

We Come to Witness

*Sonny Assu in Dialogue with
Emily Carr*



Sonny Assu
Spaced Invaders, 2014
digital intervention on an Emily Carr painting (*Heina*, 1928)
Courtesy of the Artist

TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE
FALL 2016

Vancouver
Artgallery

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Vancouver Art Gallery

Teacher's Guide for School Programs

The exhibition *We Come to Witness: Sonny Assu in Dialogue with Emily Carr* presents a dialogue between the works of the iconic West Coast modernist Emily Carr and the contemporary artist Sonny Assu. In his series *Interventions On The Imaginary*, Assu uses contemporary versions of traditional First Nations forms to transform and interrupt a selection of Emily Carr paintings from the Vancouver Art Gallery's collection. In doing so, Assu confronts grave misconceptions about First Nations people held by many during Carr's lifetime.

DEAR TEACHER:

This guide will assist you in preparing for your tour of the exhibition *We Come to Witness: Sonny Assu in Dialogue with Emily Carr*. It also provides follow-up activities to facilitate discussion after your Gallery visit. Engaging in the suggested activities before and after your visit will reinforce ideas generated by the tour and build continuity between the Gallery experience and your ongoing work in the classroom. Most activities require few materials and can be adapted easily to the age, grade level and needs of your students. Underlined words in this guide are defined in the Vocabulary section.

The tour of *We Come to Witness: Sonny Assu in Dialogue with Emily Carr* has three main goals:

- to introduce students to the work of the artists Emily Carr and Sonny Assu,
- to consider diverse artistic traditions and disciplines,
- to explore individual artworks within historical, social and cultural contexts.

THE EXHIBITION: *We Come to Witness: Sonny Assu in Dialogue with Emily Carr*

The exhibition *We Come to Witness: Sonny Assu in Dialogue with Emily Carr* presents a dialogue between the works of the iconic West Coast modernist Emily Carr and the contemporary artist Sonny Assu.

Sonny Assu continues his ongoing body of work *Interventions On The Imaginary*, creating a new series of digital tags on a body of Emily Carr paintings selected from the Vancouver Art Gallery's collection. Assu confronts the portrayal of Indigenous peoples as a vanishing race by interrupting Carr's landscapes with an insertion of contemporary versions of traditional First Nations forms. The exhibition also includes new and existing sculptural works from Assu in addition to a special collaboration with the ceramic artist Brendan Tang.

ARTISTS' BACKGROUND

Emily Carr (1871–1945)

Born in 1871, Emily Carr was one of the most important British Columbia artists of her generation, best known for her work documenting the villages and totem poles of First Nations peoples of BC, and for her paintings of the forests of Vancouver Island.

Carr studied art in San Francisco, London and then France, where she was introduced to outdoor sketching along with new approaches to art making. In 1912, after her return to Canada, she travelled north, visiting First Nations villages on the Skeena River and Haida Gwaii, and she produced her first major canvases of First Nations subject matter. In these works, influenced by her explorations of Modernism in Europe, she used bright colours and broken brushwork. Carr offered these works for sale to the provincial government, which rejected the work on the grounds that it was not “documentary”—it was, in essence, too abstract, too specifically an artist’s vision. Dejected, she returned to Victoria to make a living by running a boarding house, raising sheepdogs, making pottery and giving art lessons. Between 1913 and 1927, Carr produced very little painting.

In 1927, Carr’s work was included in the exhibition West Coast Art: Native and Modern at the National Gallery in Ottawa. This event was her introduction to other artists, particularly members of the Group of Seven, who recognized the quality of her work. In the 1930s, Carr began devoting most of her attention to landscape, particularly the forest, as her subject. These paintings express her strong identification with the British Columbia landscape and her belief that a profound expression of spirituality could be found in nature. They are among her strongest and most forceful works, in which she developed her own modernist style of rich, layered coloration and increasing abstraction.

In the late 1930s, as her health worsened, Carr began to focus more energy on writing, producing an important series of books. They included *Klee Wyck*, a book of stories based on her experiences with First Nations people, which won the Governor General’s Award for Literature in 1941. She died in 1945 in Victoria at the age of seventy-four, recognized as an artist and writer of major importance.

Sonny Assu (b. 1975)

Sonny Assu was born in Richmond, BC, in 1975 and raised in North Delta, more than 250 km away from his ancestral home on Vancouver Island. He is an interdisciplinary artist currently living on unceded Ligwilda’xw territory in Campbell River, BC. It was not until he was eight years old that he learned of his Kwakwaka’wakw First Nations heritage, and this discovery has become the focal point of his contemporary art practice.

Assu graduated from Emily Carr University (2002) and was the recipient of their alumni award in 2006. There, he studied painting and combined his interest in pop art with traditional drum-making and cedar bark weaving. He received the BC Creative Achievement Award in First Nations Art in 2011 and was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award in 2012, 2013 and 2015. His work has been accepted into the National Gallery of Canada, Seattle Art Museum, Vancouver Art Gallery, Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Burke Museum at the University of Washington, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Hydro Quebec, Lotto Quebec and in various other public and private collections across Canada, the United States and the UK.

Brendan Tang (b. 1975)

Brendan Tang was born in Dublin, Ireland to Trinidadian parents and grew up in Nanaimo, BC. A Canadian citizen, Tang started his ceramics career in 1994 – 1996 with a Diploma in the Visual Fine Arts from Malaspina University College in Nanaimo, BC. This was followed by a Bachelor of Visual Fine Arts from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) in 1998. His career accelerated in 2003-2006 with his move from Vancouver Island to obtain his Master of Fine Arts in Studio Arts from Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, Illinois. As his career has progressed, Tang has moved from functional ceramic ware to post modern art and become one of the most well-known and tech-savvy artists in the Canadian spectrum of ceramics.

Tang has lectured at conferences and academic institutions across the continent, and his professional practice has also taken him to India, Europe and Japan. He has been exhibited at the Museum of Fine Art in Boston, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in QB, and Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, as well being a recipient of the 2016 Biennale Internationale de Vallauris contemporary ceramic award. Tang's work can be found in such collections as the Seattle Art Museum, the Ariana Muse in Geneva (SW), Canada House in London, UK and the Art Bank of Canada. Tang dedicates his full attention to his professional art practice in Vancouver BC, where he continues to explore the interface between culture and material.

NORTHWEST COAST ART: A Brief Introduction

Northwest Coast Art

Much of Northwest Coast art is representational: the images represent animals and figures from crests and stories. Formline is the continuous flowing line that outlines creatures and structures in a work of art. Artists use formline, ovoids and u-forms to create their designs, adhering to strict rules of composition that are passed down from generation to generation. The rules that guide formline design are consistent whether the subject is a human or an animal form, on a monumental totem pole or a goat-horn spoon handle.

Formline

“There are rules to go by . . . When I was working with Robert [Davidson], he explained that it was like learning to do the alphabet. He said, ‘If you don’t understand the alphabet, you can’t make new words.’ It’s the same with Northwest Coast Art.”

Reg Davidson

“We say, the line has to look like it would spring apart if you touched it with a knife.”

Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas

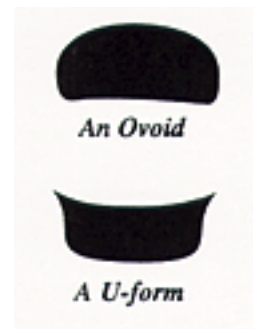
The formline design system can be compared to a formal language based on a kind of visual grammar. True masters of the art adhere to the “rules” while also achieving endless variations and surprising innovations. Formline designs can be painted on panels, drums, chests, boxes, spruce-root baskets and hats; they are incised on totem poles, argillite sculpture and silver and gold jewellery; they are woven into decorative robes. In traditional women’s arts, formline is approached differently, through the more abstract patterns of cedar and spruce root weaving.

Ovoids

- are traditionally convex on top, and slightly concave on the bottom, like a rounded rectangle or angular oval
- vary in thickness and length
- are commonly used for eyes and joints

U-forms

- are thick arches, with ends tapering to sharp points, similar to the letter *U*
- vary in proportion, and can be placed one inside another
- are often found in conjunction with other form elements
- are commonly used to depict appendages



Masks

First Nations masks and the design elements used to create them are cultural property, owned by the particular cultures to which they belong. The bold designs and forms used on the masks are distinctive of the Northwest Coast style of decoration. The painted and carved images on the masks utilize abstraction to represent animal, human and supernatural beings. The artists create complex images using the basic shapes of formline design.

A primary role of masks is to make the supernatural world visible. Masks can also represent everyday people, particularly ancestors and the people who meet the supernatural beings. Masks have had essential functions in First Nations societies from the earliest times. They rarely appear alone, outside of ceremony. Every mask has a story and a dance associated with it. When the masks are danced in special ceremonies, such as the potlatch, the stories are told as a way to pass on information and to record history in the memories of those watching the performance. Traditionally, First Nations had an

oral tradition through which they communicated their history, instead of a written tradition. The masks and dances help to preserve the values, status and responsibilities of their owners and makers.

Transformation Masks

The idea of transformation, in a symbolic and literal sense, is integral to much of traditional Northwest Coast thought and practice. Used in ceremony, transformation masks portray the spectacular metamorphosis of supernatural figures in oral histories.

Potlatch

"The potlatch ceremony is our supreme court where our laws are established and reaffirmed. The potlatch is a public forum where songs, which are inherited as property, are transferred and sung by their rightful owners. It is where the chiefs claim their position. It is where names, titles and social privileges are handed down to the rightful person through our mothers, since we are a matrilineal society. The potlatch, the very foundation of our culture, was outlawed, banned from our use."

Robert Davidson

The potlatch relates to social, spiritual, political and economic aspects of life. In the past, it was particularly important because First Nations languages were strictly oral. Through the potlatch, Northwest Coast peoples ensure that their family and community histories are preserved and maintained. Potlatches vary from nation to nation. Generally, a person of high rank hosts a potlatch to mark important social, sacred, legal, political or family transitions. There is a great feast, speeches and dancing, and the hosts give away food, objects and money to all the visitors. The gifts symbolize the wealth of the hosts. In accepting these potlatch goods, the visitors take on the responsibility of being witnesses. In an oral culture, there is no written record of property boundaries, fishing rights, treaties or marriages. As a result, the people who attend serve as the record. Their presence and acceptance of the gifts validates the claims of the host family. Potlatches were banned in Canada from 1884 to 1951.

Totem poles

Totem poles record the real and mythic histories of chiefly families and First Nations communities. They have many purposes: to tell stories, show land rights, celebrate marriages, remember the dead and welcome guests. The carved images on totem poles are crest figures. They show the animal, human and supernatural ancestors of a family. The rituals involved in constructing and erecting totem poles are ancient and complex. Totem poles are made of wood, usually cedar, and are carved by a master carver working with apprentices. Totem poles are often painted with bright, durable colours derived from plant and mineral sources. When erected, a pole is dedicated with a detailed account of the meaning and history of each figure depicted on it. It is then established through feasts and potlatches where guests are paid, with food and gifts, as witnesses to the host chief's claims.

Residential schools

Residential schools were government-sponsored religious schools established to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture after 1880. Originally conceived by Christian churches and the Canadian government as an attempt to both educate and convert Indigenous youth and to integrate them into Canadian society, residential schools disrupted lives and communities, causing long-term problems among Indigenous peoples. Since the last residential school closed in 1996, former students have pressed for recognition and restitution, resulting in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2007 and a formal public apology by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2008. In total, an estimated 150,000 First Nation, Inuit, and Métis children attended residential schools.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: About the Artists (intermediate and secondary students)

Objective:

Students read, research and share information about the artists represented in the exhibition.

Materials:

- ❑ writing materials
- ❑ access to Internet. Some useful websites:
 - www.artcyclopedia.com
 - www.wikipedia.com
 - www.sonnyassu.com
- ❑ Artist Information Sheet (page 10) and Student Worksheet (page 11)

Process:

1. Divide the students into small groups and assign an artist to each group.
2. Give each student a copy of the Student Worksheet (page 9) and ask them to transfer the information about their artist to the appropriate box.
3. Have students figure out what they need to know to complete the section on their artist, and search the Internet, either at home or at school. Older students can find more information; younger students, just the basics.
4. Ask each group to find/copy/sketch an artwork by each artist on a separate piece of paper.
5. Have each group present the information on their artist while the rest of the class adds the information to their worksheets.

Conclusion:

Discuss:

- What were some of the most interesting things that students learned or discovered?
- Which artist and/or kinds of artwork made students curious about seeing the actual work in the exhibition?
- Which artist, ways of working or ideas did the students want to find out more about?

Artist Information Sheet

Emily Carr (1871–1945)

- Born and died in Victoria, British Columbia
- Studied art in San Francisco, England and France, travelled through British Columbia visiting First Nations villages
- Lived mostly alone, kept lots of animals
- Wrote many books toward the end of her life, which were well received
- Painted First Nations villages and totem poles, and forest landscapes
- Sketched outdoors using thinned oil paint on paper, made final paintings in her studio using oil paint on canvas

Sonny Assu (b. 1975)

- Born in Richmond, BC
- Mixed racial background
- First Nations heritage important to him and in his work
- Influenced by and immersed in pop culture and developing technologies
- Makes objects, mixing new technology with traditional forms and materials

Student Worksheet

	Emily Carr	Sonny Assu
Personal Information		
Type of Art		
Known for		
Name of an Artwork		

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Sketch and Paint (all levels)

Objective:

Students are introduced to Carr's process of working by sketching outdoors and then, back in the classroom, creating a painting based on the sketch.

Discussion:

Emily Carr often created sketches for her landscapes out in nature, where she could study the colours and textures of the trees, foliage, lakes and sky, and observe the way light, wind and weather affected her subjects. She often began sketching in charcoal or thinned oil paint, and did the final work later, back in the studio. She would make oil paintings based on—but not exactly the same as—her sketches.

Emily Carr wrote the following passage in her book *Growing Pains*:

“Outdoor study was as different from studio study as eating is from drinking. Indoors we munched and chewed our subjects. Fingertips roamed objects feeling for bumps and depressions. We tested textures, observed contours. Sketching outdoors was a fluid process, half looking, half dreaming, awaiting invitation from the spirit of the subject to ‘come, meet me half way.’ Outdoor sketching was as much longing as labour. Atmosphere, space cannot be touched, bullied like the vegetables of still life or like the plaster casts. These space things asked to be felt not with fingertips but with one’s whole self.”

Materials:

For Part 1:

- drawing pads, or clipboards and sheets of paper
- pencil crayons, crayons or pastels

For Part 2:

- thicker paper for painting
- paint—preferably tempera or acrylic, but any available paint will work
- paintbrushes

Process:

Part 1:

1. Discuss Carr's two-step approach to her painting, and tell the students they are going to go outdoors and make a colour sketch as a precursor to a painting. Read them the above excerpt from *Growing Pains*.
2. Choose an outdoor area with some greenery and one or more trees. Have the students decide on a starting perspective; for example:
 - close up, with tree trunk or branches filling the page,
 - from a distance, including grass, trees and sky,
 - looking up, including the top of the tree and an expanse of sky, a single tree.
3. Have them look closely at the greens and yellows of the leaves, the browns and greys of the trunk and branches, and the blues and greys of the sky. Remind them that

landscape painters like Carr didn't use just one colour, but mixed and blended colours and shades to create rich, dense surfaces.

4. Have the students make a few colour sketches from different perspectives or angles, from close up and far away. Encourage them to fill the page with quick detail—broad strokes of colours, lines and shapes that include all the elements in their line of vision.

Part 2:

1. Back in the classroom, within a week after making the sketches, have the students look at their sketches and choose the one they would most like to make a painting from. What parts of their sketch do they want to leave in? What parts would they like to change? Does the composition feel balanced, or are there some areas they would like to add something to or remove something from? Would they like to combine elements from two drawings?
2. Have the students set up workspaces at their tables, where they can see their sketches and have access to paper, paint and brushes.
3. Have them paint their landscapes, encouraging them to fill the page, layering on and blending colours as they work.

Conclusion:

- Display the students' work: painting alongside sketch.
- Have them look at the work and talk about the similarities and differences in materials, locations, colours and composition.
- Discuss the process, how easy or hard it was to create the work, the differences between making the sketch and creating the painting.

PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Past to Present (all levels)

Objective: Students use a historical painting and advertising images to create a mixed artwork that changes the original context and meaning of the painting.

Discussion:

In his series *Interventions On The Imaginary*, Sonny Assu superimposes digital designs that reference both his First Nations heritage and pop culture onto images of Emily Carr paintings. With the insertion of ovoids and u-forms into the images, both the landscape paintings and the Northwest Coast design elements are changed. Assu uses contemporary versions of First Nations forms and incorporates ideas and symbols from popular culture such as tags and tagging. In doing this, Assu's work seeks to bring attention to the many misconceptions about First Nations people held by the large majority of non-aboriginal people during Emily Carr's lifetime. Assu merges the aesthetics of Northwest Coast Indigenous iconography with a pop art sensibility in an effort to address contemporary political and ideological issues.

Assu writes: *"My work comes from challenging the notion tradition. My tradition/identity is not only made up of Indianness but is also made up of TV, comic books, pop culture and the effect of mass media/advertising: By using the images I use now, I begin to empower the Indian culture by appropriating from the appropriator. By melding my pop past with the exploration of the Laich-kwil-tach culture, I am breathing new life into an art form that has become a commodity."*

Materials:

- access to the Internet and printer
- printed image of a famous painting
- magazines
- scissors
- glue

Process:

1. Have students look at Sonny Assu's work from his *Interventions On The Imaginary* series. Images are available at www.sonnyassu.com, or on page 15.
2. Discuss with students how Sonny Assu superimposes digital designs that reference pop culture onto images of Emily Carr paintings in order to change their meaning.
3. Have students look for a famous historical painting online and print a full-page colour image of it, or find the image in a magazine or old calendar.
4. Have students look through magazines and newspapers and find commercial images and advertisements that represent something significant in their lives or today's world. This could be a consumer item, a logo or brand, etc.
5. Have each student select one image from the magazine or newspaper, and cut it out.
6. Have them glue the cut-out image onto the image of the historical painting in a way that changes the meaning of the original work.
7. Display the finished artworks.

Conclusion:

- How did the image change from its original form?
- How did the cut-out image change the meaning of the painting?
- Compare students' works. How are they similar? How are they different? Consider subject matter, composition, layout, clarity of message, etc.

Examples



Sonny Assu, *Spaced Invaders*, 2014



Example 1



Example 2



Example 3

PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Documenting First Nations Cultures (intermediate levels)

Objective:

Students investigate Emily Carr's interpretation of First Nations cultures. They will consider the ways in which the cultural meaning of an object can change when it is interpreted from outside.

Discussion:

The First Nations communities of the Northwest Coast were a major source of inspiration for Emily Carr. She visited many First Nations villages, making her first excursion to Hittats'uu (Ucluelet), part of the Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka) territories on western Vancouver Island, in 1899. Here, Carr developed a keen interest in First Nations cultures, but her visits were brief and she never learned the language of the people she met.

Carr's work representing cultures that were not her own has led some authors to argue that her paintings are more a reflection of her British heritage than documents of First Nations cultures. This point deserves some consideration, as Carr often travelled to abandoned First Nations villages to paint and preferred to focus her attention on totem poles rather than people. She represented the poles using modern techniques that she had learned while studying in France. At the same time, it is important to remember that Carr was part of a generation in which many Westerners believed that the First Nations peoples of Canada were disappearing, and that it was her concern for these people that led her to try to document Northwest Coast culture.

Materials:

- ❑ images of totem poles
- ❑ reproductions of Emily Carr's paintings: *Totem Poles, Kitseukla, 1912*, and *Blunden Harbour, c. 1930* (page 18 or internet search)
- ❑ reproductions of photographs of the totem poles being discussed (page 18 or internet search)
- ❑ personal photograph (provided by the teacher)
- ❑ heavy paper
- ❑ pencils, pencil crayons, crayons, markers

Process:

Part 1

1. Introduce students to the totem poles of the First Nations of the Northwest Coast. Describe how totem poles are made out of cedar wood. Use images to point out the various types of poles and note the importance of crest figures.
2. Have students examine *Totem Poles, Kitseukla (1912)* and *Blunden Harbour (c. 1930)*.
3. Ask students to describe what they see. Have they seen a totem pole "in person"? How does it compare to the totem pole painted by Carr? Discuss.
4. Show students a photograph of the totem pole in Carr's painting. How does the painting compare to the photograph? What does she add or change? Discuss.

Part 2

5. Bring in a personal photograph of a place that is special to you.
6. Ask students to draw the place, focusing on what they like most about the photograph.

Conclusion:

- Invite students to share their drawings with the class.
- Tell students why your personal photograph is so special to you, making sure to point out the similarities and differences in how you see the image and how students represented it.
- Return to Carr's two images. Discuss how Carr's interpretation of these totem poles was not necessarily the same as their carvers', just as the students' interpretations of your photograph were not necessarily the same as yours.



Emily Carr, *Totem Poles, Kitseukla*, 1912



Emily Carr, *Blunden Harbour*, c. 1930



Gitksan Village of Gitsegukla, 1910



Kwakwaka'wakw Village of Ba'a's (Blunden Harbour), 1901

PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Meaningful Objects (adaptable to all levels)

Objective: Students find a discarded object and use it for a conceptual sculpture.

Discussion: Sonny Assu’s Longing series consists of conceptual sculptures that represent both simple and complex meanings. Assu creates ready-made sculptures using found pieces of wood to represent aspects of his culture and issues relevant to today’s society. Assu found the pieces at the site of a log-home developer on the traditional territory of the We Wai Kai Nation, his reserve on northeastern Vancouver Island. While exploring the piles of discarded wood, he discovered the off-cuts and thought they looked remarkably like pre-fabricated Northwest Coast masks. Assu felt the “masks” had an inherent beauty, and that each one had a face and story within. The display of these discarded objects, using museum-quality mask mounts, creates a sense of material value, “high art,” and reveals the expressive power of ordinary objects.

Materials:

- discarded found objects (chosen by students)
- glue or glue guns (optional)
- small cardboard box
- white paint
- writing paper, pencils

Process:

1. Have students look at Sonny Assu’s Longing series. Images are available at www.sonnyassu.com or on page 20.
2. Discuss how Assu used off-cuts of wood he found and made them look like museum-quality sculptures. In some of his later works in the series, he created bronze versions of the “masks” (see page 20).
3. Ask students to find one or more discarded objects or materials. This could be done at school in the outdoor areas or in their own time. Visits to beaches, parks and other areas are encouraged.
4. Have students bring the objects to school and arrange them in an interesting or artistic way on their desks, the floor or other appropriate areas. If some students want to use glue or glue guns, make sure they do so under supervision.
5. Once the object-based sculptures are complete, have each student bring a small box that can be made into a base for the sculpture.
6. Have them paint the boxes white.
7. Once the paint has dried, have each student place the finished sculpture on the box.
8. Ask each student to write a brief description of the sculpture’s significance to them and their reasons for choosing it. Younger students might write a sentence or two, older students a paragraph or more.
9. Have students edit the text, and write/type a good copy.
10. Have each student present their work to the class and read their piece.
11. Display the sculptures, with the written texts, in the classroom.

Conclusion:

- Why do you think artists choose to use everyday objects in their art? Would you? Why or why not?
- Does the meaning or significance of the everyday object change when it becomes part of an artwork? How?

“Longing” sculptures by Sonny Assu



Sonny Assu, *Longing #29*, 2011



Sonny Assu, (B) *Longing*, (B) *Longing #29*, (B) *Longing #4*, Bronze, 2013-15

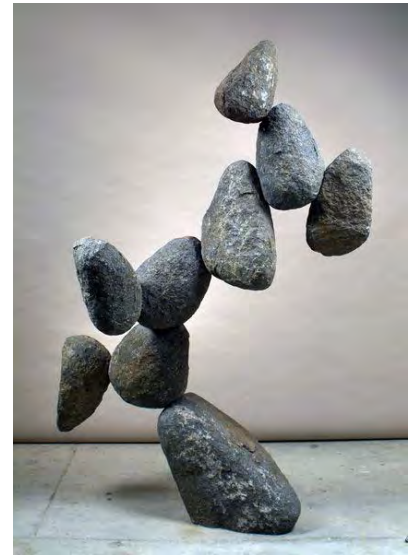
Examples



Driftwood



Metal and plastic scraps



Rocks



Cardboard



Perforated cardboard



Twigs or sticks



Shells

PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Forest Forms (all levels)

Objective:

Students create an abstract forest collage focusing on shape, form and colour.

Discussion:

Bright colours and bold forms characterize many of Emily Carr's paintings. As she progressed as a painter, her works became increasingly abstract and simplified, particularly the trees in her paintings of BC forests. Over time, Carr began to simplify her colours as well. She did not attempt to portray her subject in a realistic manner; rather, she used the real world as inspiration for abstract, personal interpretations of her subjects.

Materials:

- construction paper, tissue paper and/or other paper in a variety of colours
- pencils
- scissors
- glue
- printer
- access to the Internet
- printed image of a landscape or one of Emily Carr's paintings

Process:

1. Discuss Emily Carr's style of painting and her use of simple shapes, forms and colour to represent landscapes.
2. Have students find or print an image of a Carr painting *OR* an image of a Canadian landscape of their choice. If a print is not available, have students look at some works by Carr and then use their imagination to create a forest.
3. Encourage students to look at the painting or printed image as if it were a combination of simple shapes. What shapes do they see?
4. Provide students with a selection of paper in a variety of colours.
5. Have them draw out the major shapes they see on their chosen paper.
6. Have students show light and shadow by using papers with different shades of colour.
7. Have students glue shapes onto a background sheet of construction paper to create a bold and simplified landscape.
8. Display the work in the classroom.

Conclusion:

- Invite students to look at the work and talk about similarities and differences in colour, shapes and compositions.
- Have them discuss the process. How easy or hard was it to create the work? What are the differences between creating a shape collage, a painting and a landscape?
- How do the students perceive landscape and nature differently now?

Examples



VOCABULARY

abstract/abstraction: a style of art that can be thought of in two ways:

- a) the artist begins with a recognizable subject and alters, distorts, manipulates or simplifies elements of it;
- b) the artist creates purely abstract forms that are unrecognizable and have no direct reference to external reality (also called non-representational art).

conceptual art: art in which the ideas behind the creation of the work are more significant than the end product. During the 1960s and '70s, conceptual artists rejected the idea of the unique, precious art object and focused on intellectual explorations into artistic practice.

contemporary: created in the last thirty years. Most contemporary artists are living artists. Challenging traditional boundaries, many contemporary artists use a limitless range of materials and ideas to reflect, explore and comment on today's world.

First Nations/Indigenous: Aboriginal cultures of Canada. There are currently 634 recognized First Nations governments or bands across Canada, roughly half of which are in Ontario and British Columbia.

high art: art that is created by a culturally renowned artist and is considered not accessible to lower classes. Classifying art is subjective, so what one group considers high art may be considered low art by another. The most common meaning is the set of cultural products, mainly in the arts, held in the highest esteem by a culture.

intervention: the act of intervening, the interference into the affairs of another, the act of inserting one thing between others.

Modern/Modernist: a historical period of art practice—from 1850 to 1970—during which approaches to art embraced new ideas in science, political thought and many other areas. The Modernists rejected the restrictions of past art traditions and stressed innovation over all other values.

Pop art: The term *Pop* was first used in the late 1950s to refer to the work of artists who took both their art forms and their subjects from popular consumer culture. Using photography, printmaking and found objects, Pop artists brought the techniques and aesthetics of advertising, comic strips, movie stardom and product packaging to fine art, generating new modes of music, architecture, visual art, design, film and literature, and taking art out of the museum and into everyday life.

Post-modern art: a body of art movements that seeks to contradict some aspects of modernism or some aspects that emerged or developed in its aftermath. In general, movements such as intermedia, installation art, conceptual art and multimedia, particularly involving video are described as postmodern.

ready-made: everyday object selected and designated as art.

representational: Representational art, or figurative art, references objects or events in the real world. Romanticism, Impressionism, and Expressionism contributed to the emergence of abstract art in the nineteenth century. Even representational work is abstracted to some degree; entirely realistic art is elusive.

tags: A stylized signature, normally done in one color. The simplest and most prevalent type of graffiti, a tag is often done in a color that contrasts sharply with its background. Tag can also be used as a verb meaning "to sign".

digital tags: a keyword or term assigned to a piece of information (such as an Internet bookmark, digital image or computer file). A tag helps to describe an item and allows it to be found again by browsing or searching. Tags are generally chosen informally and personally by the item's creator or by its viewer, depending on the system.

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