

Do you see me like I see me? **CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN WESTERN AMERICAN ART**

SKYPE LESSON DESCRIPTION

Middle and high school students will explore how culture, individuality, technique, and place in history influence an artist's production. Presenters will engage students using artwork from the Whitney Western Art Museum at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West as a tool to introduce students to historical and contemporary reflections of Plains Indian life. We will show European views of Native life, as well as American Indian perspectives of their own experiences.

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the idea of perspectives in art through self and peer evaluation.
- To introduce and compare historic and contemporary perspectives of Plains Indian art by native and non-native artists.

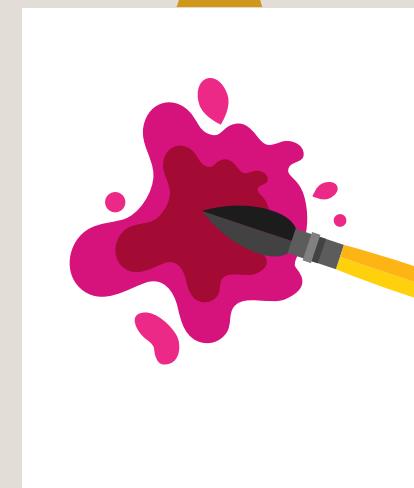
PRE-LESSON ACTIVITIES

Introduce Vocabulary | *Discuss the vocabulary terms below.*

- **Acculturation** – cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture
- **Anachronistic** – outdated or old fashioned to our modern eyes
- **Artistic technique** – method an artist employs using technical skills or materials to achieve a work of art
- **Contemporary art** – art created by living artists
- **Culture** – a shared pattern of learned behavior; a shared way of thinking, believing and acting that is passed from generation to generation (examples include language, stories, folktales, music, roles of men, women, elders, and children, spiritual beliefs, and economic development)
- **Euro-American** – United States citizen of European ancestry
- **Hide painting** – Plains Indians wore unshaped buffalo hides (decorated with quillwork, beaded bands, or paint) around their shoulders for warmth
- **Historic art** – represents art created by artists of the past
- **Metaphor** – symbolizes something else
- **Motifs** – recurring subject or theme in art
- **Perspective** – point of view that depends on one's own experiences
- **Pre-reservation** – time prior to when areas of public land were set aside by the United States government for the use of American Indians
- **Reservation** – area of public land set aside by the United States government for the use of American Indians
- **Winter counts** - robe on which Plains Indians painted symbols for each year that has passed; creates a pictorial timeline for the tribe

GRADES 6-12

PRE & POST SKYPE LESSON ACTIVITIES



PRE-LESSON ACTIVITIES

Do You See Me Like I See Me?

Prior to the lesson, students should complete the following activity.

1. Have each student draw a self-portrait in a setting that reflects who he/she is.
2. Have each student work with a partner to draw a portrait of his/her classmate in a setting they think reflects who his/her classmate is.
3. Choose 3 or 4 pairs of students to share their drawings during the lesson.

POST-LESSON ACTIVITIES

Now It's Your Turn

Have students visit the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's online collection at <https://collections.centerofthewest.org/>. The collection is set up so students can narrow their search to objects and artwork from the Plains Indian Museum and Whitney Western Art Museum. Have students search for one historic piece of art by a Euro-American and one contemporary piece by a Plains Indian. The subject of both pieces should be Plains Indian related. Encourage students to present their interpretation of the art they chose.

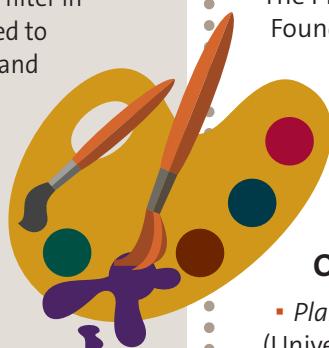
Natural Dye Art Project

Materials: flowers, berries, vegetables, 3 pots, water, stove or hot plate, paint brushes, coffee filters, paper

Bring various examples of flowers, fruits, and vegetables that are easy to obtain. If you do not use native flowers, fruits, or vegetables, explain to students at the beginning of this activity that Plains Indians used plants that grew in the environment around them.

Set up a hot plate or use a stove for boiling water. Choose one flower, one fruit, and one vegetable. Boil each in a pot of water or steep a small amount of water for 30 minutes. Students can observe and record the progress during the 30 minutes. Students can measure progress by placing the plant/dye materials in the coffee filter to mash, or they can look at the color by dipping the coffee filter in the water. Note that you may need to mash up some of flowers, fruits, and vegetables to achieve optimal color.

Students can experiment with the paints by creating their own individual artwork after the paints have cooled.



Tribes of Your Region

Have students research the different tribes that are native to their region or area. Research should focus on comparing and contrasting the tribes' art.

Allow time for students to present their findings to their classmates through creative methods of delivery, such as skits, artwork, journal entries, photographs, and multimedia.

RESOURCES

Buffalo Bill Center of the West Resources

- **Visit our website** at www.centerofthewest.org
- **Plains Indian Art Trunk**
available through our lending program

This trunk fosters an understanding and appreciation for the culture of Plains Indian people. Materials in the trunk include examples of traditional Plains Indian arts such as beadwork, quillwork, and rock art. A new teacher's guide is included.

- **Powwow Trunk**
available through our lending program

Music and dance have long been central to American Indian cultures, and today's powwow is a celebration of that heritage. Learn about powwows in their present form and the history behind them with a video, dance outfits, musical instruments, accessories, and a teacher guide.

- **Explore Plains Indian Culture and History**

Looking to enrich your curriculum with primary resources through photos, art, and oral histories? This rich content will help teachers and students, whether they have visited the Center or not. Visit the following links to explore Plains Indian culture and history.

1. **Land of Many Gifts** – Learn about village life from the historic era.
<https://centerofthewest.org/exhibit/pim-land/>

2. **Buffalo and the People** – Explore the economic and spiritual importance of buffalo to the Native people of the Plains.
<https://centerofthewest.org/exhibit/pim-buffalo/>

3. **Honor and Celebration** – Discover the ceremonial aspects of Plains life.
<https://centerofthewest.org/exhibit/pim-honor/>

4. **Adversity and Renewal** – Reflect on the changes and innovation that have taken place in the cultures of Plains people since being placed on reservations.
<https://centerofthewest.org/exhibit/pim-adversity/>

- **Plains Indian Map Project**

The Plains Indian Map—created with generous funding from The Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston—is a fusion of scholarship and educational interpretation. The map represents 230 years of movement on the Plains amongst more than 45 different Indian cultures. Territorial, treaty, reservation, and state boundaries flow in an animated timeline. Visit this link to view the map: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=f83rCIXOVWU.

Other Resources

- *Plains Indian Buffalo Cultures: Art from the Paul Dyck Collection* (University of Oklahoma Press) by Emma I. Hansen
- *The Plains Indians: Artists of Earth and Sky* (Skira) edited by Gaylord Torrence
- *Painted Journeys: The Art of John Mix Stanley* (University of Oklahoma Press) by Peter H. Hassrick and Mindy Besaw
- *Albert Bierstadt: Witness to a Changing West* (University of Oklahoma Press) by Peter H. Hassrick
- *George Catlin and His Indian Gallery* (Norton, W. W. & Company, Inc.) by George Catlin, Brian W. Dippie, and George Gurney