

CURRICULUM THEMES

Environment; Technology; Painting

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

GRADE 3 | CP3.7- Students will be discussing the artwork of Wanda Koop and the relationship to the featured environment and create a response artwork that expresses their own relationships to a specific environment.

GRADE 11 | CR20.2- Students will explore interpretations of an artwork by Wanda Koop, including exploring how her artwork relates to her environment and modern technologies.

WANDA KOOP: SIGHTLINE

As we can see in *Sightline (Cityscape with Red Cross)* the crosshairs (or “target”) in the piece sit directly over a compact city block with large open spaces on either side, conveying the environment of a city on the prairies.

The crosshairs are a way of locating something, of targeting, of pointing to a goal or an objective. Usually, this is to cause damage; it comes from archery and rifling and was used to indicate where an arrow or bullet would fly. More recently it has come to be used for photography; the crosshairs in the camera indicates something that is worth taking a picture of, and therefore something that should be paid attention to.

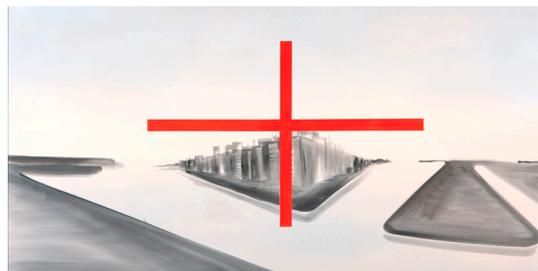
The practice of hunting is similar to the practice of photography. We refer to both hunting and photography in similar ways: in photography, we refer to recording an image as “capturing” or “shooting,” and another term for a gun’s crosshairs is its “sight.” Both are about targeting, locating, and choosing a moment.

In this work, Koop has chosen to locate the crosshairs on the center of the piece, over the city part of the image. We can then assume that Koop is trying to indicate that this urban space sandwiched between the natural environment should be given importance and attention. On the other hand, the crosshairs in this piece appear more like that of a gun (she calls it a “target” rather than using the language of photography by calling it a “viewfinder” or “rangefinder”). This might indicate that Koop is suggesting taking aim at urbanization. She seems to pinpoint how our experience of Canadian landscapes often happens between the actual natural location itself, and a form of technology such as a camera or a gun’s sight.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Does Wanda Koop’s placement of the target in *Sightline* mean that she wants to damage the landscape or to protect it? Why?

If you were to use another symbol the way Koop has used the “target,” what symbol would you use for this landscape? What could your new symbol tell us about the landscape that is different from what Koop is saying?



Wanda Koop, *Sightline (Cityscape with Red Cross)*, 2001, acrylic on canvas. Collection of the MacKenzie Art Gallery, purchased with the financial support of the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Program.

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE IMAGE](#)

ACTIVITY

In *Sightline*, Wanda Koop uses crosshairs as a way of locating something, of targeting, of pointing to a goal or an objective. Alter the meaning of a landscape image by using symbols.

- Have a discussion with a parent or teacher about what a symbol is, and what different examples of symbols are.
- Look through a magazine or a calendar and cut out an image of a landscape that interests you or print one off from an online source. Or, you can create your own landscape painting or drawing from observation or memory.
- Draw or paint a bold symbol on your images. Consider where you put the symbol, and its size in the landscape. You might even consider using multiple symbols.
- (Advanced option for older participants)- Can you think of any other symbols or alterations you could make to an image that imply looking at it indirectly, where there is something between you and the actual location?
- What does your placement of the symbol mean to you? How does it change the viewer's interpretation of the picture you've added it to?

WHAT YOU NEED

- Landscape images from either magazines, calendars, or online
- Scissors
- Paper
- Glue
- Markers, pencil crayons or painting materials

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Wanda Koop's painting career spans three decades and includes over 50 solo exhibitions. Her work is included in numerous international private and museum collections including the National Gallery of Canada. She is known for exploring and rethinking the nature of painting as a medium. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Queen Elizabeth II Golden and Diamond Jubilee Medals, the Order of Manitoba, and the Order of Canada. She received honorary doctorate degrees from the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba and the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. Koop has been involved in many art activism projects. She is well-known for founding Art City, an art center in Winnipeg that brings together youth and contemporary visual artists.

Koop was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, and moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba as a child, where she lives and works today.