



MACKENZIE ART GALLERY SCHOOL TOURS

TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969

TOURING 26 MAY — 19 SEPTEMBER 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969

You can use this resource to prepare for your visit to *Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*. It includes both information for teachers and extension activities that you can share directly with students.



Installation image from *Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*, June 24 – November 26, 2023. Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY. Photo: Olympia Shannon, 2023.



TOUR OUTCOMES***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969***

Students will explore topics of representation and identity through the works of prominent Indigenous artists from across Turtle Island.

Students will examine and discuss performance art and activism, as presented in the works in the exhibition.



Installation image from *Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*, June 24 – November 26, 2023. Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY. Photo: Olympia Shannon, 2023.

RESOURCES***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****BOOKS:**

Performing Turtle Island by Jesse Rae Archibald-Barber, Kathleen Irwin, and Moira J. Day

Critical Companion To Native American And First Nations Theatre And Performance: Indigenous Spaces by Jaye T. Darby, Courtney Elkin Mohler, Christy Stanlake

Medicine Shows: Indigenous Performance Culture by Yvette Nolan

Indigenous Storywork by Jo-Ann Archibald

Laughing with the Trickster: On Sex, Death, and Accordions by Tomson Highway

The Rez Sisters by Tomson Highway

Where the Blood Mixes by Kevin Loring

MACKENZIE ART GALLERY PUBLICATIONS:

7: Professional Native Indian Artists Inc., a MacKenzie Art Gallery Publication, edited by Michelle LaVallee

Radical Stitch including texts by co-curators Michelle LaVallee, Cathy Mattes, and Sherry Farrell Racette

Bob Boyer: His Life's Work, curated by Lee-Ann Martin

Exposed: Aesthetics of Aboriginal Erotic Art, texts by Lee-Ann Wood and Morgan Wood

RESOURCES***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****WEBSITES:**

Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969:

ccs.bard.edu/museum/exhibitions/719-indian-theater-native-performance-art-and-self-determination-since-1969

Indian Theater by Jennifer Krasinski:

4columns.org/krasinski-jennifer/indian-theater

In Celebration of “Indian Theater” by Bockley Gallery

bockleygallery.com/news/in-celebration-of-indian-theater/

Indigenous Art History Gets a Rewrite, With an Emphasis on Performance, in a Standout Show Upstate by Alex Greenberger

www.artnews.com/list/art-news/reviews/indian-theater-bard-college-candice-hopkins-performance-art-review-1234678340/jaune-quick-to-see-smith-paperdolls-for-a-post-columbian-world-2021/

Hessel Museum of Art Annandale-on-Hudson, NY
Jun 24, 2023

forgeproject.com/programs/indian-theater

Bios for Curator Candice Hopkins can be found on the Independent Curators International website.

curatorsintl.org/about/collaborators/7599-candice-hopkins

RESOURCES***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****VIDEOS:**

Curator Talk: “Native Art from the 1950s to Now: Art for a New Understanding” youtu.be/KiqrumQY84k

Art 21: Cannupa Hanska Luger in “Friends & Strangers” art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s11/cannupa-hanska-luger-in-friends-strangers/

Curator and Artist Walkthrough – Beads in the Blood / mīgisak mīgohk: A Ruth Cuthand Retrospective: www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7hCXotKrxA

Rebecca Belmore, 2013 Canada Council laureate – a film by Danielle Sturk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85sL13UBLyQ>

Portrait of Kent Monkman, #GGArts2025 winner: www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHITJtGGOGI&list=PLjhCs-hRAvsEB4KD4iPslvStkLB57KZF2&index=7

Audio Oral Histories:

<https://ccs.bard.edu/museum/exhibitions/719-indian-theater-native-performance-art-and-self-determination-since-1969>



ABOUT STUDENT-LED, TEACHER-SUPPORTED RESEARCH***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969***

In Lesson 1, we ask students first to research a historical event related to the Indigenous peoples of North America and then plan a re-enactment performance. We have included a list of research resources that are broken down according to grade levels. Be sure to engage students on topics of critical thinking by helping them to analyze the perspectives of their resources. You can also use this lesson to encourage research through diverse sources; not all research is done through books or websites. Help students connect with elders and others with lived experiences where appropriate.

Here are a few resources that may be useful. Please evaluate these resources yourself before sharing them with your class.

For youngest researchers (Gr. 4-7)

- Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids (has some free online articles and issues)
www.canadashistory.ca/youth/explore-kayak-all-stories#/?page=1 or
www.canadashistoryarchive.ca/landing
- National Geographic Kids: Primary Resources
www.natgeokids.com/uk/teacher-category/history/

ABOUT STUDENT-LED, TEACHER-SUPPORTED RESEARCH

Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969

For budding researchers (Gr. 7-12)

- The Office of the Treaty Commissioner
www.otc.ca/
- The Gabriel Dumont Institute Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture
www.metismuseum.ca/
- Indigenous Cultural Heritage Collection
saskindigenouscollection.ca/en/
- Canadian Geographic Education
cangeoeducation.ca/en/
- Crash Course World History
thecrashcourse.com/topic/worldhistory1
- Canadian Museum for Human Rights webpage:
humanrights.ca/
- *Blanket Toss Under Midnight Sun: Portraits of Everyday Life in Eight Indigenous Communities*, book by Paul Seesequasis.

- Canadian War Museum's student resources
www.warmuseum.ca/learn/online-resources/
- Veterans' Affairs Canada's Classroom Materials:
www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/classroom/

For advanced researchers (Gr 9-12, Post Secondary)

- Canadian History Museum Collections
www.historymuseum.ca/collections
- Canadian War Museum Collections
www.warmuseum.ca/collections/
- Library and Archives Canada
library-archives.canada.ca/eng
- *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Indigenous Life*, Book by James Daschuk.



ABOUT THE EXHIBITION***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****ABOUT THE EXHIBITION**

Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969 is the first large-scale exhibition to centre Indigenous performance and theatre as the genesis of contemporary trends in Native American, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Alaska Native art. Beginning with the role that Indigenous artists played in the Occupation of Alcatraz, the exhibition explores what it means to be an Indigenous artist in the self-determination era (after the 1960s).

Through their use of humour, cultural critique and reflection, the artists included in *Indian Theater* represent the leaders of performance art practices and discourse. In addition to artworks, the exhibition includes important archival material documenting the emergence of the New Native Theater movement in Santa Fe in 1969 as well as clothing, music, dance and other materials used for expressing resistance, cooperation, and pride.



Installation image from *Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*, June 24 – November 26, 2023. Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY. Photo: Olympia Shannon, 2023.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

This exhibition includes artworks by more than 40 artists from Indigenous communities across Turtle Island including local artists like Audie Murray (Métis), Bob Boyer (Métis), Dana Claxton (Lakota), Theo Jean Cuthand (Plains Cree, Scottish, Irish), Ruth Cuthand (Plains Cree, Scottish, Irish, Canadian), and more.



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ABOUT THE CURATOR***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****ABOUT THE CURATOR****Candice Hopkins**

Curated by Candice Hopkins (Citizen of Carcross/Tagish First Nation), Forge Project's Executive Director and Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College's Fellow in Indigenous Art History and Curatorial Studies, with curatorial research led by Amelia Russo, Forge Project's Collections and Exhibitions Director and contributions from CCS Bard graduate students in the Native Art & Artists and Oral Histories elective.

The exhibition and associated publication is made possible by Lonti Ebers, the Marieluise Hessel Foundation, Becky and David Gochman, the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, and the Henry Luce Foundation. Indian Theater was originally organized by the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College (CCS Bard), New York. Additional support for Indian Theater has been provided by Forge Project, Teiger Foundation, The Kaleta A. Doolin Foundation, and the Kettering Family Foundation.

The MacKenzie Art Gallery is honoured to host the Canadian premiere of Indian Theater. The exhibition will tour to the Vancouver Art Gallery and SITE SANTA FE.



IMPORTANT WORDS***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****IMPORTANT WORDS AND PHRASES**

These words and phrases may come up in the lessons below during your visit to the MacKenzie, or during conversations about the exhibition.

historical event: something important that happened in the past.

self-determination: for Indigenous peoples, self-determination means the right to freely determine their own political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.

resistance: the refusal to accept or comply with something.

discourse: communication of thought by words or conversation.

perspective: how you understand something based on your worldviews and life experiences. Or how you literally see something. For example, how things seem to vanish into the distance, or how we may view things from different positions like up high or down low (point of view).

small “p” political: related to power, and how people use power.

capital “P” Political: related to leaders, governments, politicians, and official systems of power.

power: having control over other people. Or being able to perform an action to get a specific result.

community: a group of people who interact with each other and have something in common connecting them. This common thing could be where they live, their culture and beliefs, the work they do, their interests, or many other things. Often people in communities support each other.



IMPORTANT WORDS***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****IMPORTANT WORDS AND PHRASES (continued)**

colonization: when one country or group of people tries to take over another country or group of people. This can include trying to physically remove people from their homeland as well as trying to change their ways of living and thinking. Colonization has huge effects on people that last many generations.

colonial: a word to describe values, ways of thinking, or ways of acting brought to a place by colonization.

decolonize: to remove the mindsets, practices, and beliefs that come with colonialism.

worldviews: beliefs that help us understand the world, life, and everything. When we use this word, we are often pointing out that these beliefs come from a specific place, time, and culture.



LESSON OPTION 1: ART AND HISTORY (Gr. 4-12)***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****ACTIVITY**

How do artists show us a moment in history through their art? Imagine that you have been asked to make a performance commemorating an historic event. Create a performance and share it with your class.

MATERIALS

Research tools (books, computers, etc.)

Note-taking tools (pencils and paper, or computers)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In small groups, select an historic event. It could be an event you are learning about in a Social Studies, Indigenous Studies, or History Class. It could be related to the history of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, Turtle Island (also known as North America), or any other part of the world. And it could have happened recently, or a long time ago. If the event was very big, you may want to focus on a small part of it or an important person who was involved.
2. Research the event you chose. Try to find answers to the general question words about the event you chose:
 - Who was involved in this event?
 - What happened?
 - When did it happen?
 - Where did it happen?
 - Why did it happen?
 - How did it happen?

You may want to use books, the internet, or speak to people who were involved with the event or had information about it passed down to them.



LESSON OPTION 1: ART AND HISTORY (Gr. 4-12)***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****ACTIVITY**

How do artists show us a moment in history through their art? Imagine that you have been asked to make a performance commemorating an historic event. Create a performance and share it with your class.

MATERIALS

Research tools (books, computers, etc.)

Note-taking tools (pencils and paper, or computers)

No matter what resources you use, keep in mind who is sharing the information with you, and what their biases may be. Whether we mean to or not, our worldviews and perspectives change how we see history and may change how we tell historical stories. All resources have biases. This doesn't necessarily make them good or bad, but it will change the information the resource shares.

Try to be a critical researcher. It's a good idea to check that facts come from sources you trust, and that more than one source agrees on those facts.

3. As a group, plan your memorial performance. As you work, ask questions to guide your work. Some examples include:
 - a. Does this performance do a good job of telling the story of this historical event? Will a viewer understand it?
 - b. Am I respecting the views of the people who were involved with this event?
 - c. Am I respecting the storytellers who shared information about this event?



LESSON OPTION 1: ART AND HISTORY (Gr. 4-12)***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****ACTIVITY**

How do artists show us a moment in history through their art? Imagine that you have been asked to make a performance commemorating an historic event. Create a performance and share it with your class.

MATERIALS

Research tools (books, computers, etc.)

Note-taking tools (pencils and paper, or computers)

You can plan your performance in many ways. You could perform a conversation that happened before, during, or after the event you chose. You can choose many different perspectives to convey such as a person not directly involved in the event but who witnessed it. The more research you have, the easier the performance will be to create.

4. Present your performance to the class and allow time for a Q & A period at the end. Be prepared to ask and answer questions. For example, you may be asked to provide more details about the words you chose, your costumes or props, or about the event itself. You may also want to ask about what your class learned from your performance.



LESSON OPTION 2: OUR ORAL STORIES (Gr. Pre.K-3)***Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969*****ACTIVITY**

Listen to stories told by an Indigenous elder or storyteller. Have a guided discussion together.

MATERIALS

An elder or storyteller

This video of an elder storyteller:
youtu.be/fd18NxiHBQ?si=WIIFgQyFu7XT7Dj9

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask an elder or storyteller to share a story with you. Or watch a video of them sharing a story.
2. Each story has a teaching/lesson in it. Storytelling is the way Indigenous peoples of North America have taught youth since time immemorial. Discuss these questions as a class:
 - a. What was the elder teaching?
 - b. Did the story contain any special characters, animals or places?
 - c. How will this story help you in your everyday life?

EXTENSIONS

Take turns telling a story with your classmates about a lesson that you've learned.



CONTACT

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