



TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR GRADES 9–12

LEARN ABOUT

LAND & INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS

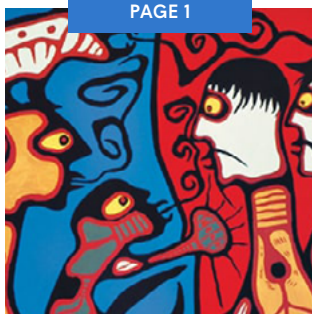
through the art of

NORVAL MORRISSEAU

ART CANADA INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN

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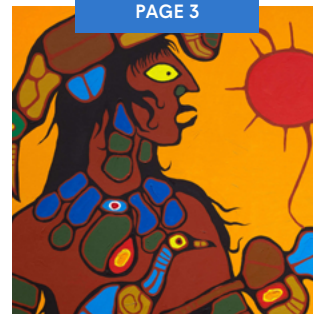
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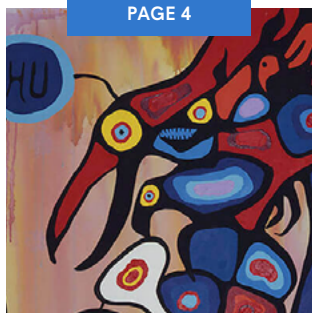
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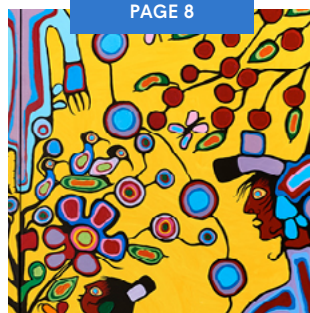
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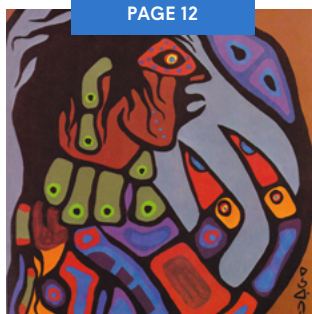
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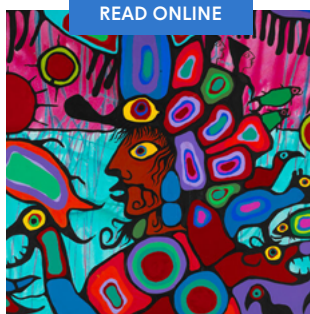
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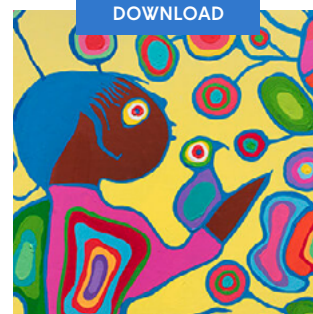
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

READ ONLINE



NORVAL MORRISSEAU: LIFE & WORK BY CARMEN ROBERTSON

DOWNLOAD



NORVAL MORRISSEAU IMAGE FILE

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

This teacher resource guide has been designed to complement the Art Canada Institute online art book [Norval Morriseau: Life & Work](#) by Carmen Robertson. The artworks within this guide and images required for the learning activities and culminating task can be found in the [Norval Morriseau Image File](#) provided.

Anishinaabe artist Norval Morriseau (1931–2007) is considered by many to be the Mishomis, or grandfather, of contemporary Indigenous art in Canada. He is known for creating a distinctive style of painting that came to be known as the Woodland School, and for addressing a wide range of themes in his work, from spiritual beliefs to colonial history. Throughout his career, he explored ways of thinking about the land, and many of his most famous paintings emphasize the idea of land as a relation; Morriseau believed that people live in relationship with animals, plants, the earth, and the spiritual world, a conviction shared by many Indigenous communities. In this guide, students will explore Morriseau's works as well as this worldview, with attention to the artist's beliefs and the significance of these views today.

Curriculum Connections

- Grades 9–12 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies
- Grades 9–12 Visual Arts

Themes

- Contemporary First Nations art
- Indigenous activists
- Indigenous worldviews
- Land and the environment



Fig 1. Norval Morriseau, *Floral Theme in Two Parts*, c.1980–85. The symmetry in this painting of birds, butterflies, flowers, and berries represents balance in nature.

Teaching Exercises

The exercises in this guide explore Indigenous worldviews about the land as represented in artworks by Norval Morriseau and they ask students to reflect on their own relationships with land and communities.

- Learning Activity #1: Norval Morriseau and Land as a Relation ([page 4](#))
- Learning Activity #2: Different Views on Land ([page 6](#))
- Culminating Task: Art and Aspirations for Lands and Communities in Canada ([page 8](#))

A Note on Using This Guide

Norval Morriseau had an extraordinary career as an artist, but his life was also shaped by several difficult experiences. He was a residential school survivor, he struggled with alcohol and was incarcerated, and he was subject to racist discrimination in numerous ways. The activities in this guide are not designed to explore these aspects of Morriseau's life, but educators should be aware that they are addressed in the online art book [Norval Morriseau: Life & Work](#).

While the activities in this guide can be done independently, educators are strongly encouraged to reach out to local Friendship Centres and Elders and, if possible, invite a speaker to visit the class. It is important to note that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit have different protocols for inviting community members and Elders to a classroom or event. It is vital that these protocols are understood and respected (contact your local Friendship Centre or Cultural Centre when in doubt).

WHO WAS NORVAL MORRISSEAU?



Fig 2. Norval Morrisseau in Red Lake.

Norval Morrisseau was born in Fort William, Ontario, in 1931. Following tradition, his earliest years were spent with his maternal grandparents in the Anishinaabe community at Sand Point reserve (now known as Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek First Nation). He learned about Anishinaabe spirituality and the Midewiwin tradition from his grandfather; from his grandmother he learned about Catholicism. Both religious outlooks informed his worldview. At age six he was sent to a residential school, and it was not until four years later that he returned to Sand Point and began attending a public school nearby.

Growing up, Morrisseau drew often and he was fascinated by Anishinaabe pictographs and birchbark scrolls. At nineteen he became ill, and in a healing ceremony he received the name Miskwaabik Animiiki (Copper Thunderbird), which became his signature and an important part of his identity. In his late twenties, he married Harriet Kakegamic. He also began exploring new directions for his art.

In 1962 Morrisseau met the Toronto gallerist Jack Pollock, who arranged an exhibition held later that year—the first exhibition of the artist's work in a commercial gallery. Morrisseau's show at the Pollock Gallery marked the first time that work by an Indigenous artist had been shown at a contemporary art gallery in Canada. However, while some critics lauded the work, prevailing stereotypes of Indigenous people and cultures shaped how the media viewed Morrisseau and his art. As his reputation grew, his personal struggles often received more press coverage than his achievements as an artist.

By the 1970s Morrisseau was widely recognized as an important contemporary Indigenous artist, and he became an advocate for and mentor to other emerging artists. He joined the [Professional Native Indian Artists Inc.](#), a group formally incorporated in 1975. He received several national honours and was recognized as a leading artist in Canada; he participated in the artist residency program at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and in 1984 his work was at the centre of a major exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, entitled *Norval Morrisseau and the Emergence of the Image Makers*, that celebrated the [Woodland School](#).

When the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa organized a retrospective of his work in 2006—the first for a contemporary First Nations artist—it brought renewed attention to Morrisseau's art. He died in 2007, but his legacy continues in both his paintings and in the doors he opened for the Indigenous artists who have followed him.



Fig 3. Norval Morrisseau, *Man Changing into Thunderbird* (detail), 1977. This work charts Morrisseau's personal transformation into Copper Thunderbird.



Fig 4. Norval Morrisseau, *Shaman and Disciples*, 1979. Morrisseau identified the central figure in this painting—completed while he was an artist in residence at the McMichael—as a self-portrait.



Fig 5. Norval Morrisseau, *Water Spirit*, 1972. This manitou, or spirit-being, is known as Micipijiu and expresses the duality of good and evil.

NATIONAL & WORLD EVENTS



Fig 6. The Federal Provincial Constitutional Conference in Ottawa on February 13, 1969.



Fig 7. Northern Quebec (territory covered by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975).



Fig 8. Truth and Reconciliation Commission closing ceremonies, 2015.

The release of the Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy (a document commonly known as the 1969 White Paper) by the Canadian federal government is met with widespread criticism and protests led by Indigenous activists. The paper is withdrawn the following year.

Following protests about the impact of hydroelectric-power developments in the region of James Bay, the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, a contemporary treaty, is signed by several parties, including the Quebec and federal governments, Hydro Quebec, and Cree and Inuit peoples in Quebec.

Canada and Great Britain sign the Constitution Act, 1982, which recognizes and affirms existing aboriginal and treaty rights.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney initiates the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

The final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples makes 440 recommendations to change the relationships between Indigenous peoples, non-Indigenous peoples, and governmental bodies in Canada.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission formally begins its work, which will not be concluded until 2015.

Through their movement to resist the construction of a pipeline, the Wet'suwet'en Nation captures the attention of Canadians across the country.

NORVAL MORRISSEAU'S LIFE

1931 Morrisseau is born in Fort William, Ontario.

c.1937 Morrisseau is sent to St. Joseph's Indian Residential School in Fort William. He will spend four years at two different residential schools before returning to Sand Point (now Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek First Nation) and enrolling in public school in nearby Beardmore.

c.1950 Morrisseau participates in a healing ceremony during which he receives the name Miskwaabik Animiiki (Copper Thunderbird).

1962 A meeting with Toronto gallerist Jack Pollock in Beardmore leads to Morrisseau's first exhibition in a commercial gallery.

1967

1969 Morrisseau receives a commission to create a mural for Expo 67, but he abandons it after officials censor his design.

1975 Professional Native Indian Artists Inc. is formally incorporated; Morrisseau is one of the members.

1978

1982

1991 Morrisseau is awarded the Order of Canada.

1996

2006 The National Gallery of Canada mounts the retrospective exhibition *Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist*.

2007

2008

2019

Morrisseau dies of complications from Parkinson's disease.



Fig 9. Harriet, Norval, Pierre, and Victoria Morrisseau, photographed in Toronto in March 1964.



Fig 10. A view of the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Montreal's Expo 67, 1967.

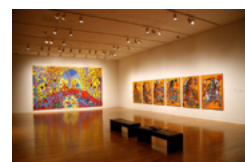


Fig 11. Installation of Morrisseau's works in the exhibition *Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist* at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 2006.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #1

NORVAL MORRISSEAU AND LAND AS A RELATION

The Storyteller: The Artist and His Grandfather, 1978, shows Norval Morriseau learning from his grandfather; both are closely linked to figures of animals using Morriseau's distinctive black lines. These lines are a powerful stylistic choice, but they also represent relationships. In this activity, students will analyze Morriseau's paintings to reflect on interdependent relationships among people, animals, plants, and the earth.

Big Idea

Interdependent relationships, kinship

Learning Goals

1. I can explain the significance of Norval Morriseau's style.
2. I can analyze a painting by Norval Morriseau.
3. I can reflect on how interdependent relationships among people, animals, plants, and the earth are part of my own lived experience.
4. I can show respect and cultural sensitivity when discussing and analyzing an artwork.

Materials

- [Norval Morriseau Image File](#)
- Paper
- Pens, pencils
- "Who Was Norval Morriseau?" biographic information sheet ([page 2](#))

Process

1. Introduce students to Norval Morriseau using the biographic information sheet ([page 2](#)), and project his painting *The Storyteller: The Artist and His Grandfather*, 1978. Lead students in a discussion about Morriseau's use of lines in this painting. Possible guiding questions include the following:
 - What are some of the different figures that are connected by the lines?
 - Why do you think Morriseau used lines to outline figures and to connect them together?
2. Explain to students that using black lines to outline and connect figures was a key part of Morriseau's distinctive style. The lines represent interdependent relationships; as author Carmen Robertson explains in [Norval Morriseau: Life & Work](#), "These lines, which are sometimes referred to as power lines, connect the figures to one another to create a balanced composition of interrelated figures."



Fig 12. Norval Morriseau, *The Storyteller: The Artist and His Grandfather*, 1978. In this work Morriseau presents himself as a young boy, respectfully acknowledging his debt to his Anishinaabek Mishomis—his maternal grandfather, Moses Potan Nanakonagos.

Learning Activity #1 Continued

3. Divide students into pairs and give them copies of *Children with Tree of Life* and *Shaman and Apprentice*, both c.1980–85. Ask students to brainstorm in pairs to identify different interdependent relationships in these works. Create a master list as a class (for instance, people are connected to animals and trees because we all require air; many animals, such as birds, eat foods that grow on the lands that we live on; all living beings need clean water; and so on).



Fig 13. Norval Morrisseau, *Children with Tree of Life*, c.1980–85. In this painting children and animals have come together to look at a vibrant, colourful plant.



Fig 14. Norval Morrisseau, *Shaman and Apprentice*, c.1980–85. This work represents learning: the shaman on the left is sharing his spiritual knowledge with the figure on the right.

4. Ask students to select a single relationship to focus on and to write a brief reflection on how they experience this relationship in their everyday lives.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #2

DIFFERENT VIEWS ON LAND

In his painting *The Land (Land Rights)*, 1976, Norval Morriseau sharply contrasted an Indigenous worldview, which understands all living things, human and non-human, as related, with a settler worldview, which views humans as separate and above other living things. By depicting figures confronting each other and separated by a strong line and a sharp contrast in colours, the artist shows us how these different ways of knowing the land can impact the earth. In this activity, students will explore different views about land and the earth, first in Morriseau's painting and then in recent news reports about disputes centred on land and the ways that people have responded.

Big Idea

Indigenous and settler worldviews

Learning Goals

1. I can explain different worldviews about the land.
2. I can analyze a news story about Indigenous activists and the land.
3. I can show respect and cultural understanding when researching various viewpoints.

Materials

- Access to computers and the internet for research
- [Norval Morriseau Image File](#)
- Paper
- Pens, pencils
- "Who Was Norval Morriseau?" biographic information sheet ([page 2](#))

Process

1. Introduce students to Norval Morriseau using the biographic information sheet and project the painting *The Land (Land Rights)*, 1976. Created during a period of rising Indigenous community activism against destructive mining, dam building, and deforestation practices, this painting represents a confrontation between figures whose views are in opposition. Lead students in a guided discussion about this painting: what do they notice about the different figures? Students should recognize that the two figures on the right have white skin, which suggests that they are settlers, and they are alone; on the left we see figures with close connections to animals, who represent the earth. These figures represent two different worldviews about land, one that emphasizes a relationship with the land and one that accepts the exploitation of resources for economic purposes.



Fig 15. Norval Morriseau, *The Land (Land Rights)*, 1976. Morriseau's dramatic painting speaks to historic and ongoing conflicts over land rights.

Learning Activity #2 Continued

2. Explain to students that a profound relationship with and respect for land and the earth was important to Morriseau. Show students some of his other paintings about the land, such as *Moose Dream Legend*, 1962. These values continue to be important to many Indigenous communities, artists, and activists. Today these values are increasingly important to many Canadians, but historically many settlers did not share this view of the land and many Canadians do not do so today. Differing worldviews and values are often evident in disputes and protests about land and in how people react to these events.



Fig 16. Norval Morriseau, *Moose Dream Legend*, 1962. One of Morriseau's early paintings, *Moose Dream Legend* is an example of the artist's powerful use of lines.

3. Divide students into small groups and assign each group a recent news story related to conflict over land and Indigenous land rights (select news stories from your local community or see Additional Resources [page 13]). It is important to use professional judgment when selecting these news stories, ensuring they are appropriate for the age and stage of the student. Ask students to read their stories carefully and to make notes on how the specific event they are reading about might relate to different worldviews about the land.

4. Give students time to consolidate their notes and prepare explanations of the different viewpoints they have identified. Emphasize that this activity is not about deciding which viewpoint they think is better—it is about trying to explain both sides' perspectives and developing greater understanding and empathy while doing so. Hold a class discussion in which each group shares their news stories and their observations about different worldviews.

5. In concluding the activity, show students one of the banners that the Indigenous artists Isaac Murdoch and Christi Belcourt have created as artworks to support recent grassroots activism to protect land and water (see [Norval Morriseau Image File](#) and Additional Resources [page 13]). Students might recognize these banners from photos accompanying their news reports. Ask students to reflect on the following questions: how can these artworks make an impact? How do these artworks refer to Morriseau's work?



Fig 17. Isaac Murdoch, *Thunderbird Woman*, 2016–18. This work has been adapted for banners and posters at protests and activist gatherings.



Fig 18. Christi Belcourt, *Water is Life*, 2016–18. The *Water is Life* project asks viewers to reflect on connections between the earth and all living beings.

CULMINATING TASK

ART AND ASPIRATIONS FOR LANDS AND COMMUNITIES IN CANADA

One of Norval Morriseau's most powerful artworks is the painting *Androgyny*, 1983, an enormous canvas that represents his personal understanding of the interconnectedness of life. He created this work as a gift to the people of Canada. As Carmen Robertson explains in [Norval Morriseau: Life & Work](#), in this work we see many related figures including [Thunderbird](#), [manitous](#), and "the turtles, muskrats, frogs, fish, birds, butterflies, trees, and men, women, and children that appear in many of Morriseau's works." By representing relationships among the land, people, and spirits, Morriseau asked his viewers—all Canadians—to reflect on the worldview he was sharing with them. [Alex Janvier](#) (b.1935), one of Morriseau's peers, similarly challenged Canadians to reflect when he created *Morning Star—Gambeh Then'*, 1993, for the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now the Canadian Museum of History). In this task, students are asked to explore both these works before creating and sharing their own artworks about their aspirations for the lands that they live on and the communities they live with.

Big Idea

Sharing aspirations

Learning Goals

1. I understand artworks by Norval Morriseau and Alex Janvier.
2. I can research the land that I live on and the communities I live in and near.
3. I can articulate my aspirations for the future of these lands and communities in writing and in art.
4. I can show respect and cultural sensitivity in both oral and written work.

Success Criteria

- To be added to, reduced, or changed in collaboration with students.
1. Personal reflection demonstrates understanding of artworks by Norval Morriseau and Alex Janvier.
 2. Personal reflection and statement for sharing present a clear articulation of personal aspirations for lands and communities in Canada.
 3. Artwork presents a clear visual interpretation of personal aspirations for lands and communities in Canada using a personal artistic style.
 4. Written work is respectful, clearly written, and edited.

Materials

- Acrylic paints
- Canvases (in small sizes)
- [Norval Morriseau Image File](#)
- [Norval Morriseau: Life & Work](#)
- Paintbrushes
- Paper
- Pens, pencils



Fig 19. Norval Morriseau, *Untitled (Two Bull Moose)*, 1965. Morriseau's compositions often emphasize balance and symmetry.

Culminating Task Continued

Process

1. Project *Androgyny*, 1983, by Norval Morrisseau, and *Morning Star—Gambeh Then'*, 1993, by Alex Janvier, and give students background information on both works using the [Key Works](#) chapter of *Norval Morrisseau: Life & Work* and the interpretive platform about *Morning Star—Gambeh Then'* (see Additional Resources [\[page 13\]](#)). *Androgyny* was Morrisseau's gift to the people of Canada and, as he explained, in this work he represented a "shaman that is Androgyny in four directions, filled with all parts of nature in Canada, thunderbeings, sacred serpents and turtles, flowers, animals, and we children of Mother Earth... Butterflies and Bumble Bees, too!" The work may have been intended to express Morrisseau's hope for Canadians to be united in their respect for the earth and for one another. Similarly, when Janvier painted *Morning Star—Gambeh Then'*, he wanted to represent hope for the future (while also acknowledging colonial violence and paying tribute to Indigenous communities' resilience and resistance). Explain to students that in this project they will also be creating artworks representing their aspirations for the future. They will then share their artworks with others (educators should decide if students are to share the artworks with the school community or with specific individuals, such as family members).



Fig 20. Alex Janvier, *Morning Star—Gambeh Then'*, 1993. The title of this enormous mural (418 square metres in size) refers to the morning star because Janvier's people used that star as a guiding light and the artist hoped this work might become one as well.



Fig 21. Norval Morrisseau, *Androgyny*, 1983. Morrisseau offered this work to the people of Canada as a decolonizing gesture of reconciliation.

Culminating Task Continued

2. Give students time to research lands in their own communities, using the following guiding questions:
 - What are the most critical characteristics of the ecosystem?
 - Which Indigenous nations lived on these lands in the past, and which continue to do so today? (In some communities these answers may be the same, but in others they may be different.)
 - What settler communities live on these lands? Encourage students to recognize and acknowledge diversity within settler communities.
3. Ask students to write personal reflections about their aspirations for the future of the land they live on and the different communities that they live in and alongside. While students should refer to their research to support their reflections, each student should base their reflections on their personal convictions.
4. Lead students in a discussion about respectful engagement with Indigenous art and ethical creative work. Emphasize that students should not appropriate Morrisseau's or Janvier's styles; both men developed distinctive personal styles to express their own viewpoints and students should strive to do the same. However, students may choose to represent similar themes, such as respect for the land. Both artists used colour to express hope for the future and their interconnected understanding of land.
5. Give students time to "think-pair-share" their plans for their artworks representing their personal aspirations and encourage students to discuss their artworks as they create them.
6. When students have completed their artworks, ask them to write a short statement for the person or people that they will be sharing their artwork with: what do they want this person or these people to know about their work and their hopes?
7. After students have shared their artworks and statements, hold a class discussion about the experience of sharing their aspirations through art.



Fig 22. Norval Morrisseau painting *Androgyny*, 1983. This photograph shows the artist working on the defining black outlines.

HOW NORVAL MORRISSEAU MADE ART: STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Here are a few of the important artistic concepts that characterize the art of Norval Morriseau. For more information see the [Style & Technique](#) chapter of *Norval Morriseau: Life & Work*.

EARLY EXPERIMENTS

Morriseau's earliest paintings drew heavily on Anishinaabe traditions. Rather than paper, board, or canvas, he often used birchbark, a medium that was readily available and that had been used by generations of Anishinaabe artists for writing and to make canoes and other objects. The subjects of these early works were frequently spiritual figures, especially the [Thunderbird](#), a symbol of Ojibway culture with which Morriseau identified. Morriseau combined these elements with his personal beliefs, experimenting with line and colour to develop an artistic language that was uniquely his own.

COLOUR

Throughout Morriseau's career, colour was central to his images, at times driving his compositions. "The colours are in my mind somewhere," he said. "In fact, I have no preconceived idea where they will go. I can almost see them clearly." Although in the beginning he used coloured pencils and oil paints, acrylic paint became Morriseau's medium of choice. He rarely mixed his colours, applying them to the canvas with brushes of different sizes and even his fingers, creating an uneven layer of paint. Whether he was using more muted earth tones (as in his early work) or bright turquoises, golds, and coppers (as in his later work), the colours Morriseau chose had symbolic as well as aesthetic significance. For instance, contrasting colours might show opposition among figures in a composition, as in [The Gift](#), 1975.

LINE

Black lines give structure and definition to Morriseau's bold colours, turning loose, expressionistic forms into defined figures. He adapted the decorative lines and latticework that segment the interiors of animals, humans, and spiritual beings in many of his paintings from geometric designs on birchbark scrolls that were part of the Midewiwin tradition he participated in through his grandfather. The symbol of a divided circle references Midewiwin medicine bags. These lines do more than add detail to Morriseau's compositions: along with the lines that link different figures, they convey the energy of an interconnected world at the heart of Morriseau's belief system.

SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality was central to Morriseau's life and his art, informing his choice of colours, his use of line, and the subjects of his works. The Anishinaabe and Catholic beliefs he received from his grandparents were complicated by his views on colonialism and filtered through his practice of [Eckankar](#). In his paintings, images of transmission and transformation—a grandfather and grandson, or the artist becoming [Thunderbird](#)—represent Morriseau's spiritual life. Many of his works, including *Ojibway Shaman Figure*, 1975, and [Observations of the Astral World](#), c.1994, bring shamanism into his art.



Fig 23. Norval Morriseau, *Untitled (Thunderbird Transformation)*, c.1958–60. Thunderbird, the powerful spirit-being that often signifies spiritual transformation, appears repeatedly in the artist's paintings.



Fig 24. Norval Morriseau, *The Gift*, 1975. In this work Morriseau represents a missionary and a shaman and uses the contrast of red and green to represent their different ways of knowing the world.



Fig 25. Norval Morriseau, *Ojibway Shaman Figure*, 1975. Morriseau identified as a shaman artist, and this became an important part of his public identity.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Supplementary Materials Provided by the Art Canada Institute

- The online art book *Norval Morriseau: Life & Work* by Carmen Robertson: <https://aci-iac.ca/art-books/norval-morriseau>
- [Norval Morriseau Image File](#) with artworks and images related to this lesson
- “Who Was Norval Morriseau?” biographic information sheet ([page 2](#))
- Timelines of national and world events and Norval Morriseau’s life ([page 3](#))
- “How Norval Morriseau Made Art: Style & Technique” information sheet ([page 11](#))

GLOSSARY

Here is a list of terms that appear in this resource guide and are relevant to the learning activities and culminating task. For a comprehensive list of art-related terms, visit the Art Canada Institute’s ever-growing [Glossary of Canadian Art History](#).

Eckankar

Founded by American Paul Twitchell in 1965, this religious movement was influenced by surat shabd yoga. Followers of Eckankar adopt various practices that facilitate soul transcendence by allowing a connection with the Divine Light and Sound. Eckankar translates as “coworker with God.”

Janvier, Alex (Dene Suline/Saulteaux, b.1935)

Influenced by Expressionism and strongly by his First Nations heritage, Janvier was a founding member of the Professional Native Indian Artists Inc. and is a pioneering figure in Indigenous art in Canada. Often composed with bright, symbolic colours and curvilinear lines, his nonrepresentational paintings address themes of land, spirit, and the struggles and triumphs of Indigenous culture.



Fig 26. Norval Morriseau, *Mishupishu*, n.d. Morriseau’s representations of the manitou Micipijiu are similar to images of this being in Anishinaabe rock art.

manitous

Manitous or manidoogs are common to many Native groups in North America, including the Anishinaabe. The sacred spirit-beings are tied to organisms, the environment, and events that help connect cultural narratives and their ways of being.

Professional Native Indian Artists Inc.

Informally founded in the early 1970s and incorporated in 1975, this avant-garde association of Woodland School artists championed the inclusion of Indigenous art in mainstream Canadian art circles and aimed to foster revisionist thinking about Indigenous art and culture. Members included Jackson Beardy, Eddy Cobiness, Alex Janvier, Norval Morriseau, Daphne Odjig, Carl Ray, and Joseph Sanchez.

Thunderbird

Considered one of the highest spirits (manitous) in Ojibway culture, and taken as a symbol for the culture itself, this supernatural bird is said to produce thunder and lightning and tend to the health and well-being of the Earth.

Woodland School (of art)

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Norval Morrisseau pioneered this school of artistic practice. Key characteristics of Woodland School art include the fusion of traditional Ojibway imagery and symbols with sensibilities of modernism and Pop art, as well as the fusion of X-ray-style motifs with bold colours and interconnected, curvilinear lines. Alex Janvier, Daphne Odjig, and Carl Ray are other prominent artists associated with the Woodland School.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

The following external resources can be used to augment the learning activities and materials provided by the Art Canada Institute. They are to be used at the teacher's own discretion.

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network

<https://aptnnews.ca/>

CBC News: Indigenous

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous>

Isaac Murdoch and Christi Belcourt Banners

<http://onamancollective.com/murdoch-belcourt-banner-downloads/>

Sakihitowin Awasis, "Keep It in the Ground!," *Canadian Art magazine*, 7 August 2017.

<https://canadianart.ca/features/keep-it-in-the-ground/>

Lenard Monkman, "How art and spirituality are defining the 'water protectors,'" *CBC News*, 19 August 2018.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/how-art-and-spirituality-are-defining-the-water-protectors-1.4244645>

Morning Star

<https://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/tresors/treasure/283eng.html>

Books

These titles are geared for grades 5–9 but are useful for readers old and young.

Edward Benton-Banai. *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. *The Gift Is in the Making: Anishinaabeg Stories*. Highwater Press, 2015.



Fig 27. Norval Morrisseau, *Man Changing into Thunderbird* (detail), 1977. This work includes six panels that together represent the artist's personal transformation into Copper Thunderbird.

FIGURE LIST

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Fig 1. Norval Morriseau, *Floral Theme in Two Parts*, c.1980–85, acrylic on canvas, 60.9 x 45.7 cm. Collection of Art Gallery of Hamilton, Gift of Mr. Nicholas John Pustina, Mr. Robert Edward Zelinski, and Mr. Kenny Alwyn Whent, 1985. Courtesy of Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Fig 2. Norval Morriseau in Red Lake. Courtesy of Red Lake Museum.

Fig 3. Norval Morriseau, *Man Changing into Thunderbird* (detail), 1977, acrylic on canvas, six panels: each panel 153.5 x 125.7 cm. Private collection, on loan to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Photo credit: Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Fig 4. Norval Morriseau, *Shaman and Disciples*, 1979, acrylic on canvas, 180.5 x 211.5 cm. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario (1979.34.7).

Fig 5. Norval Morriseau, *Water Spirit*, 1972, acrylic on brown kraft paper, 81 x 183 cm. Collection of Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (III-G-1102).

Fig 6. The Federal Provincial Constitutional Conference in Ottawa on February 13, 1969. Courtesy of *Canadian History*.

Fig 7. Northern Quebec (territory covered by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975). Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Fig 8. Truth and Reconciliation Commission closing ceremonies, 2015. Courtesy of Aboriginal Multi-Media Society of Alberta.

Fig 9. Harriet, Norval, Pierre, and Victoria Morriseau photographed in Toronto in March 1964. Courtesy of the *Globe and Mail*.

Fig 10. A view of the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Montreal's Expo 67, 1967, photographer unknown. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Fig 11. Installation of Morriseau's works in the exhibition *Norval Morriseau: Shaman Artist* at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 2006.

Fig 12. Norval Morriseau, *The Storyteller: The Artist and His Grandfather*, 1978, acrylic on canvas, diptych: each panel 176.3 x 96.6 cm. Collection of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Gatineau (151805 A-B). Photograph by Lawrence Cook.

Fig 13. Norval Morriseau, *Children with Tree of Life*, c.1980–85, acrylic on canvas, 132.7 x 189.2 cm. Collection of Art Gallery of Hamilton, Gift of Mr. Nicholas John Pustina, Mr. Robert Edward Zelinski, and Mr. Kenny Alwyn Whent, 1985. Courtesy of Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Fig 14. Norval Morriseau, *Shaman and Apprentice*, c.1980–85, acrylic on canvas, 135.2 x 189.2 cm. Collection of Art Gallery of Hamilton, Gift of Mr. Nicholas John Pustina, Mr. Robert Edward Zelinski, and Mr. Kenny Alwyn Whent, 1985. Courtesy of Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Fig 15. Norval Morriseau, *The Land (Land Rights)*, 1976, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 96.7 cm. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario (1982.6).

Fig 16. Norval Morriseau, *Moose Dream Legend*, 1962, oil on wove paper, 54.6 x 75.3 cm. Collection of Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of Procter and Gamble Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1964 (no. 63/ 54).

Fig 17. Isaac Murdoch, *Thunderbird Woman*, 2016–18, digital image, dimensions variable. Courtesy Onaman Collective.

Fig 18. Christi Belcourt, *Water is Life*, 2016–18, digital image, dimensions variable. Courtesy Onaman Collective.

Fig 19. Norval Morriseau, *Untitled (Two Bull Moose)*, 1965, acrylic on millboard, 81.3 x 243.9 cm. Thunder Bay Art Gallery. Gift of Carl Boggild.

Fig 20. Alex Janvier, *Morning Star—Gambeh Then'*, 1993, mural. Collection of Canadian Museum of History (CMH, IMG2009-0085-0001-Dm).

Fig 21. Norval Morriseau, *Androgyny*, 1983, acrylic on canvas, 366 x 610 cm. Collection of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Gatineau (306400 A-D). Photograph by Lawrence Cook.

Fig 22. Norval Morriseau painting *Androgyny*, 1983.

Fig 23. Norval Morriseau, *Untitled (Thunderbird Transformation)*, c.1958–60, watercolour and ink on birchbark, 63 x 101.3 cm. Weinstein Collection, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (III-G-1099).

Fig 24. Norval Morriseau, *The Gift*, 1975, acrylic on paper, 196 x 122 cm. Helen E. Band Collection, Thunder Bay Art Gallery.

Fig 25. Norval Morriseau, *Ojibway Shaman Figure*, 1975, acrylic on card, 101.6 x 81.3 cm. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Gift of Freda and Irwin Browns (2006.23).

Fig 26. Norval Morriseau, *Mishupishu*, n.d., felt marker on cotton, 51 x 88 cm. Collection of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Gatineau, Selwyn Dewdney Fonds (A-306079). Photograph by Lawrence Cook.

Fig 27. Norval Morriseau, *Man Changing into Thunderbird* (detail), 1977, acrylic on canvas, six panels: each panel 153.5 x 125.7 cm. Private collection, on loan to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Photo credit: Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.