techniques. Pop artists employed commercial techniques in preference to the painterly manner of other artists.

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.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Credits

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The Artists

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Art Gallery of Alberta

SOURCE MATERIALS:

- Oxford Companion to Art**, Oxford University Press, 1970 - pg. 2-4
The Usborne Book of Art Skills, Fiona Watt, Usborne Publishing Ltd., London, 2002
Art in Action, Guy Hubbard, Coronado Publishers Inc., United States, 1987
Modernism - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernism>
Modern Art - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_art
The History of Art, Second Edition, H.W.Janson, Harry N. Abrams Inc., New York, 1977, pp. 631-675
Graffiti - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graffiti>
University of Alberta, Faculty of Arts - <https://www.ualberta.ca/arts/faculty-news/2018/februaryofficial-recognition-of-black-history-month-in-alberta-an-uphill-battle>
Black History Month - <https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/education/dates/Pages/blackhistory.aspx>
Black History in Canada: Education Guide - [Historica Canada](#)
Underground Railroad - <https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/underground-railroad>
John Ware (cowboy) - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ware_\(cowboy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ware_(cowboy))
John Ware by Laura Neilson Bonikowsky, 2013, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/john-ware>
John Ware, Dictionary of Canadian Biography - www.biographi.ca/en/bio/ware_john_13E.html
Amber Valley, Alberta - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amber_Valley_Alberta
Amber Valley - <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/eppp-archive>
Black Settlers Come to Alberta - <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/eppp-archive/100/200/301...>
'Secret Alberta': New documentary brings Amber Valley back to life - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/>
The black people in the Middle of Nowhere: The lost community of Amber Valley, AB - <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/the-black-people-in-the-middle-of-nowhere....>
Paula Simons: Strong and free: The adventures of Joseph Lewis, Edmonton's first black voyageur - <https://edmontonjournal.com/opinion/columnists/paula-simons-strong-and-free-....>
The West Indians in Canada by James W. St. G. Walker, Department of History, University of Waterloo, pp. 8-24, 1984
Jamaican Canadians - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaican_Canadians
Caribbean Canadians - <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/caribbean-canadians>
Mathieu da Costa - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathieu_da_Costa
Black Loyalist - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Loyalist
The Jamaica Maroons - <https://www.bccnsweb.com/web/our-history/the-maroons/>
Jamaican Maroons in Nova Scotia by John N. Grant, 2015 - <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/maroons-of-nova-scotia>
Black Refugee (War of 1812) - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Refugee_\(War_of_1812\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Refugee_(War_of_1812))
Black Canadians - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Canadians

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Credits

Paula Simons: Strong and free: The adventures of Joseph Lewis, Edmonton's first black voyageur, The Edmonton Journal - <https://edmontonjournal.com/opinion/columnists/paula-simons-strong-and-free-the-adventures-of-joseph-lewis-edmontons-first-black-voyageur>

Statistics Canada - 2016 Census

FADER: How Canada Forgot Its Black Artists by Yaniya Lee, 2016

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

Funding for this exhibition was provided by The Alberta Foundation for the Arts

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

Front Cover Images:

Left: Elsa Robinson, *Honouring The Ancestors*, 2021, Mixed Media Textile,
Collection of the artist

Right: AJA Louden, *Claiming A Chair* (detail), 2021, Mixed media on panel, Private Collection

