

GRADE 9: *Our Creative Spirit*

Interpretive Panel – “Inspired by Mother Earth”

These resources are intended to support curriculum connections to the *Indigenous Connections to the Northeast Swale* project on the Meewasin app and the physical interpretive panels located at the [Meewasin Northeast Swale](#). Content can also be accessed on our [web-based platform](#).



The land influences creative expression and culture in a variety of ways. In this inquiry, students will learn how the land inspires many Indigenous art forms, as well as the ways that those art forms are integral to the cultures of this landscape.

This inquiry can also extend into the urban environment where students will be invited to consider how the cityscape inspires artists and influences the culture of our city. Finally, students will create their own artwork that is inspired by the landscape (urban, natural, or otherwise).

This inquiry connects with Grade 9 Treaty Outcomes by helping students understand one aspect of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and its role in upholding the rights of Indigenous peoples on this landscape.

It also supports Arts 9 and Social Studies 9 in investigating the relationship between art, values, beliefs, and ideas, as well as interacting with a variety of traditional and contemporary art forms. **For more information about outcomes, and assessment examples, see the end of this document.**



Arnold Isbister is an artist from Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation.

TREATY EDUCATION OUTCOMES & INDICATORS

GRADE 9

TR9¹:2 Investigate the Canadian government’s response to the UN Declaration of the Rights for Indigenous Peoples.

SI9²:2 Analyze the purpose of symbols used in treaty making from Canada to other countries.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

FOR LEARNERS

What is the role of art in our lives and cultures?
How does UNDRIP support the arts?
How does art support nationhood? Challenge oppression? Support reconciliation? Imagine alternate histories and futures?

FOR LEADERS

How can we support artistic expression in our classrooms?
What modes of communication do you value (explicitly and implicitly) in your pedagogy?
How can we value art through assessment? How can we devalue art through assessment?

INTRODUCTION

SEQUENCE	DECOLONIZING MINDSET	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and share an example of artwork that challenges the way you think about your ideas, beliefs, and/or values. These could include examples from drama, music, visual art, and/or dance. If possible, bring a sample of the artwork (video, image, audio) to share with the class. 2. In small groups, identify the qualities of the artwork that are most compelling, interesting, or inspiring and record them in a notebook. 	Positioning/Understanding self	

GATHERING INFORMATION

SEQUENCE	DECOLONIZING MINDSET	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Investigate traditional art forms that are connected to the landscape in this region. Start with examples from the Meewasin App (embroidery, weaving, dance, leatherwork, birchbark biting, beading, and quillwork) and see what you can find. 4. On the "Inspired By Mother Earth" interpretive panel at the Northeast Swale, Elder Roland Duquette talks about how the Chicken Dance holds lessons about family structure and community. In the Meewasin App, Elder William Ratfoot tells a story about the origins of the Grass Dance, and Métis Enn Vyay (Old Person) Nora Cummings shares that Métis sashes contain information about stories that are told aloud. What can you find out about other traditional art forms in terms of how they support community, and transmit values and beliefs? 5. Engage in proper protocol to invite an Elder or Knowledge Keeper to share information about the art forms that are meaningful to them (or to teach you one!). 6. After you have researched traditional art forms, revisit your list from the introductory activity and add any qualities of these art forms that you found most compelling, interesting, or inspiring. 	Affirming Indigenous Nationhood	<p>Meewasin App (Apple) Meewasin App (Google)</p> <p>Meewasin Web-Based Resources</p> <p>Video: "Our Creative Spirit" Elder Nora Cummings on Métis Art</p> <p>Video: "Everything Has Spirit - Origins of the Grass Dance", Elder William Ratfoot</p> <p>Gabriel Dumont Institute: Art & Artifact Collection</p>

LAND-BASED EXPERIENCE: ART ON THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

SEQUENCE	DECOLONIZING MINDSET	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
<p>7. Urban Art Trek:</p> <p>Art can be found throughout the Meewasin Valley. Using the websites, maps, and blogs in “Additional Resources”, as well as ideas from students, create an Urban Art Trek.</p> <p>Decide on several examples of public art that you want to visit as a class and map out a route to walk.</p> <p>Create a viewing guide to refer to as you visit each sculpture, mural, or installation to help you think about how the urban landscape inspires unique artwork. This viewing guide can include questions based on criteria from your list of compelling, interesting, or inspiring qualities of artwork, as well as questions from the “How to View Public Art” video in the additional resources.</p> <p>You can record student responses to prompts in the viewing guide by blogging, journaling, or recording video/audio files of their thoughts.</p> <p>NOTE: To help you prepare for an outdoor excursion with your students, consult the resources in “Outdoor Learning: Setting up for Success” from Meewasin’s Education Activities.</p>	<p>Positioning/Understanding Self</p>	<p>Meewasin Valley Trail + Locations: As stewards of the river valley corridor, the Meewasin Valley Authority strives to ensure a healthy and vibrant river valley, balancing human use and conservation for the benefit of present and future generations.</p> <p>Local Public Art Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meewasin Public Art Tour • City of Saskatoon Public Art Examples • Murals in the Broadway Area • Tourism Saskatoon: Dynamic Downtown Public Art • Map of the City of Saskatoon’s Public Art Collection <p>Video: “How to Look at Public Art”, KQED Art School</p> <p>Meewasin: “Outdoor Learning: Setting up for Success”</p>

APPLYING KNOWLEDGE

SEQUENCE	DECOLONIZING MINDSET	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
<p>8. Following your Urban Art Trek, have students reflect on their inquiry to this point (including research on traditional art forms, as well as contemporary urban art) and brainstorm the many ways that art affirms and supports culture.</p> <p>9. Create a concept map to display in the classroom during the next phase of your inquiry. You can reference the “Stars and Constellations” process from the additional resources section.</p> <p>10. Investigate the ways that traditional art forms were impacted by the colonization of this land. See “Additional Resources” for starting points into this research. Topics that you may want to investigate include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bans on ceremony resulting from the Indian Act • Museum possession of traditional works of art • Appropriation and commodification of Indigenous art forms 	<p>Critical Analysis of Colonization</p>	<p>Description of “Stars and Constellations” process (page 24) and “Here’s What. So What? Now What?” process (page 34) in Discursive Strategies and Thinking Routines to Support Citizenship Education Inquiries, by Sherry Van Hesteren, Educational Consultant, Saskatoon Public Schools, 2018</p> <p>Bans on ceremony resulting from the Indian Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline of the Indian Act from the Native Women’s Association of Canada <p>Museum possession of traditional works of art:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decolonizing Canadian Museums: Part 1 and Part 2

<p>11. Use the “Here’s What. So What? Now What?” process to organize your information:</p> <p>In the “Here’s What” column, include facts, stories, and examples of how colonization impacted traditional art forms.</p> <p>In the “So What?” column, record information or inferences about the consequences of this impact.</p> <p>In the “Now What?” column, students can look for examples of how these issues have been addressed (examples of repatriation/repatriation of museum artefacts, initiatives that specifically support Indigenous artists, and UNDRIP).</p>		<p>short documentary from <i>APTN Investigates</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repatriation of Birch Bark Canoe from the U of S <p>Appropriation & commodification of Indigenous Art forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: Fake Art Hurts Indigenous Artists <p>Other related resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: How Indigenous Art is Challenging Colonial Law • UNDRIP Articles and the Government of Canada’s response <p>A few local art institutions and collectives that feature/support Indigenous Artists (not comprehensive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanuskewin • Manacihitowin: Indigenous Art at the U of S • Remai Modern • Indigenous Poets Society • Gordon Tootoosis nīkāniwin Theatre
--	--	--

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT TASK

SEQUENCE	DECOLONIZING MINDSET	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
<p>Visit the Northeast Swale or another place in the Meewasin Valley and learn about the people’s history on the landscape, as well as the ecology of the site you have chosen.</p> <p>Engage in solo time and observe the natural phenomena there.</p> <p>Reflect on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the land inspire and influence art? • What have you learned about the history of art on this landscape? • How could you express your shifting ideas, values, or beliefs through music, dance, visual art, or drama? <p>Drawing inspiration from the land and using your criteria for interesting, compelling, and inspiring art, create a piece of music, dance, visual art, or drama to share your learning.</p>	<p>Positioning/Understanding Self</p>	<p>Solo/Sit Spot Support, courtesy of Samantha Gunn, Saskatoon Public Schools, 2021</p>

ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES

OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES
SOCIAL STUDIES 9	
DR9.3 Assess the relationship of the natural environment in the development of a society.	Solo reflection on the relationship between land, culture, and art.
DR9.4 Determine the influence of societies of the past on contemporary life in Canada.	"Here's What. Now What. So What?" research
ARTS ED 9	
CR9.1 Respond to professional dance, drama, music, and visual art works through individual or collaborative inquiry and the creation of own arts expressions.	Urban Art Walk responses
CR9.2 Investigate and identify ways that today's arts expressions can inspire change.	"Here's What. Now What. So What?" research
CR9.3 Investigate and identify how arts expressions can challenge thinking about values, ideas, and beliefs.	Reflections on traditional and contemporary art forms; viewing guide
CH9.2 Use the arts to raise awareness on topics of concern to Indigenous artists in dance, drama, music, and visual arts.	Final assessment project

DID YOU KNOW?

Meewasin works in partnership with Saskatoon Public Schools and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools to develop resources that help teachers engage their students in outdoor learning. Please share your feedback on these resources by completing a [short survey](#) and let us know what you'd like to see developed in the future!

© Meewasin Valley Authority, 2020-2022.

NOTICE AND DISCLAIMER: All Rights Reserved. These materials have been co-developed with support from Saskatoon Public Schools and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and are intended for educational use only. No part of these materials may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, duplicated, distributed, or modified without the express written consent of Meewasin Valley Authority. Resources referenced in these materials are subject to their own copyright protection.