

Teaching Materials for Blake Lepine Exhibit

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Lower grades: *What happens when we mix old art styles with new art styles?*

Higher grades: *When an artist combines a culturally traditional art style with modern style, what happens to the message?*

ARTIST INFORMATION:

Blake Lepine: Acrylic on Wood

Instagram: @blake_lepine_art

“Blake Lepine, or Shaá’koon, was born and raised in Whitehorse, Yukon. He is of Tlingit, Han, Cree and Scottish descent and grew up with the Tlingit culture. **Blake is inspired by the old designs from carving books his mother had. Over the years, Blake has practiced and perfected his own stylized form and interpretation of this art while adhering to the traditional foundations.** This gives a modern voice to an ancient art, but also carries it into modern mediums other than the traditional forms of carving and painting of his ancestors. Blake has also worked with silkscreen, design, beadwork, textile work, sewing and painted leather, collage, block printing and watercolour. Through these mediums Blake has found a way of expressing his everyday experiences and life lessons through this art.”

PRE-VISIT CONNECTION ACTIVITIES

Outcome of activities: annotated formline colouring page.

Materials needed: pencils/pencil crayons, printed colouring pages.

Learn about formline style:

- When Blake says “the old designs”, he is referring to traditional Tlingit carving style, which uses Formline.
- Definition of formline from the Douglas Reynolds Gallery in Vancouver: “*The term formline refers to the continuous swelling and tapering lines that unite design units in Northwest Coast Indigenous art. It is one of the most distinct characteristics of Haida two-dimensional and three-dimensional art, painting as well as carving. Each nation has their own recognizable style with main design features like the ovoid, U-form, and tri-neg.*”
- Watch the one-minute video on importance of formline: [Formline; Northwest Coast Art Program](#)
- Read through this introduction to the building blocks of formline: [Basic formline elements and shapes](#)
- Have each student choose a colouring page to complete from [Michelle Stoney colouring pages](#). Michelle Stoney uses contemporary style to create her drawing outlines, and then uses

formline techniques for the designs inside. Have students identify (perhaps label/annotate as they colour) the elements and shapes of formline within their colouring page.

POST-VISIT REFLECTION ACTIVITIES

Outcome of activities: individual step-by-step formline wolf head drawings.

Materials needed: blank paper, pencil, red and black pencil crayons (optional).

Reflection on new learning:

- Sharing circle: make a circle and ensure that no one is in front or behind anyone else. Explain that a sharing circle is an Indigenous method of learning, and it's just as important of a job to be a listener as a speaker. Teachers can pre-read about circle pedagogy and protocol here: <https://passthefeather.ca/sharing-circles/>.
- Have students go in a circle to respond (or pass) to the following questions:
 - *Which art piece grabbed your attention? What did it make you feel?*
 - *Blake Lepine writes a small piece of prose to accompany each of his works... how did this affect your understanding of his work?*
 - *What happens when we mix old art styles with new art styles? Blake Lepine and Michelle Stoney both do this. This is the essential question. Remind students that there are SO many possible right answers!*

Art activity:

- Work through this lesson from Raven Publishing (Pacific Northwest Coast Native art and culture publisher): [How to draw a wolf head in Pacific Northwest Coast formline art style](#).
***Teach students that this is not their artwork -- they are completing this drawing because they have been invited to learn how to complete this specific drawing but they cannot then call this their own or adopt this style into their work unless it is a part of their culture.*

Final closing piece:

- Exit slip: have students answer the question: "how does learning about another culture's art styles change me?"