GEORGE MORRISON

NATURE

INTERSECTIONS
Born in Chippewa City, Minnesota, George was one of twelve children and grew up near the Canadian border in northern Minnesota. He spoke Anishinaabe until he was six years old. He learned English in school, and when he was nine years old, he was sent away from his family to a boarding school in Wisconsin. He was not allowed to speak in his Native language. As a child, he had health problems. When he was nine years old, he spent over a year alone in a Minneapolis hospital and then for nine months he had both of his legs in casts. During this time, he read and created artworks.

Later, he was encouraged by high school teachers to pursue art at the college level, and he was very successful. From Minnesota, he traveled to New York City and studied with Abstract Expressionists, and in Provincetown, Massachusetts, he studied with artist Hans Hoffman. George then studied in Europe to become an internationally known artist, and later he returned to Minnesota to teach at the university. In 1983, he retired to his home in Red Rock along the North Shore of Lake Superior and became a respected elder of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

“The Lake has many moods. It's a living thing, a very powerful thing that changes by hour like a living human being. If you’re close to it, it becomes more potent as a subject. By virtue of living near it or being born by it, it has a certain meaning for your life; it's good for you, and it has certain healing properties.”

Art Idea:
Create an Abstract Horizon Painting of Lake Superior

Style:
Abstraction

Art Materials:
White poster board or cardboard, acrylic paint, brushes, pencils

Procedure:
Look closely at George’s Lake Superior paintings:
See the land, the water, and the sky? Divide your painting into three parts. Notice how George simplifies rocks, waves, and clouds? Can you use your imagination to simplify the natural forms into geometric and organic shapes?
Add your colored shapes to each section to explore your love for Gitchi-Gami or the Big Sea Water of Lake Superior!
Carl Gawboy (Bois Forte Ojibwe, b. 1942), Untitled (Storm on Lake Superior), 1963, Watercolor on paper, Collection of Tweed Museum of Art, UMD, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Theodore S. Svensson D76.x33

Carl Gawboy
b. 1942
Bois Forte Ojibwe

Carl was born in the Cloquet Indian hospital. His mother was Finnish, and his father was an Ojibwe hunter and trapper in the woods of Ely, MN. There were eight children in the family.

Carl has many academic degrees and is an historian, college instructor, and a painter who uses both watercolor and acrylic paint. As an artist, Carl’s paintings capture that moment in time that we all remember. It’s the common places, people, and daily universal life we all know. Carl is well known for his portraits of everyday activities in Ojibwe life. Carl’s paintings depict the life and culture of the Ojibwe with honor and dignity. He has spent most of his life in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Carl Gawboy honors all subject matters. He paints with a vivid limited palette of colors. In this early work, he uses Expressive Lines to convey the movement of water, trees, and clouds in the sky. His work offers an historical perspective of everyday activities of the Ojibwe in the past and the present. He shows the daily chores of harvesting, hunting, gathering, ceremonies of women coming of age, and births. He also paints myths, legends, and important historical events, stars, and rock paintings.

“What should Ojibwe be known for? Forget warriors. How about [being] known for developing a food system that is now considered gourmet, how about cultural liaisons, and how about geniuses with the quill, glass beads, and tubes of paint?”

Art Idea:
Storyteller in Paint:
Paint Your Story of the Lake

Style:
Narrative

Art materials:
Watercolor,
watercolor paper,
white crayon

Procedure:
Tell your story about Lake Superior. Are you in a canoe or kayak? Imagine how the water and the sky look on a windy day. Using a white crayon, draw waves and clouds in quick motions. Now add blue, green and black watercolor washes of paint. Continue to use expressive lines of color and build your composition of a windy lake.
GORDON VAN WERT

Gordon Van Wert
b. 1952
Red Lake Ojibwe Nation

Gordon was one of seven children and had a difficult childhood. When he was 14, he got in trouble and was sent to a boarding school in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This experience turned out to be the best thing for him, he later said, because he was introduced to art. Through the years, he has developed his artistic language. Even after he suffered a massive stroke, which left him paralyzed for a time, he continued to make art. In his sculptures, he often includes healing symbols such as feathers, medicine wheels, and natural medicine from plants and traditional stories.

When Gordon was a boy, an elder told him the story about salamanders and the coming of spring. This story became the theme for his stone carving he called *Coming of Salamander* (*Otawagamegotag*). See where he carved the Turtle and salamander into the cloud. This is because when you hear thunder, it is the salamander’s soul being put into each raindrop. When raindrops fall to the ground, their body is formed, and they become salamanders. The salamanders come to earth to let humans know that the spring is coming. “I tell stories in stone. I am honored to pass on these stories.”

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**Art Idea:**
Carve an Animal Soap Sculpture

**Style:**
Modernist

**Art materials:**
Ivory Bar soap, butter knife, plastic knives, Popsicle stick, toothpicks, black marker

**Procedure:**
Draw or scratch an image of raindrops and a salamander on the soap. Carve out the soap around you.

**Challenge:** Be an art detective. See if you can find a sculpture by Gordon outside in Ordean Court in front of the Tweed Museum of Art.
ANIMALS

INTERSECTIONS

JULIE BUFFALOHEAD
Julie Buffalohead
b. 1972
Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma

Julie expresses her identity, cultural experiences, and knowledge from her ancestors by telling visual stories in her artwork. Julie works in many media including painting, mixed media, printmaking, drawing, illustration, bookmaking, and sculpture. In her work, she often comments on Native people throughout history, including of their mistreatment, and she includes animal forms instead of humans.

Julie was always inspired by the Native American stories she heard growing up in Oklahoma. She says that animals are very special to the Ponca people, and the animals in her works have an important ancestral meaning to her. She invites us to make our own meanings about her stories that can be serious and funny at the same time. She also encourages us to rethink how we have learned American History.

Look for her special symbols:
Deer: Julie belongs to the Deer Clan, so deer are important symbols to her.
Raven: These birds can bring messages.
Coyote: (Ictinike) The trickster character was the son of the Sun God. He roams the earth, having many adventures, and sometimes gets into trouble! Julie identifies with this animal, and it often symbolizes her.
Rabbit: Rabbit is a cultural hero of the Ponca.
Crow: These birds have special spiritual powers.

Art Idea:
Ancestral Knowledge: Create a Wax Etching of Animals Important to You and Your Family

Style:
Narrative

Art materials:
Paraffin (wax) block (from the grocery store), old pen or nail, water-based ink, a brayer (roller), paper, wooden spoon, (optional watercolors and brush)

Procedure:
Decide on some animals that are part of your family. Do you identify with certain animals? Is there a squirrel or bird you notice outside your house? Is there a special cat or dog in your family? Is there an animal that you feel represents you? Make some sketches of these important animals first on paper or draw directly on the wax. How many ways can you add linear interest to your composition? Use a variety of expressive lines on the animal, make some lines thicker than others, and use lines to define and emphasize your animal forms. Brush away the loose wax, ink your wax block carefully, rub it on top of the lines, and then clean off all the extra ink, leaving ink only in the grooves of the wax. Take a piece of light colored paper, press it onto your wax, and then rub the back with a wooden spoon. You can add watercolor to your print if you choose to add meaning and visual interest.
Karen Savage-Blue lives on the Fond du Lac Reservation in northern Minnesota. Her Native American heritage insists that she acknowledge nature by practicing respect and gratitude for the natural world. She was introduced to oil paints in high school and took many art classes. After graduating, she went to the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. While attending the Institute, she met some of the most proficient Native American Artists of our time. Karen returned to the Great Lakes area and lived on her Reservation while attending the University of Minnesota-Duluth where she received her K-12 Teaching Art License. In 2012, she received a Masters of Education. She currently teaches at the local Fond du Lac Community College.

Karen is an oil painter influenced by the recurring cycle of extreme seasons in Northern Minnesota. Nature and animals are prevalent in many of her artworks for the last 20 years. Her current art contains elements from nature and humans alike. There are shared emotions in the features and gestures of the subjects and characters. People who purchase her artwork express that the paintings create a sense of place by providing a vessel to experience a connection to the earth and spirit that live here. Karen’s mission through her art is to stir a desire towards living in partnership with the earth. She also wants to ensure the health and well-being of our planet, our Mother Earth, for this generation and all that follow.

Oil paints offer her many ways to create her style; oils provide her with stunning color and texture by using a pallet knife and brushes with rough edges. The texture gives the lines she creates in a painting a dimensional effect that invites the viewer to want to feel the textured lines. Currently, Karen’s interest is in creating a series of brightly colored animals from the woodlands of Minnesota. The animals are bright blue and have brilliant red backgrounds.

Art Idea:
Paint your Favorite Animal in Complementary Colors

Style:  
Figurative Colorist

Art Materials:  
Tempera or acrylic paint, heavy paper cut into circular shapes, pencils, house paintbrushes, artist paintbrushes

Procedure:  
Have the students create their painting on a paper circle. Pick your favorite animal. What plants does your animal interact with in its daily life in the woods? What plants can you include in your painting? What plants do you like? What plants do you have in your home? Paint your animal to fit into the circular compositional format and change the color of the animal, and then create texture with a heavy textured house painting brush. You can use imaginary colors! Try working with contrasting colors for your animal and their dream world environment where they live. These contrasting color combinations include blue and orange, red and green, and yellow and purple.
ANIMALS

INTERSECTIONS

JONATHAN THUNDER
Jonathan Thunder
b. 1977
Red Lake Ojibwe Nation

Jonathan grew up in Minneapolis, MN. In the third grade, he decided he wanted to be an artist. His mother who made him a simple drawing of a happy and sad face inspired him. He thought his mother was a great artist because she could draw, and he wanted to become just like her. Jonathan began to draw on everything around him from his textbooks to walls and desks. His high school counselor in Minneapolis gave him information about the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He studied art there and was influenced by the contemporary images of Indians in T.C. Cannon’s paintings. Jonathan went on to develop his own style of a brilliantly colored palette in deep red and blues. Jonathan is a painter, filmmaker, and digital mixed media artist. He gathers inspiration from his surroundings, life events, and cultural heritage. He interprets and reflects what is happening around him. His paintings explore personal themes of identity, life transitions, internal conflict, and self-transformation. His painting is a form of storytelling.

He paints the stories and history that is not taught in school. He actively introduces the public to the Ojibwe culture. He is a prolific painter, having designed murals and creating digital animations reflecting the stories and history of the Ojibwe. He is active in the Duluth Native community encouraging many young up-and-coming artists.

“The hardest part of being a working artist is working on the art.”

“My work explores personal themes of identity and internal dialogue through story and characters. I depict expressive characters whose emotions and thoughts manifest viscerally in their physical form. The bodies of my subjects often appear fragmented, animalistic, or partially obscured. My art acts as the scrapbook recording an evolving identity. Through my subjects, I can exaggerate the villains and heroes that make up my self-image or the worldview as seen through my lens. My cultural identity infuses with my identity as an urban dweller. These paintings are vignettes by nature, a glimpse at a moment in a story that neither begins nor ends on the canvas.”

Art Idea 1:
Create a Painting of the Goldfinch

Per Jonathan Thunder: The Goldfinch, Aginjibagwesi, is “the leaf counter.” This bird symbolizes the spirits that keep the Anishinaabe language alive. When the bird jumps from branch to branch, it is counting the leaves in song.

Style:
Pop Art

Art Materials:
Permanent pens, heavy paper, watercolor or gouache paint, and brushes

Procedure:
Draw a simplified bird with birch branches on a large piece of heavy paper. Outline your bird in black marker and color in all areas with bright colors such as yellow, greens, and blue. Use a variety of light and dark colors to balance your composition visually.
Art Idea 2:
Create a Flip Book Animation about Mishu Bizhiw, the Underwater Panther

In Jonathan's Manifest’o digital animation, he claims inspiration by three Anishinaabeg stories that reflect our connection to time, space, and survival. He composed these images from paintings he made on canvas and then digitized them to represent how each of the three living stories manifest themselves in a contemporary medium. In his Tweed installation, notice how Mishu Bizhiw (also known as Gitche-anahmi-bezheu) or "the fabulous underwater panther" appears. Look at the large eyes, dagger-like scales on its back and his long wavy whiskers. Look how the giant cat swims along the long display case. What else do you see in the case? What figures do you see? What transforms into flowers?

Art Idea:
Creating a Flipbook (Simple Animation)

Style:
Figurative Storyteller

Art Materials:
Lightweight white paper, pencils, and stapler (optional: use Post-it Notes to create a flipbook)

Procedure:
1. Cut the lightweight paper into small squares about 4 1/2 by 3 inches. Fold white typing paper in half lengthwise.
2. Then fold in half and again in half. This will give you 8 pages for your book. Cut out each page. Make 16 pages for your flipbook. You can make more pages if you would like a larger book with more pages.
3. Stack all the sheets of your book and fold over 1 inch at the top of all the pages. This will be the binding that holds all the pages of the book together.
4. Staple together all the pages on the fold. Staple 2 to 3 times. You are now ready to start your drawing that will move across the pages. What would you like to draw? You can refer to Jonathan Thunders digital animation for ideas.
5. Your first drawing will start at the LAST page of your book. Use a pencil to draw your design on the lower part of the page near the right corner. You will be starting a sequence of the same design. On your second page, you will layer the second page over your drawing and place your next drawing on the second page.
6. You use a pencil to draw your images, as you may need to erase and change the position of your image. Use sequential process on each page.
7. Continue to draw your same design placing the image on a different place on the page until you use all your pages. By doing your drawing in this manner, you are doing a basic animation skill.
8. Use a pencil to draw your images, as you may need to erase and change the position of your image. Enjoy!
9. Your flipbook will work by flipping the pages with your thumb from bottom to top.
10. There are many good instructions on the Internet on creating flipbooks if you would like more information.
Joe grew up on the Nett Lake Indian Reservation, and he began to paint when he was 19 years old. He studied art in New York City and then moved to the Lac La Croix reservation in Ontario, Canada where he was an elementary art teacher. He later became involved in traditional native spiritual ceremonies in South Dakota. It was during this time that he found his artistic calling: to connect to Mother Earth through his artistic practice and to share his heritage through his art. He often used sacred colors of red, yellow, black, white, green and blue. He celebrated his cultural traditions and wanted viewers to be inspired to find their own connections to Mother Earth.

"My work is a reflection of the spiritual connection that originates from the traditional sacred ceremonies."
STAR WALLOWING BULL

INTERSECTIONS ANIMALS
Art Idea: Create a Transformer-Robot Dog

Style: Pop Art

Art Materials: Permanent pens, heavy paper, Prismacolor colored pencils

Procedure:
Draw a picture of a transformer-robot dog. Make the shapes mechanical, angular, and solid. Use a variety of patterns to fill in the spaces in interesting designs. Fill in the negative space around your robot dog with visual interest and symbolic meaning. Color in each shape with patterns and colors. You can blend colors and notice the direction that you color in. The pencil marks should visually reinforce forms and create visual texture and expression.

Star Wallowing Bull
b. 1973
White Earth Ojibwe Nation and Arapaho

Star’s father is artist Frank Bigbear. Like his father, he uses Prismacolor colored pencils and acrylic paint to create richly colored collage-like compositions. However, Star Wallowing Bull makes his figures mechanical looking. Using this unique artistic style, he explores both his mother’s Arapaho and his father’s Ojibwe cultural traditions in his artwork.

Star Wallowing Bull (White Earth Nation and Northern Arapaho, b. 1973), Rez Dog, 2009, Prismacolor on paper Collection of Tweed Museum of Art, UMD, Gift of Alice B. O’Connor, D2010.4
Art Idea:
Create a Mixed Media Assemblage Sculpture Using Recycled Materials

Style:
Surreal

Art Materials:
Broken toys, old Happy Meal toys, random puzzle pieces, low-temperature hot glue (paint optional)

Procedure:
Collect all your materials and decide on an animal to create. Think how you add pieces together to create a sculptural form. Take your largest shapes to build a main structural form where you can add shapes. Have an adult help with the hot glue. Keep building your animal and use your IMAGINATION to invent new ways of using your recycled materials.
As a child, Patrick spent countless hours in the woods studying the animals and plants, which would later become primary subjects of his paintings. In school, he was encouraged to develop his artistic skills by his English teacher. Later, he received a scholarship to study art at Arizona State College. He went into the Navy, and, while in San Diego, CA, he worked at Walt Disney Studios as an animator. He took a government service job and taught art in the Japanese Relocation Camps. In the Navy, he produced Navy training films. After service, he went home to the Red Lake Reservation and developed his distinct style of painting, eventually fulfilling his lifelong dream to be an artist and educator.

Patrick was a painter who captured the everyday beauty of his beloved Red Lake Ojibwe. He had a great respect for the woodlands of his home on Red Lake in northern Minnesota. He painted the everyday daily tasks of the Ojibwe. He painted their seasonal cultural activities such as netting fish, making baskets and gathering berries. Another important subject matter was dancing. Patrick developed his own distinct style of painting using tiny individual brush strokes to create his art. This method of painting would take many hours to create and finish a stunning art piece. He was inspired by the Modernist styles of French Cubism and the work of the Mexican Muralists. He used a visual vocabulary of simplified forms with rounded curves, angles, and visual balance to create expression. Patrick worked with a limited palette of color and used thousands of small intricate brush strokes to make a painting. He painted in his unique style the woodlands, lakes, animals, and the daily beauty of his beloved Ojibwe people.

Art Idea:
Birch Bark Paper Basket with Floral Designs

Art materials:
Cardstock, pattern of basket, scissors, markers or crayons, glue or stapler, colored paper scraps

Procedure:
1. Have basket pattern copied on card stock.
2. Cut out the pattern of the makak (basket).
3. Using markers, crayons or scraps of colored paper, make floral designs to decorate basket. Refer to Patrick DesJarlait paintings of Ojibwe dancers and LOOK at the designs on the dancing regalia. You can decorate your basket and add some of your own individual artistic expression.
4. Cut the four corner black lines of the basket.
5. Using a stapler, staple the corner lines together, one side at a time. This forms the shape of the basket. You could also use glue or tape to secure the four corners.
Art Idea:
Draw an Ojibwe-Inspired Dot Painting

Style:
Decorative Beadwork-Pointillist

Art materials:
Scissors, thin cardstock for stencils (optional), white pencils, acrylic paint, or tubes of fabric Puff Paint, and small brushes, or Q-Tips, and black construction paper

Procedure:
Make cardboard stencils of Ojibwe inspired leaves, buds, and flowers using recycled file folders. Draw plant designs and cut them out. Trace around the patterns using a white pencil onto the black paper. Using small brushes, Q-tips or Puff Paint, dot paint inside and around the edges of each stencil.

Leah Yellowbird
b. c. 1965
First Nations Algonquin-Metis and Anishinaabe

Leah draws inspiration from her ancestors and their traditional art forms that honor nature. She learned to bead from her extended family. The beads or manidoominens (spirit berries) are sacred gifts of the spirits, and most Native adults and children from Minnesota learn to bead. It is believed in traditional Anishinaabe culture that people must have good feelings when beading to continue the gift of beauty from the spirits. Today, she continues to create beautiful beadwork, and she creates intricate bead inspired paintings and sculptures by carefully dotting bead designs using acrylic paint on canvas.

“Each dot embodies a moment and a prayer.”
Dyani is an artist and curator. In her work, she explores the intersections of traditional Native art with a contemporary exploration of abstraction. She has carefully studied works by her ancestors for inspiration and from those images she paints, beads, sews, and combines media to create visually complex works. By celebrating her Native heritage through art, she would like us to be better relatives to each other.

In her Quill painting, her brush strokes become stitched quills in patterns of intricate colors and line. In this work, she is combining traditional designs with contemporary materials. Can you see the painted quills? See how she repeats the short quill lines in perfect order and composition. This is one way to continue a tradition by letting it evolve and change.

Art Idea:
Paper Quill Design

Native women and girls have always decorated domestic and ceremonial objects with the beautiful patterns of nature. Porcupines have quills on them that were gathered and used for decoration on many objects. The quill has qualities that lend it to be flattened, folded and sewn. The quills were dyed many colors to bring out the beauty of the design. Did you know that the word Porcupine is French for “thorn pig” and that one porcupine can have as many as 40,000 quills on it?

Style:
Pattern Painter

Art Materials:
Colored cardstock, colored paper straws or strips of paper if you cannot find paper straws, scissors, pencils, rulers, staplers

Procedure:
1. Cut out a rectangle from cardstock that is 3 inches by 9 inches.
2. Make a fold that is 4 inches from the bottom.
3. Make a second fold from the top 1 1/2 inches to cover the 4-inch fold. This will look like a small pouch.
4. With a pencil draw two lines on the front of your pouch that is 3 inches long and one inch apart.
5. Flatten a straw and lay it at the top of the lines you drew.
6. Place one end of the flattened straw at the top of the lines, 1/2 inch of the straw in the center.
7. Staple the straw on the left line.
8. Staple the straw on the line and fold the long end of the straw to the left side of the line.
9. Carefully fold the long end of the straw in a zigzag pattern to the right and staple in place before you fold to the left. The fold will cover the staple each time.

10. Continue to fold in a zigzag pattern. Going from left to right until you have about 1/2 of the straw left. You staple the straw in place each time it meets the line you have drawn.

11. You will now have to add another straw.

12. Tuck a new flattened straw under the first straw. Staple it in place and continue until the area is covered with the zigzag straws.

13. Glue the long sides of the pouch.

14. You can glue a string at the top of the pouch right under the top fold line to make it a pouch that can be worn around the neck.
Frank Bigbear  
b. 1953  
White Earth Ojibwe Nation

Growing up at White Earth, Frank was encouraged to make art by his grandparents. He always drew on whatever materials he could find such as paper bags or paper record sleeves. When he was fifteen, he moved to Minneapolis. He had some difficult times, but eventually, he studied art with George Morrison at the University of Minnesota. Sometimes you can see the Morrison-inspired horizon of Lake Superior in his works. However, Bigbear is mainly a self-taught artist. Even while he drove a cab in Minneapolis for thirty years to support his family of six children, he continued to develop his unique artistic language that is visually complex. His cultural portraits are filled with Native themes mixed with Pop Art commentary. Today, he lives in Duluth, while occasionally working as an Uber driver in Minneapolis, and continues to create brilliantly colored compositions with Prismacolor colored pencils, paint, and collage. Frank is considered one of the leading Native artists in Minnesota today.

"I cannot live without reading. I cannot live without drawing."

Art Idea:  
Create a Frank Bigbear Inspired Cubist-Cultural Portrait

Style:  
Cubist

Art Materials:  
Prismacolor colored pencils, #2 pencil, Bristol board paper, ruler, pencil sharpener

Procedure:  
Draw an oval shape in the center of the paper for the head lightly with the #2 pencil. Then add eyes, nose, mouth, and a neck. Now take your ruler and divide the face into smaller shapes. Keep breaking apart forms on the face. Then create circular scribbles in the background. You can now add symbols of animals and objects that reflect your cultural heritage in the shapes. Include a variety of sizes for visual interest. Now, using the Prismacolor colored pencils, start coloring in your composition! Use the brightest colors you have. You can use a variety of techniques to create the illusion of 3-D shapes but coloring the edges of your shape and leaving the center part white. Value contrasts can also be created by blending your colors with the white pencil. Pressing hard will give you brilliant colors and yes, your hand will hurt!
David Bradley
b. 1954
White Earth Ojibwe Nation

David lived in Minneapolis before moving to the American Southwest where he studied at the Institute of American Indian Arts and the College of Santa Fe, New Mexico. He began to make commercial art until he painted to comment upon politics, serious environmental concerns, and social problems of exploitation of Native people, through humor. He is critical about how money and casinos change people and culture. He wants us to think more about these and many other issues he addresses. He gives us many clues in his artworks, and we must discover the meanings.

“To be an artist from the Indian world carries with it certain responsibilities. We have an opportunity to promote Indian truths and at the same time help dispel the myths and stereotypes that are projected upon us. I consider myself an at-large representative and advocate of the Chippewa people and American Indians in general. It is a responsibility which I do not take lightly.”

**Art Idea:**
Re-design a Dollar Bill to Make a Personal Dollar Bill

**Style:**
Socio-political

**Art materials:**
paper, Prismacolor colored pencils

**Procedure:**
Look carefully at David's dollar bill. Notice how he adds an Indianhead and Buffalo nickel on a dollar bill as seals in the corners of the bill? What else do you notice? Make a copy of a dollar bill and change the designs to reflect you and your cultural heritage. Sketch out your dollar using the basic design from the dollar bill. Put yourself in the center. Include borders, important symbols to you and add words for your Millennium Note as a hopeful period for joy and justice.
“WE HOLD A VASTER EMPIRE THAN HAS BEEN.”

ANDREA CARLSON
Andrea Carlson
b. 1979
Grand Portage Ojibwe

Andrea works on paper using a variety of media such as pencil, paint, colored pencils, watercolors, and ink. Her work looks like a collage, but it is carefully drawn and painted with depictions of cultural objects that symbolize Native American concerns. She wants to understand the tangled histories of culture and identity. She often creates cultural narratives to try to understand the disconnections of how things can be upside down when things do not make any sense.

Art Idea:
Create a Mixed Media Collage
Choose a subject that you are concerned about such as climate change.

Style:
Visual Culture Abstraction

Art Materials:
Magazines, scissors, glue sticks, paper

Procedure:
Cut out images from magazines that relate to your theme of climate change. Think about how you could create visual interest by dividing your paper into two parts. On one side, place the images of the current environmental emergency today, and on the other side, put images of what we need to do to keep in harmony with Mother Earth.
Steve Premo  
b. 1952  
Mille Lacs Ojibwe

Steve has been drawing and painting since he was a child. When he was little, he suffered a leg injury, which left him at his mother’s side. With her guidance, he learned to make beadwork, birch bark baskets, quillwork, jingles, and bandolier bags. His wise mother, Rose Clark, took him to the medicine lodge in Mille Lacs when doctors in Minneapolis wanted to amputate his leg. His healing began, and Steve learned to walk again. This was the beginning of his life as an artist. In 6th grade, he went to the Minneapolis Institute of Art where he realized in a moment of inspiration that he wanted to “chronicle or be the recorder of Ojibwe life and conscience.” He studied art at University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Today, Steve’s work combines traditional and contemporary art forms, painting, illustrations, textile design, and ceremonial blankets.

“People associate my paintings, posters or even the Premo Woodland fabric with me, but more importantly with their Ojibwe community. Ojibwe art is just as relevant to the community today as ever, and our traditional arts are passed on in thoroughly contemporary ways.”

Style: Realist-Expressionist Steve Premo’s portrait paintings are realistic in composition. Community members and tribal leaders are documented for history. His illustrations have strong line composition, and the use of black and white strengthens his images. The textile designs reflect the beautiful floral designs of the Ojibwe. Many of Steve’s illustrations and posters deal with historical events, and he provides social commentary on the political issues American Indians face now and in the past.

In his painting Free the Slave-Slay the Free, we see President Lincoln in robes and a halo. His hands are in the traditional Christian religious pose of blessing. The subject matter was inspired by the movie and PBS documentary about Lincoln. We are aware that President Lincoln freed the slaves, but Lincoln was also responsible for the largest mass hanging in US history. In 1862, he approved the hanging of 38 Dakota men in Mankato. Steve Premo wanted to document a part of this tragic history we all would like to forget.

Art Idea:  
Be a Peace Maker—Make a Peace Poster

Style:  
Figurative Realism

Art Materials:  
Poster board, pencils, markers

Procedure:  
Draw a portrait of a Peace Maker you know about in history or today. Draw the person in the center of the paper, add a hand gesture that means peace to you, and draw how they work for peace in the background, whether it is saving animals, working for water, clean air, respect for all people, etc.
Art Idea: Mixed Media Collage

Style: Surreal

Art materials: Photocopies of institutions, glue sticks, thin black pens, watercolors or colored pencils

Procedure:
Find some pictures of an important place to you such as a school or community center. Can you think of a time that someone had conflicts and was not treated respectfully? Or can you find pictures of important places in magazines, or make copies from an old book where you know people were not treated in a Friendly Way. Cut up the pictures and glue those onto a piece of paper 8 1/2” x 11.” Arrange the pictures into a symmetrical composition and now draw directly onto the paper copy. Add pictures or words of problems you, or other people, maybe had at that place or how they were not treated respectfully or were not nice.

Wanbi Koyake (Francis Yellow)
b. 1956
Itazipco Lakota

Wanbi Koyake is Francis’ Lakota name and it means “Carries the Eagle.” His grandparents, parents, and elders raised him to be Lakota, which means “friends... allies...to be friendly.” Wanabli creates art to live in a peaceful way following the “Friendly Lifeway” tradition of the Lakota people. His cultural heritage is central to his work, and he wants to keep Lakota culture alive.

“Considering the genocidal conditions that they were born into, their endeavors were truly heroic. Lakota is not about race, ethnicity, or culture, but an everyday way of being in life. It is said [that] we do everything through dreams. Like our ancestors, today’s Friendly People still say, ‘Lakol wicohan kin tewahila ca iyotiyewakiyelo’ or ‘I love the Friendly Lifeways, so I have a hard time.’ The Friendly Lifeway is how I live my life; it is how I make things. [It is] a voice, my life story, a poem, sculpture, ledger art, public art – relations. Hau Mitakuye Owasin – All My Relations. Lemiye – This is me.”

“All wisdom comes from a close contact with life.”

His artwork honors Mother Earth and expresses the humanities of the Lakota people.
SOCIAL JUSTICE INTERSECTIONS

JOHN BERNARD FEATHER
The Dakota name *Ihanktonwan Dakota Oyate* means “People of the End Village.” John lives in the Dakota way at peace with people and in harmony with nature. This lifestyle is patterned after the natural order of nature, and it inspires him for his artistic practice. He went to art school and now lives in the Two Harbors, MN area. Some of his drawings are in wood and show the troubles he has seen with alcohol abuse in his community. His art reflects what he sees and knows. He has drawn an image of a man who is not living in harmony and who is being destroyed by alcohol. John has distorted the figure and colors of the man for expressive purposes. He has also shown us the conflicted and unhealthy inside of the man.

**Art Idea:**
Surreal Drawing of Problems

**Style:**
Surrealism and Realism

**Art materials:**
#2 pencils, paper

**Procedure:**
Make a detailed drawing of a problem you know about or a place that you do not like where you think people are not healthy and not in harmony with nature or are not kind to each other. Add details to the people’s faces and what they wear and draw how are they are not living in peace. How can they get better? Express emotions through color and exaggerated forms.
Jim Denomie  
b. 1955  
Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe

Jim’s parents did not learn about their Native culture because they were sent to boarding schools. He had to learn about it and find a way to reclaim and connect to his cultural heritage, and he did it through art.

Jim gets his ideas from history, politics, his dreams, his imagination, and memories. He also looks at history, politics, and current events. He makes these ideas into symbolic shapes and forms and sometimes they are funny, but sometimes they are sad or upsetting, and usually, they are both. He uses art to speak about injustices. He uses bright colors, and he invites you to decide what he is saying in his paintings. His artistic style is visually expressive, and he uses active brushwork, thick paint, and bold colors.

“Storytelling is used in Anishinaabe culture to pass on knowledge from one generation to the next, preserving culture and history.”

He paints to educate people about historical and cultural events of American Indians in Minnesota and elsewhere.

Art Idea:
Protection Animal in Rainbow Color

Style:
Expressionist

Art Materials:
Oil pastels, paper

Procedure:
Sketch out your animal figures onto the paper and then using bright colors, fill in the shapes with an active motion so that the pastel is thick. In each direction you color, add energy and expressive meaning to the story you are making with the colors you use. See if people can guess your animal and the story you are telling.