

# ***Visions of British Columbia***

## ***A Landscape Manual***



Roy Arden  
*Construction Site and "Suntower," Vancouver, B.C., 1992*  
chromogenic print  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery  
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

## **TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE WINTER 2010**

**Vancouver**  
Artgallery

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# Vancouver Art Gallery

## Teacher's Guide for School Programs

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The exhibition *Visions of British Columbia* features a diverse selection of work by thirty-six of British Columbia's most compelling artists. We find work that covers the whole spectrum of community engagement, from historical Northwest Coast masks to contemporary urban paintings. Viewers are invited to engage with visions of our province that record, challenge and respond to perceptions of our environment. The visions presented are as numerous as the artists in the exhibition.

### DEAR TEACHER:

This guide will assist you in preparing for your tour of the exhibition *Visions of British Columbia*. 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 *Visions of British Columbia* has three main goals:

- to introduce students to the work of historical and contemporary artists of British Columbia,
- to consider diverse artistic traditions, disciplines and media,
- to explore individual artworks within historical, social and cultural contexts.

## THE EXHIBITION: *Visions of British Columbia*

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The exhibition *Visions of British Columbia* presents a diverse array of artwork by historical and contemporary British Columbia artists exploring their relationships with the landscape and the community at large. Multiple viewpoints and perspectives are presented, reflecting the diversity of the peoples of the province.

Through engaging with their work, the artists ask us to consider the role that art plays in forming, communicating and recording our perceptions of a place, raising questions such as: What makes a place meaningful to people in personal, political, cultural, and social terms? Can an artist's image of a place communicate a sense of that meaning? The home, the neighbourhood, the city, the countryside and the wilderness appear in these works in countless ways. For the most part, though, the artists focus on a particular or personal interpretation of their environment rather than on famous tourist attractions or monuments.

The work in this exhibition ranges from the historical Northwest Coast masks made by Willie Seaweed for traditional potlatch ceremonies to the intensely colourful, contemporary political work by First Nations artist Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun. Brian Jungen's use of mass-produced commercial materials in his extraordinary installation questions societal and cultural values. E.J. Hughes' detailed, peaceful evocations of a time gone by, Emily Carr's modernist representations of the forest and Gathie Falk's close-up examinations of her sidewalk give personal glimpses into familiar terrain. John Vanderpant's black-and-white documentary photographs from the province's early days, Jin-me Yoon's multiple images concerning culture and identity, and Ian Wallace's photo-based works give us pause to question the documentary/interpretive roles of photography.

*Visions of British Columbia: A Landscape Manual* is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Bruce Grenville, senior curator, with Emmy Lee, assistant curator.

# NORTHWEST COAST ART: A Brief Introduction

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## 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

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 that they 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 for different Nations. Generally, a person of high rank hosts a Potlatch to mark important social, sacred, legal, political, or family moments. There is a great feast, speeches, 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.

### **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 colour derived from plant and mineral sources. When erected, they are dedicated with a detailed account of the meaning and history of each figure depicted on the pole. They are then established through feasts and potlatches where guests are paid, with food and gifts, as witnesses to the host chief's claims.

## ARTISTS' BACKGROUND

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The following background information highlights some of the artists whose work we may explore in the school tour.

### **Christos Dikeakos (b. 1946)**

Christos Dikeakos was born in Greece and moved to Canada as a child. He studied art history at the University of British Columbia. Since the beginning of his career as an artist, Dikeakos has been interested in exploring the culture of First Nations people and the history of the city of Vancouver.

In the works of Chris Dikeakos, the city is revealed as a place of constant change. From Vancouver to Saskatoon to Athens, Dikeakos' work focuses on present-day places and ways to echo the layers of unseen histories that accumulate in them over time. His photo-based images of Vancouver ask viewers to reflect on the perception of the city as a purely European settlement, by bringing up the silenced Native histories beneath the city sprawl. Delicately layering words, names and drawings over photographs, Dikeakos reveals traces of the former activities, stories and traditions that have made this place important over time.

Since it was incorporated as a city, Vancouver has undergone vast and forceful change. Using a variety of aggressive and subtle means, the new colonizers of the Pacific coast forced the Salish Nations to leave their villages and traditional food-gathering areas along the shores of what is now Greater Vancouver. Each location that Dikeakos photographed has a Salish history. These places have become renowned tourist parklands and beaches as well as industrial sites and underbellies of bridges. Dikeakos' artworks return signs of these changes to the surface of the city we see each day. The photographs are of familiar places, but they hide profound underlying social and political realities.

### **Gathie Falk (b. 1928)**

Born in Manitoba, Gathie (short for Agatha) Falk moved to Vancouver in 1947 and taught elementary school. She studied art in her spare time and became a full-time artist in 1965. In the 1970s, she gained recognition for her ceramic sculpture and performance art. Falk works with a variety of media including painting, installation and papier mâché.

As Falk's career progressed, she utilized a variety of media to continue her exploration of the "veneration of the ordinary." She has stated that although her work is removed from reality, it does have roots in her daily living. Her neighbourhood, friends, sense of community, pets, furniture, home, garden, English Bay, the night sky, and rituals relating to food and drink all have provided and continue to supply sources for her imagery.

In 1990, Falk was awarded the prestigious Gershon Iskowitz Prize for "the extraordinary range of her work and the substantial contribution she has made" through her artistic achievements. In 1997, she was appointed to the Order of Canada in recognition of her contribution to the history of contemporary Canadian art.

### **Edward John Hughes (1913–2007)**

Born in North Vancouver, E.J. Hughes spent his childhood there and in Nanaimo. He studied art at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts with some of British Columbia's most influential artists, including Charles H. Scott, Jock Macdonald and Frederick Varley. In 1939, Hughes enlisted in the Royal Canadian Artillery and was one of the first Canadians to

work as a war artist in the Second World War; ironically, this enabled him to focus all of his energy on developing his painting techniques.

Following the war, Hughes and his wife Fern returned to British Columbia and eventually settled on Vancouver Island. Hughes began to focus almost exclusively on landscape painting. Large figures disappeared from his work and he began to show human occupation of the land in quieter ways—including the boats, farms and small details of daily life he saw as part of the landscape. Hughes altered the realistic view in his paintings in subtle ways. He compressed spaces and included far more detail in his paintings than the human eye could take in when viewing a scene in nature. He worked with different techniques and effects to create paintings that were filled with activity and yet strangely still.

By the late sixties Hughes was recognized as one of Canada's most important landscape painters. In 2001 he received the Order of Canada. He died in 2007, aged ninety-three.

### **Brian Jungen (b. 1970)**

Brian Jungen was born in Fort St. John, BC, to a First Nations mother and Swiss father. Since graduating from Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design in 1991, he has lived in Montreal, New York and Vancouver, and has exhibited his work internationally. From October 2009 to August 2010, his work is being shown at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Jungen is the first living Native American/First Nations artist ever to have a solo exhibition there.

Although his heritage is of the Dunne-Za people of northeastern BC, Jungen has received a great deal of attention for his artworks re-interpreting the art of Northwest Coast peoples using contemporary found materials. His work reflects on the realities of urban Native youth living with demands to continue traditional ways of life while surrounded by a predominantly non-Native consumer society.

Jungen speaks of being “fascinated by the uncertain path of hybrid unions... creating and transforming relationships between materials and subjects.” Working with popular consumer goods and ordinary mass-produced objects—such as athletic shoes, cafeteria trays and plastic patio chairs—as his materials, Jungen creates hybrid sculpture and installations. His work asks us to examine the ways that understandings of culture, value and place develop and circulate in society. Drawing out questions about the representation of cultures, museum display and the global consumer economy, his remarkable works are also extraordinary feats of visual transformation that inspire a sense of wonder.

### **Susan Point (born 1952)**

Born in Alert Bay, BC, Point has lived most of her life on the Musqueam First Nation Reserve in Vancouver. Since 1981, she has been exploring traditional art forms of her First Nations ancestry. She has worked with a wide range of techniques including wood carving, printmaking, foil embossing, paper casting, linocuts and lithography, using materials as diverse as glass, bronze, concrete, polymer, stainless steel and cast iron.

Early on in her career, in consultation with her uncle, Michael Kew, an anthropologist at the University of British Columbia, Point began to research and explore Coast Salish forms. In time she began experimenting with traditional designs, imbuing her art with her own sense of colour and design, straying from the strict rules of the designs. Although she has at times been criticized for her departure from strict traditions, she has won much acclaim for her work.



Point has been commissioned to make numerous public artworks, including large works at the Vancouver International Airport, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, and Canada–US border crossings. She has been the recipient of many awards, including a National Aboriginal Achievement Award, in recognition of her work as an artist.

### **Bill Reid (1920–1998)**

Bill Reid was a descendant of the great Haida artists Albert Edward Edenshaw and Charlie Edenshaw. Born in Victoria to a Haida mother and a Scots-German-American father, he did not learn about his First Nations heritage until he was a teenager. Later in life, while working as a CBC broadcaster, he studied jewellery design and engraving and began investigating the arts of the Haida people.

Reid became a recognized authority on Haida art and life, instrumental to the rebirth of Northwest Coast art. Accomplished in many media, he worked in silver, gold, wood, argillite and bronze, and was also a printmaker and a writer. For his major sculptures, Reid transformed traditional myths into oversized, compelling modern forms.

Among his major works are the 4.5-ton cedar sculpture *Raven and the First Humans* in the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, and a bronze killer whale sculpture, *The Chief of the Undersea World*, at the Vancouver Aquarium. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from UBC, and the Lifetime Achievement Award, National Aboriginal Achievement Awards.

### **Willie Seaweed (1873–1967)**

Born in Blunden Harbour, BC, the Kwakwaka'wakw artist Willie Seaweed lived his whole life in his birthplace. Born to parents from chiefly lines, Seaweed somehow managed to avoid attending the compulsory residential schools of the times. He lived and worked within his community, spoke his native language, taught and spread Kwakwaka'wakw traditions his entire life.

He was not only an accomplished and prolific carver, but also a singer and dancer. He produced a wide range of ceremonial objects, including totem poles, headdresses, masks, whistles, drums and house facades. During the years of the potlatch ban, 1884–1951, Seaweed continued to produce works that were crucial to the preservation of the culture.

He was not only a preserver of traditions, but also an exceptional innovator. He was known for his flamboyant and expressive style, which made his work readily identifiable. The works in this exhibition emphasize the social significance of the objects he made, linking political and cultural practice in Kwakwaka'wakw society.

### **Ian Wallace (b. 1943)**

Born in England, Ian Wallace came to Canada as a child and settled in BC with his family at the age of ten. He lives and works in Vancouver, and his work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally. A painter, photographer and art history instructor, he often combines all three disciplines in his photo-based works. Along with a group of artists that includes Jeff Wall, he is known as a photo-conceptual artist, associated with the internationally acclaimed Vancouver School. Wallace has been the recipient of many awards, including the Governor General's Award in Visual Arts.

Wallace's series *Clayoquot Protest* documents the incident on Vancouver Island in 1993. The protest has come to symbolize the conflict over logging old-growth forests and the struggle between industry and environmentalism in British Columbia. Though his photographs are large and eye-catching, and document an important event, unlike traditional history paintings they do not show the exciting action or glorify a great leader. Instead Wallace presents a moment of quiet social solidarity—a crowd of people, waiting, brought together by what they believe in. Still, this calm scene is unsettled by the viewer's knowledge of what will happen later on that same day, August 9, when 200 protestors were arrested. Using photography, Wallace links traditions of "history painting" to today's news media, which also tends to focus on dramatic moments in sensational images. Wallace questions the way important events are represented.

### **Jin-me Yoon (born 1960)**

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Jin-me Yoon immigrated to Canada in 1968, after immigration restrictions were lifted allowing her family to make the move. She studied art in Vancouver and Montreal, and she currently lives and works in Vancouver and teaches at Simon Fraser University. She is an active member of the Vancouver art community and her work has been exhibited extensively locally, nationally and internationally.

Yoon uses photography and film to investigate ideas about identity, history, memory and place. She often inserts herself into her work, as a symbol of hybridity and multiculturalism. Her more recent works have included visual explorations into motherhood and Seoul, the city of her birth.

Her work *A Group of Sixty Seven* includes multiple references: the Group of Seven, Emily Carr, and the year 1967, which marked 100 years of confederation. She said: "My work deals with questions of identity and place. The work really refers to the question of national identity, which has been central to Canadians as well. For me it posits a more fundamental question. It's not really about the Korean Canadian subjects questioning their belonging to Canada, but more a fundamental question about how do we image belonging in Canada?"

### **Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun (b. 1957)**

Born to a Cowichan Salish father and an Okanagan mother in Kamloops, BC, Yuxweluptun grew up in Richmond, BC, surrounded by political activism. A graduate of Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design, he chose to be trained in the traditional European manner over a traditional Native one, to communicate his message to the largest possible audience. *Yuxweluptun* is a Salish word meaning "man of many masks." The name was given to him during his initiation into the Sxwaixwe Society when he was thirteen.

His large-scale, intensely coloured canvases combine traditional Northwest Coast designs and motifs with elements from the urban environment. He uses a range of media including acrylic on canvas and screenprint on paper.

While Yuxweluptun's work often causes viewers to feel unsettled, his work is very much about generating dialogue and awareness regarding First Nations issues and culture and the destruction of the natural environment. The socio-political content of his work is inspired by historical events, documents and treaties. He has chosen art as his way to give voice to his political concerns, believing that art can stimulate discussion between people from different cultures and belief systems.

## PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Beautiful British Columbia (All students)

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### Objective:

Students think about their home as an inspiration for making works of art and consider the many different ways that a single place can be depicted.

### Discussion:

E.J. Hughes once said: “The most beautiful landscape in the world shouldn’t be left to the camera alone.” In his paintings Hughes shows us where he finds beauty in BC—in the landscape and images of the sea and the shores. He records the impact of people and communities on the landscape, in the boats, farms and small figures that are a part of the bigger natural world.

### Materials:

- ❑ large sheets of paper
- ❑ variety of materials presenting British Columbia—magazines, tourist brochures, maps, postcards
- ❑ markers, pencil crayons, glue, scissors

### Process:

1. Ask students what they think makes British Columbia a beautiful place.
2. Discuss E.J. Hughes’ words above. What did he mean? Can a painting show aspects of beauty that a camera cannot?
3. In pairs, have students brainstorm what they find beautiful about BC.
4. Discuss together as a class.
  - What do they consider beautiful? Why?
  - Is there a single perspective, or do opinions differ?
  - Are there contradictory opinions?
  - Does it matter?
5. Have each student make an artwork that shows their personal perspective on what makes British Columbia beautiful, starting with images cut out from magazines, tourist brochures, maps, etc.
6. Have them complete their image with coloured markers and pencil crayons. Add words or text from the materials or from the previous discussion.
7. Display the artworks.

### Conclusion:

#### Discuss:

- How have students presented their ideas in different ways?
- Compare different versions of what the students think beauty is.
- Does beauty mean different things to different people?
- Are all ways equally valid, or should there be some absolutes: e.g., must all images representing British Columbia include mountains? Who would decide on such standards?

## PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Portrait of Place (All students)

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### **Objective:**

Students consider some writers' and artists' musings about British Columbia and write their own responses to the environment.

### **Discussion:**

In the exhibition, quotes by various writers (see next page) are placed in three of the corners, giving alternative visions of the province. In the fourth corner, there is a sign inviting visitors to "Record your visions of this place..." Students will have their opportunity right now!

Giving another perspective on responding to one's environment, the artist Gathie Falk said: "I feel that unless you know your own sidewalk really intimately, you're never going to look at the pyramids and find out what they're about. You're never going to be able to see things in detail unless you can look at your kitchen table, see it and find significance in it—or the shadow that is cast by a cup or your toothbrush. Seeing the detail around you makes you able to see large things better."

### **Materials:**

- ❑ visuals of BC—maps, magazines, postcards, brochures, newspaper articles
- ❑ writing materials
- ❑ quotes (see next page)

### **Process:**

1. Display some visuals, e.g.: postcards, maps, newspaper articles with images, advertisements from tourist magazines or brochures. What ideas of BC are being presented through these media/visuals?
2. Give students quotes (see next page) to read. Or read them out loud to the class.
3. Discuss the different ways these images and writings represent BC.
4. Read Gathie Falk's statement (above) out loud to the students. Discuss her perspective. Have students choose something on/in their desks and describe it in minute detail to a partner. Discuss what they learned or saw differently from this close observation.
5. Ask students to think about how they would like to present BC through a piece of writing. What is most important about the province to them and how would they put across that meaning? Would they choose something close and familiar (perhaps the school playground) or distant and symbolic (the mountains)?
  - Older students can decide on their own format: free-form verse, descriptive paragraph, iambic pentameter parody—whatever.
  - Younger students can be given a simple rhyming pattern to follow, asked to make a list of adjectives, or write a story that takes place in BC.
6. Have a "poetry/literary reading" and have each student read their piece to the class.

### **Conclusion:**

Discuss the different ways students wrote about their province, in format, content and meaning.

## Quotes from *Visions of British Columbia*

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...know that Haida Culture is not simply song and dance, graven images, stories, language, or even blood. It's all of these things and then . . . awakening on Haida Gwaii . . . waiting for the herring to spawn. It's a feeling you get when you bring a feed of cockles to the old people, and fixing up fish for the smokehouse . . . walking on barnacles, or moss. It has something to do with bearing witness as a falcon gets a seabird . . . and being there when salmon are finishing their course.

Guujaaw (Haida carver, educator and activist)  
from *This Box of Treasures*, reproduced in  
*Raven Travelling: Two Centuries of Haida Art*, 2006

A runaway seedling rolls down the road. We jostle around one another, hungry for the day that awaits us. We throw down our treeplanting bags and kneel down next to them and cram them with trees. We do it with practiced slapdash, as cashiers drop groceries into white plastic bags. We bump shoulders, quick-fingered and competitive, like grannies at a bargain bin. Treeplanters—one word instead of two. Little trees plus human beings, two nouns that don't seem to want to come apart.

Charlotte Gill (Vancouver writer)  
from *Eating Dirt*, first published in  
*The Vancouver Review*, 2007

Sitting in the sun at noon with the furiously  
Smoking shadow of the shack chimney—  
Eagles drive downwind in one,  
Terns blow backward,  
A new kind of tobacco at eleven,  
And my love returning on the four o'clock bus  
My God, why have you given this to us?

Malcolm Lowry (English novelist and poet)  
from *Happiness*, first published posthumously in  
*Selected Poems*, 1962

# PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Artists in Our Midst (Intermediate and secondary students)

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## Objective:

Students read, research and share information about some of the artists represented in *Visions of British Columbia*.

## Materials:

- ❑ writing materials
- ❑ Internet. Some useful websites:
  - [www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com)
  - [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)
  - [www.artandculture.com](http://www.artandculture.com)
  - [www.ccca.ca/artists/\[name of artist\]](http://www.ccca.ca/artists/[name of artist])
- ❑ Artist Information Sheet and Student Worksheet (following three pages)

## Process:

1. Divide the students into ten groups. Cut up the Artist Information Sheet (next two pages) and give each group one of the artists.
2. Give each student a copy of the Student Worksheet (following page) and ask them to transfer the information about their artist to the appropriate box.
3. Ask students to figure 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 a piece of work by each artist on a separate piece of paper. Do not label with the artist's name or any other information.
5. Have each group present the information on their artist while the rest of the class adds the information to the worksheet.
6. After the presentations, lay out the image by each artist, and see if the class can guess which image is by which artist.

## Conclusion:

### Discuss:

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

# Artist Information Sheet

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## Chris Dikeakos

- Born in Greece, moved to Vancouver as a child
- Studied, lives and works in Vancouver
- Makes photo-based art, often layering words and drawings over his photographs
- Interested in First Nations activities and stories in Vancouver's history

## Gathie Falk

- Born in Manitoba, had a hard childhood
- Studied, lives and works in Vancouver
- Her work includes paintings, sculpture, installations and performance art
- Is inspired by the everyday, the ordinary, her community to make her art

## Bill Reid

- Born in Victoria, only discovered his First Nations heritage as a teenager
- Descended from a line of important Haida artists
- Sculpted in silver, gold, wood, argillite and bronze; also a printmaker and writer
- Became an authority on Haida life, culture, traditions and art

## Willie Seaweed

- Born and lived his whole life in Blunden Harbour
- Always spoke his native language, worked to maintain and spread Kwakwaka'wakw traditions
- Made ceremonial objects including masks, totem poles, whistles and drums
- Both an important preserver of traditions and an innovative artist

## E.J. Hughes

- Born and studied art in Vancouver, was a war artist in the Second World War
- Lived and worked most of his life on Vancouver Island
- Made very detailed, finely observed sketches for his paintings
- His landscapes of British Columbia portray daily life set in the natural scenery

## Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun

- Born in Kamloops to First Nations parents
- Studied and lives in Vancouver
- Uses traditional Northwest Coast elements, which he combines with bright colours
- His deeply political work is inspired by historical events, treaties and documents

### **Jin-me Yoon**

- Born in Korea, moved to Vancouver as a child
- Studied in Vancouver and Montreal, lives and works in Vancouver
- Her work includes photographs, film, video and installations
- In her work, explores ideas about identity, history, memory and place.

### **Brian Jungen**

- Born in Fort St. John to Swiss father and First Nations mother
- Has lived in Montreal, New York and Vancouver since completing art school here
- Uses unexpected, found materials to make sculptures and installations
- Transforms mass-produced objects such as Nike shoes and plastic patio chairs into extraordinary Haida-inspired masks and whale skeletons

### **Susan Point**

- Born in Alert Bay
- Has lived most of her life on the Musqueam First Nation Reservation in Vancouver
- Uses a wide variety of materials and techniques including carving and printmaking
- Works with traditional Coast Salish forms and designs, but is also an innovator

### **Ian Wallace**

- Born in England, moved to Vancouver as a child
- Studies, lives and works in Vancouver
- Works as a painter, photographer and instructor of art history
- Known as a photo-conceptualist; questions the way events are presented



## Student Worksheet

	Personal Information	Type of Art	Known for	An Artwork
Jin-me Yoon				
Bill Reid				
Susan Point				
Ian Wallace				
Gathie Falk				
Brian Jungen				
E.J Hughes				
Chris Dikeakos				
Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun				
Willie Seaweed				

## PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Material Matters (all levels)

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### **Objective:**

Students explore the ways in which objects and materials carry meanings with them even when they are made into something new.

### **Discussion:**

Brian Jungen creates artworks that are “hybrid” by turning unexpected materials into new objects. Through his work we come to understand that all materials bring shared meanings, assumed uses and cultural symbolism with them even when they are made into something new. When Jungen turns existing objects into new artworks, old meanings become very clear and new meanings often result from unexpected combinations.

### **Materials:**

- ❑ supply of several very familiar mass-produced objects: for example, McDonald’s Big Mac wrappers, Starbucks paper cups, old CDs, paper napkins, plastic coffee stir sticks—whatever you can get your hands on.
- ❑ art-making materials: glue, string, coloured markers, scissors, paper, cardboard

### **Process:**

1. Discuss Brian Jungen’s strategy for creating artworks that are “hybrid” by turning unexpected materials into new objects. Discuss the way all of the objects that surround us bring meaning with them even though we may not think about it.
2. Introduce the material that will be your “art supply” and together, make a list of the meanings it brings with it. For example, a McDonald’s Big Mac container may make you think: fast, cheap, repetitious, available all over the world, disposable. It may be a symbol of global consumerism, failing nutritional standards, a need for environmentally friendly fast foods or the world’s inability to slow down.
3. Challenge students to design something out of the objects. They can make a design drawing, create a collage or make a 2D or 3D object.
4. Display.

### **Conclusion:**

Have students explain their designs to their classmates. Discuss.

- Have the materials been used in ways that accord with or challenge their previous associations?
- What new meanings arise?
- How do the meanings of the material and the created object combine or conflict with one another?

# VOCABULARY

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**abstract:** 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).

**contemporary:** created in the last thirty years. Most contemporary artists are living artists.

**installation:** art that is created from a wide range of materials and installed in a specific environment. An installation may be temporary or permanent. The term came into wide use in the 1970s, and many installation works were conceptual.

**landscape:** artwork in which the subject is a view of the exterior physical world. Traditionally, landscapes have been paintings or drawings depicting natural scenes and are often concerned with light, space and setting.

**modern:** 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 criteria.

**performance art:** works in any of a variety of media that are performed before a live audience. The performance itself, rather than a specific object, constitutes the artwork. Documentation is often an important part of the performance.

**photo-based art:** a work of art that incorporates some aspect of still photography as a central component. Photographs may be altered, embellished and/or manipulated in photo-based work.

**photo-conceptualism:** an artistic movement that emerged in Vancouver in the 1960s and '70s. The work is characterized by large-format photographic prints. This movement explored the ideas behind the photograph, appropriate subject matter, the assumed “truth” of photography, and the nature of photography as fine art versus commercial art.

**potlatch:** a First Nations social event which includes feasting, speeches, singing, dancing, and gift-giving by the hosts. During the potlatch, which might last many days, culture is handed down and family and community histories are preserved and maintained. Potlatches were banned in Canada from 1884-1951.

**representational art:** art in which the subject matter is recognizable, although it may not be realistically depicted.

## RESOURCES

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### **Print:**

- Augaitis, Daina et al, *Brian Jungen*. Vancouver/Toronto/Berkley: Douglas and MacIntyre, 2005.
- Bennett , Bryan, *Discovering Canadian Art, Learning the Language*. Constance P. Hall. Prentice-Hall Canada Inc.; 1984.
- Carr, Emily. *Beloved Land: The World of Emily Carr*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1996.
- Hill, Lamoureux, Thom, et al. *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre/National Gallery of Canada/Vancouver Art Gallery, 2006.
- McNair, Joseph and Grenville, *Down from the Shimmering Sky: Masks of the Northwest Coast*. Vancouver: The Vancouver Art Gallery, 1998.
- Murray, Joan. *Canadian Art in the Twentieth Century*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1999.
- Rhodes, Richard. *A First Book of Canadian Art*. Toronto: Owl Books, 2001
- Smith, Annie. *Getting Into Art History*. Toronto: Barn Press, 1993.
- Steltzer, Ulli and Davidson, Robert. *Eagle Transforming: the Art of Robert Davidson*, Vancouver, BC: Douglas and McIntyre, 1994.
- Thom, Ian. *E.J. Hughes*. Vancouver: The Vancouver Art Gallery and Douglas and MacIntyre, 2002.
- Thom, Ian. *Art BC: Masterworks from British Columbia*. Vancouver: The Vancouver Art Gallery and Douglas and MacIntyre, 2001.
- Wells, Liz, ed. *Photography: A Critical Introduction*. New York/London: Routledge, 2000.

### **BCTF Teaching Aids:**

- Clark, Karin. *Long Ago in Victoria* (K-2). BCTF Teaching Aid 3107, 1996.
- Gage, Susan. *TRFic! A Temperate Rainforest Teacher's Guidebook* (intermediate), BCTF Teaching Aid 9533, 1998.

### **Online:**

[www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com)

Online art encyclopedia, listing international artists, and museums and galleries with collections of their work.

[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

Online dictionary and encyclopedia, created collaboratively by laypeople

<http://cwahi.concordia.ca/>

Canadian Women Artists History Initiative is a newly founded collaborative that brings resources and researchers together to enhance scholarship on historical women artists in Canada.

[www.cybermuse.gallery.ca](http://www.cybermuse.gallery.ca)

Canadian Art Education and research site featuring artists' images and educational materials

<http://www.nativeonline.com>

An extensive profile on First Nations artists and descriptions of artwork are featured on this website that is a resource site for First Nations Arts in Canada.

Additional information can be found by Googling individual artists.

