

AGNES ETHERINGTON ART CENTRE AT QUEEN'S



Teachers' Notes

Nunavut Life

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School Program, Winter 2017

Nunavut Life

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Cover image: Cornelius (Kooneloosee) Nutarak (Pond Inlet), *Using Blubber to Make Fuel*, 1964, graphite, pencil crayon on paper, Canadian Museum of History, IV-C-6952.

Introduction

Our school programs challenge students to develop critical thinking skills. We ask questions and set tasks requiring students to:

Observe

Interpret

Describe

Create

These skills are used to support acquisition of flexible and imaginative thinking skills. They are paramount for student development and are an integral part of the 21st-century learning framework.

A recent study by the University of Arkansas found that art gallery field trips are valuable for the development of critical thinking skills, historical empathy and tolerance of other viewpoints.

For more information, please see: www.educationnext.org/the-educational-value-of-field-trips/

Focus Exhibition

Winter 2017

Picturing Arctic Modernity: North Baffin Drawings from 1964

This is a travelling exhibition, curated by Dr. Norman Vorano, Curator of Indigenous Art, featuring 50 extraordinary drawings from the Canadian Museum of History. Created in the spring of 1964 by Inuit men and women from the Nunavut regions of Clyde River (Kanngiqtugaapik), Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik), and Arctic Bay (Ikpiarjuk), the drawings eloquently document the thoughts, concerns, memories and observations of the people of Nunavut during a time of social upheaval.

This innovative, multi-artist, trilingual exhibition, produced in close association with individuals from the region, is rich in firsthand accounts, stories and recollections about ways of life depicted in the drawings, conveyed in many short videos. They are available in the exhibition and on the Agnes website.

Program

Junior/Intermediate (Grade 4-8)

Nunavut Life

Students spend half the session in *Picturing Arctic Modernity: North Baffin Drawings from 1964*, and half in the studio. In the gallery, students will discuss five drawings as a class, then choose one and sketch a detail from it. They will have brief looks at other exhibitions on their way to the studio. In the studio, students will watch a short video featuring a North Baffin resident talking about the drawing *Dog Teams and Men Carrying Meat*, then make their own large drawing of an Inuit scene, incorporating their detail sketch.

We align our programs to the current Ontario Ministry of Education's Curriculum documents in order to support teachers in meeting curricular objectives. This program is geared to classes of 30 students or fewer, and lasts one hour and forty-five minutes.

Curriculum Connections

Education in the arts is essential to students' intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth and well-being. Experiences in the arts—in dance, drama, music, and visual arts—play a valuable role in helping students to achieve their potential as learners and to participate fully in their community and in society as a whole. The arts provide a natural vehicle through which students can explore and express themselves and through which they can discover and interpret the world around them. (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2009)

The Ministry of Education has issued a guiding framework for experiences in the arts. This framework includes three goals: **participation, analysis and appreciation** and **integration**. Within the framework, expectations have been grouped under three headings: **Creating and Presenting/Performing, Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing**, and **Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts**. Our program strives to meet and exceed the Ministry's program expectations.

Visual Art

Students will:

- Interpret a variety of works and identify messages conveyed by the creator
- Explore and analyze elements of design, especially line, and how they contribute to the message of each art work
- Explore the ways in which these drawings reflect beliefs and traditions of Inuit communities in Nunavut in the 1960s
- Identify how visual art functions within a cultural context
- Create a work of art that demonstrates an understanding of artistic composition using elements and principles of design and that conveys a message or story in a visually coherent way

Social Studies

Students will:

- Develop an understanding of a traditional Inuit lifestyle by examining aspects of daily life including hunting, modes of transportation, food, housing, clothing and their relationship to the environment
- Hear personal perspectives and first-hand accounts from people of this culture
- Investigate how identity is formed and what threatens shared cultural identities

Geography

Students will:

- Explore the challenges that the northern environment presents to the people living there and how they have responded and adapted to these challenges

Before the Visit

The following are suggested discussion topics and activities to help prepare students for their visit.

Please note: we ask that students wear name tags during the program.

Gallery Visit

Discuss the nature of a public art gallery with your class. Art galleries collect, research, protect, preserve and display original works of art for the benefit of current and future visitors. Ask your students if they have been to an art gallery before. What types of art did they see at the art gallery? Why is it important to visit original works of art, instead of viewing reproductions or images on the Internet?

Expectations

Discuss proper behaviour and gallery etiquette with your class. The three main rules to remember are: Do not touch the art because oils on our hands can contain salt that can damage the surface of works of art. No running, and no food or drinks (including gum) are permitted.

Themes in the Exhibition and Program:

- Cultural diversity in Canada
- Traditional ways of life in northern Canada
- Change/loss to traditional ways of life
- Human connection to environment
- Art as a record of history
- Preservation of identity

Ideas to Discuss in the Classroom before the Visit:

Geography

Where is Nunavut? Discuss population density, the tree line, and climate. How far is it from Kingston?

Tradition

Discuss traditional Inuit activities such as hunting, building shelters, methods of transportation, and how they made their clothing.

Stories and Music

Read some Inuit legends. Listen to Inuit music such as throat singing or songs by contemporary artists like Susan Aglukark.

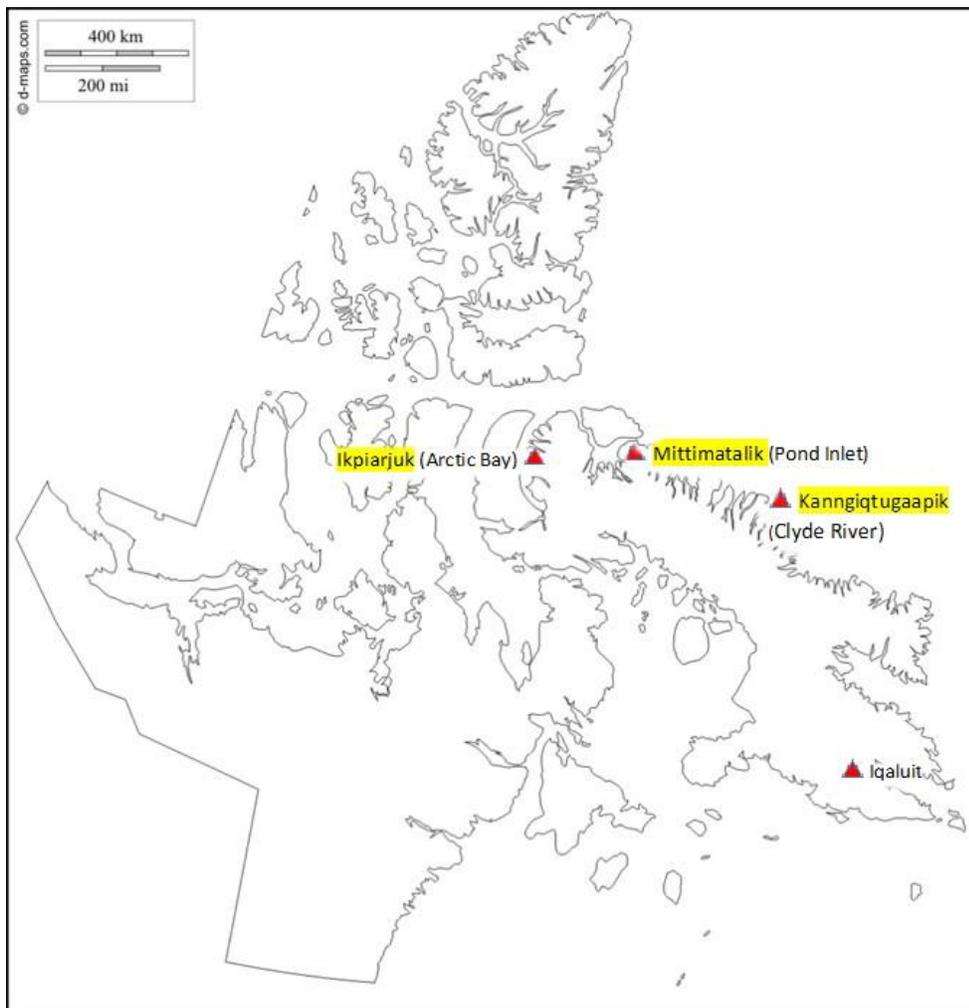
Nunavut Life Drawings Online Video Resource

The Agnes will post the interviews with North Baffin residents online, in a micro-site linked to:
<http://agnes.queensu.ca/exhibition/picturing-arctic-modernity-north-baffin-drawings-from-1964/>

These short videos (1 to 2 minutes long) feature people from the Inuit communities where these drawings were originally made, talking about and commenting on the drawings. The people speak in Inuktitut, and you can choose either English or French sub-titles. Speakers add to our understanding of the drawings by explaining the content, or voicing reflections gleaned from their oral family histories.

Map of Nunavut with the three communities where the drawings were produced

Ikpiarjuk (Arctic Bay), Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet), Kanngiqtuqaapik (Clyde River)
(Iqaluit has been included as a reference point)



Extending the Visit into the Classroom

Your visit to the Agnes can be extended to your classroom upon your return. Here are a few ideas to support extension:

Videos

If you have use of tablets, have the students make videos in which they talk about their drawings.

Our Daily Life

Students can create a drawing of an aspect of their own daily lives.

Point of View

In the gallery, we saw a drawing from an aerial or bird's-eye view. Students create an aerial drawing of a room familiar to them: the classroom, their bedroom, or another room in their house.

Games

A number of drawings in the exhibition feature games: string games, juggling and baseball. Students create drawings or paintings depicting a game they play.

Language Arts

Each student writes a short story about one of the drawings, explaining what they learned from it. The story could take the form of a letter to the artist who created that drawing.

Story-Telling in Pictures

Some of the drawings we saw depict more than one incident. Students create drawings with multiple related scenes. What happened first? What happens next? How does the story end?

Legends

The Inuit have many myths and legends. After reading some, students create drawings that depict a scene or multiple scenes from one.

Front and Back

In Mary Tassugat's drawing *This Is How They Made Clothing for the Winter*, she shows a woman wearing a caribou skin winter coat, front and back. Students can draw themselves the same way, in the clothing of their choice. They can write about their garments: when do they wear them? What are they made of?

Resources

Agnes Etherington Art Centre

<http://agnes.queensu.ca>

Visit the exhibition section to read about *Picturing Arctic Modernity: North Baffin Drawings from 1964*.

Websites with examples of Inuit art, as well as insights into its creation:

<http://www.inuitart.org/>

<http://www.artnunavik.ca/webconcepteur/web/fcnq/en/artnunavik/accueil>

http://www.inuitartalive.ca/index_e.php?p=0

<http://www.inuitartzone.com/>

The following site offers an overview of the entire history of Inuit art:

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/inuit-art/>

This website offers an overview of Inuit myth and legend:

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/inuit-myth-and-legend/>

The Inuit Cultural Online Resource was designed specifically for students and teachers to learn about Inuit art:

<http://icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com/>

The Alberta Teachers' Association has put together a useful guide for teaching Inuit and other First Nations arts:

[https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Education%20is%20Our%20Buffalo%20\(PD-80-7\).pdf](https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Education%20is%20Our%20Buffalo%20(PD-80-7).pdf)

A Brief Overview of Inuit Art from the National Gallery of Canada:

<https://www.gallery.ca/en/about/942.php>

Articles on the exhibition:

“Preserving Culture in Art: The North Baffin Drawings” - Interview with Dr. Norman Vorano

<http://queensu.ca/research/humandimensions/vorano>

Article on the exhibition in the Queen's Gazette, 16 October 2015:

<http://www.queensu.ca/gazette/stories/grant-will-make-inuit-art-exhibition-reality>

Press Release from the CMH about the acquisition of the drawings, 12 March 2015:

<http://www.historymuseum.ca/media/canadian-museum-of-history-acquires-major-collection-of-historical-inuit-drawings/>

Find out more about the contemporary life and concerns of Canada's northern peoples:

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

www.itk.ca

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

www.trc.ca