



MACKENZIE ART GALLERY
MUSÉE D'ART MACKENZIE

MACKENZIE ART GALLERY VIRTUAL SCHOOL TOURS

TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

DIVYA MEHRA

*From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which
you cannot take away)*

14 SEPTEMBER – 20 DECEMBER 2020



| | |
|---|----------|
| Tour Preparation | 1 |
| <hr/> | |
| Introduction | 3 |
| <hr/> | |
| About the Artist & Other Resources | 4 |
| <hr/> | |
| Mandatory Pre-Tour Activity | 5 |
| <hr/> | |
| Curricular Outcomes | 6 |
| <hr/> | |
| Appendix A: Comic Strip Template | 9 |



INTRODUCTION

Divya Mehra: From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which you cannot take away)



Installation view of *Divya Mehra: From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which you cannot take away)*, MacKenzie Art Gallery, 2020. Photo: Don Hall.



TOUR PREPARATION

Divya Mehra: From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which you cannot take away)

Welcome to the MacKenzie Art Gallery's first-ever livestreamed digital tour! This resource is meant to prepare you for your guided online experience, and we are excited to share our in-gallery programming with you from the comfort of your classroom.

We look forward to working with you to create a safe and brave space for dialogue and learning, unpacking big ideas and working towards a deeper understanding of the world and each other through art. Please take the time to review this resource and reach out if you have any questions whatsoever.

TOUR PREPARATION

Please make sure you are in a space that includes audio-visual technology (webcam, 360 camera, microphone, laptops and projectors). Tours can be delivered using one device for the entire class (in this case a microphone and 360 cameras are required) or through each student joining from their own device. Students are welcome to join from home as required.

IF USING ZOOM PLATFORM

Please download the zoom app prior to your scheduled tour time. The gallery will email you a link to join the meeting upon booking the tour.

IF USING TEAMS PLATFORM

The gallery will email an invite to join the meeting upon booking the tour.

Please join the meeting 5-10 minutes prior to the scheduled time.

Please provide students with pencils and one sheet of paper for use during the tour.

Included in this resource is a mandatory pre-tour activity for you to complete with students prior to your tour. Please make sure this is completed, as each student will be asked to share their work during the tour. This is an important step for the interpretive process and directly contributes to deeper engagement with artwork themes, ideas, and meaning.

INTRODUCTION

Divya Mehra: From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which you cannot take away)

From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which you can not take away) is an exhibition centering on the West's obsession with simultaneously defining and consuming the histories/identities of other cultures. The concepts of the West and East do not describe real cultural groupings—similarly, very little of what you see in this show is real; The gallery is occupied by over-inflated facsimiles of important cultural objects, alongside one leather bound volume describing idols from across the “Eastern” world accumulated by MacKenzie Art Gallery's namesake, Norman MacKenzie.

TOUR OUTCOMES

Students will consider how societies consume culture, analyzing big questions such as ‘How do attitudes towards culture resonate both through history and into the current moment?’ and ‘Who defines culture and who tells a cultures’ story?’.



Installation view of Divya Mehra: *From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which you cannot take away)*, MacKenzie Art Gallery, 2020. Photo: Don Hall.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Divya Mehra: From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which you cannot take away)

ABOUT DIVYA MEHRA

Divya Mehra is a Canadian artist from Winnipeg, Manitoba. She is known for her meticulous attention to the interaction of form, medium, and site. Divya Mehra's work deals with her diasporic experiences and historical narratives. She incorporates found artifacts and readymade objects as active signifiers of resistance or as reminders of the difficult realities of displacement, loss, neutrality, and oppression. Mehra works in a multitude of forms, including sculpture, print, drawing, artist books, installation, advertising, performance, video, and film. She holds an MFA from Columbia University and is represented by Georgia Scherman Projects. (<https://canadianart.ca/news/divya-mehra-awarded-the-2019-wanda-koop-research-fund/>).

OTHER RESOURCES

Divya Mehra Website

www.divyamehra.com

Divya Mehra on CBC's "In the Making"

<https://gem.cbc.ca/media/in-the-making/season-1/episode-8/38e815a-00f773034d6>

Divya Mehra Art Breaks Behind the Scenes

www.youtube.com/watch?v=v95YXqIOkVI&t=1s

Artist Talk at the Dunlop Art Gallery

www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoknjOsD_h0&t=234s

"The Success of Failure"

<https://bordercrossingsmag.com/article/the-success-of-failure-divya-mehra>

"Cultural Appreciation vs Cultural Appropriation"

<https://greenheart.org/blog/greenheart-international/cultural-appreciation-vs-cultural-appropriation-why-it-matters/>



MANDATORY PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY

Divya Mehra: From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which you cannot take away)

MANDATORY PRE-TOUR ACTIVITY**Comic Remix****ACTIVITY**

Growing up, Divya Mehra loved comics and attributes her comedic style to her time spent reading Archie and graphic novels. Mehra uses humor to convey important ideas about social issues in our world within her work, challenging us to consider ‘who gets to tell the story’? How does a story change depending on who tells it? Using these questions as inspiration, ask students to create a collage with multiple comic sources, retelling and changing stories through their remix of images.

MATERIALS

Comic Strip Template (see Appendix A)
Drawing utensils (pencils, fine-tipped markers, pencil crayons)
Scissors
Glue
Old comic books/images that can be cut up (we also have a pdf that you can print for students to use in their collage)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Begin by prompting students with the questions:
Who gets to tell a story?
How does a story change depending on who tells it?
What are stories that aren’t being told?
How do we incorporate existing stories and knowledge in our day-to-day lives?
- 2 Ask students to review the collage material (old comics and printouts) and develop a new story based on the images provided. Ask them to make something new out of the images.
- 3 Students will cut, paste, and reassemble their images to tell a new story, possibly from a new perspective or by changing existing characters. They can also add color and drawings to their collage with the drawing materials.
- 4 Students will be asked to share their new comics and stories during the tour. How are their stories unique to them, how would they change depending on who was telling it?



CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Divya Mehra: From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which you cannot take away)

ARTS EDUCATION CURRICULUM KEY OUTCOMES

GRADE 4

CR4.1 Analyze how dance, drama, music, and visual art works represent unique ideas and perspectives. Students will analyze and discuss Divya Mehra's unique presentation of her installation-based artworks, examining how she critiques the very culture within which they are presented.

GRADE 5

CH5.1 Examine perspectives on contemporary life as expressed by artists in pop culture and mass media (e.g., representations of young people in ads, sitcoms, animations, and music videos). Students will learn about Divya Mehra's unique approach to mass media and its effect on South Asian culture and cultural identity. Students will learn how Mehra uses critical perspectives and presented them through pop culture references and satirical forms. Students will view artworks that have easily identifiable pop culture references.

GRADE 6

CH6.1 Investigate how personal, cultural, or regional identity may be reflected in arts expressions. Students will learn about Divya Mehra's life, culture, and cultural identity through her artwork. They will examine stereotypes through the lens of the artist.

GRADE 7

CH7.3 Investigate and identify a variety of factors that influence artists, their work, and careers. Students will learn about Divya Mehra's background and the in-depth theory behind her work. They will learn about her culture and cultural identity and how she conveys that through her artwork.

GRADE 8

CR8.2 Investigate and identify ways that today's arts expressions often reflect concern for social issues. Students will learn about Divya Mehra's message and intent behind her work. Mehra uses her passion and appreciation for her



CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Divya Mehra: From India to Canada and Back to India (There is nothing I can possess which you cannot take away)

heritage to create ironic pieces of art. Through her artwork she uses a comedic tone to convey important social issues that have affected her, critiquing the very culture within which the artworks are presented.

GRADE 9

CR9.3 Investigate and identify how arts expressions can challenge thinking about values, ideas, and beliefs.

Students will learn how Divya Mehra uses irony and satirical perspectives in her artwork to convey powerful messages. These perspectives are expressed in a satirical art perspective to begin difficult conversations, prompting change related to important topics and issues.

GRADE 10

CR10.3 Respond critically to art works of professional artists, including Indigenous artists, to explore intent. Students will critically analyze and respond to Divya Mehra's artwork. The artist uses a comedic tone to convey important social issues that have affected her, critiquing the very culture within which the artworks are presented.

GRADE 11

CR20.2 Analyze factors (e.g., inspiration, technology, culture, environment, events, government policies) that influence art-making practices around the world, past and present. Students will learn about Divya Mehra's culture and background and its contribution to her work, critiquing contemporary ideas related to the appropriation of traditional culture.

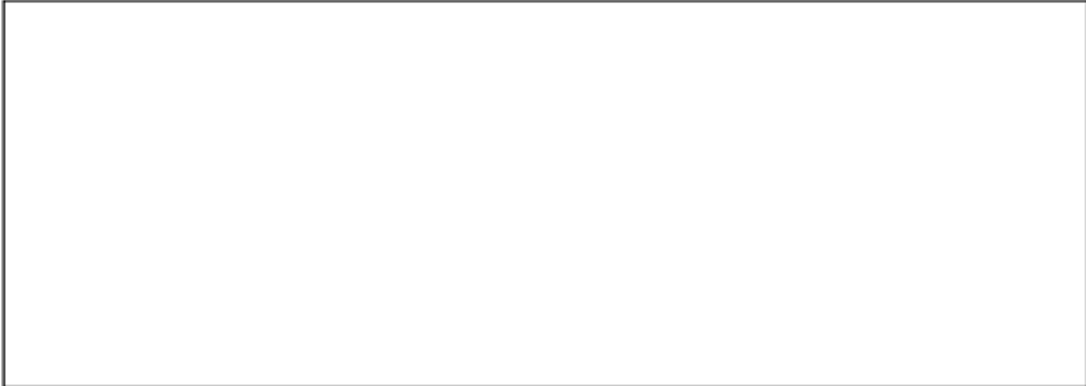
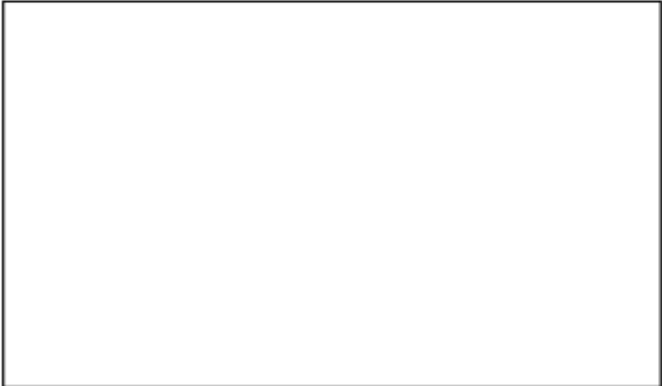
GRADE 12

CP30.4 Use inquiry to create artwork inspired by Canadian artists whose work responds to socially relevant topics (e.g., sustainability, social justice, diversity, and inclusion). Students will learn about Divya Mehra's artwork that critiques contemporary ideas related to the appropriation of culture. These perspectives are expressed in a satirical art perspective to begin difficult conversations, prompting change related to important topics and issues.





APPENDIX A



CONTACT

MacKenzie Art Gallery
3475 Albert Street
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