



ART CANADA INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN

THE CANADIAN ART INSPIRATION CONTEST FOR K-12

Artwork Examples and Ideas to Spark Student Creativity





ART CANADA INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN

THE CANADIAN ART INSPIRATION CONTEST FOR K-12

About the Canadian Art Inspiration Contest

Open to students from kindergarten through grade 12, the Canadian Art Inspiration Contest invites submissions of artworks inspired by or responding to leaders in Canadian art history and major Canadian artworks. Applicants are encouraged to interpret this theme as broadly as they wish, and to submit works in any media.

[Apply online](#) before June 30, 2021 at 11:59PM EDT. Awards will be announced in September of this year. Finalists' artworks will be showcased in an online exhibition, and prizes will be awarded in different age groups (Kindergarten to Grade 3; Grades 4 to 6; Grades 7 to 9; and Grades 10 to 12), with \$500 for first prizes and \$250 for honourable mentions.

About the Art Canada Institute & Our Education Program

Launched in 2013, the Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive multi-vocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, in both English and French, within Canada and internationally. The ACI works with more than fifty of Canada's leading art historians, curators, and visual culture experts. We are creating a central digital resource to tell the world about Canada's most important works of art: we function as [an online art museum](#), [a digital library](#), and an interactive [Canadian art encyclopedia](#). Our [teaching resources](#) are interdisciplinary, and each of our expert-authored guides follows national education recommendations and is available in both French and English.

For more information about our programming & contest contact

Emma Doubt

Editorial and Education Associate
edoubt@aci-iac.ca

Jocelyn Anderson

Education and Editorial Director
janderson@aci-iac.ca

GREG CURNOE

“My Favourite Weekend Hobby”



Greg Curnoe, *Bicycle #2*, 1973, watercolour on paper, 57.2 x 72.4 cm.

Greg Curnoe's childhood passions—from collections to journaling to maps—influenced his life as an artist and inextricably link his personal interests to his artmaking. In his adult life, cycling was a beloved pastime. He took up competitive cycling in 1971, commissioning custom-made, hand-built Canadian racing bicycles for his journeys. These became the subject of numerous large-scale paintings like the one pictured here, in which he listed the different parts of the bicycle being pictured in text next to the image. Curnoe's *Bicycle #2*, 1973, can be used to inspire your students to create artworks about their own favourite hobbies and pastimes.

[Download a Teacher Resource Guide on Greg Curnoe's Art](#)

[Watch a Video on Greg Curnoe](#)



GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST

Greg Curnoe
1932–1992

Place of Birth & Death:
London, Ontario

Best known for:
Being a leader of
London Regionalism

ROBERT HOULE

“Decolonization and Reconciliation: Envisioning a Better Canada”



Treaty No. 1... ARTICLES OF A TREATY made and concluded this third day of August in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one, between Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland by Her Commissioner, Wemyss M. Simpson, Esquire, of the one part, and the Chippewa and Swam... dians, inhabitants of the... hereinafter defined and chosen and named as... other part...Whereas all the... have been notified... said Commissioner that it is the desire of Her Majesty to open up to settlement and immigration a tract of country bounded and described as hereinafter mentioned, and to obtain the consent thereto of her Indian subjects inhabiting the said tract, and to make a treaty and arrangements with them so that there may be peace and good will between them and Her Majesty...The Chippewa and Swampy Cree Tribes of Indians and all other the Indians inhabiting the district hereinafter described and defined do hereby cede, release, surrender and yield up to Her Majesty the Queen and Successors forever all the lands included within the following limits, that is to say:-Beginning at the internatio

Robert Houle, *Premises for Self-Rule: Treaty No. 1*, 1994, oil on canvas, photo emulsion on canvas, laser cut vinyl, 152.4 x 304.8 cm.

Today, reconciliation and decolonization are critical issues for all Canadians. Saulteaux artist Robert Houle has addressed both in his art, creating striking works to challenge audiences to confront colonialism in the past and present. *Premises for Self-Rule: Treaty No. 1*, 1994, part of a series, focuses on the false promises of the Canadian government regarding land rights. Juxtaposing lushly coloured paintings combined with photographs of Indigenous subjects and legal texts from treaties, the series asserts First Nations' historic and legal connections to the land. It is a powerful starting point to encourage students to create works of their own about the themes of decolonization and reconciliation.

[Download a Teacher Resource Guide on Robert Houle's Art](#)

[Watch a Video on Robert Houle](#)



GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST

Robert Houle
b.1947

Place of Birth:
St. Boniface, Manitoba

Best known for:
Powerful artworks that challenge viewers to reflect on the history of Indigenous Peoples and colonial oppression in Canada

KAZUO NAKAMURA

“Bathed in Blue: Exploring Colour”



Kazuo Nakamura, *Blue Reflections, B.C.*, 1964, oil on canvas, 127 x 160 cm.

The immaculate glow of *Blue Reflections, B.C.*, 1964, is a testament to Kazuo Nakamura’s beautiful explorations with the colour blue. One of several works that he created using a blue/green palette, the painting represents a tranquil scene, a dense forest enclosing a bay, with a single boat breaking through the surface of the water. Born in British Columbia, Nakamura was interned during the Second World War and forced to leave the province. In his later life he believed that there was an underlying structure to the natural world, and he sought to articulate the order and tranquility of the universe despite its moments of chaos. This painting is a fantastic starting point for an artwork that explores the magical qualities of colour.

[Read More about Painters Eleven](#)

[Read More about Kazuo Nakamura](#)



GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST

Kazuo Nakamura
1926–2002

Place of Birth:
Vancouver, British Columbia

Place of Death:
Toronto, Ontario

Best known for:
Harmonious blue/green landscapes and abstract paintings, as well as being a member of the artist group Painters Eleven

PITSEOLAK ASHOONA

“Celebrating My Community”



Pitseolak Ashoona, drawing for print *Summer Camp Scene*, c.1966–76, wax crayon and coloured felt-tip pen on paper, 45.7 x 61.2 cm.

Community is at the heart of Pitseolak Ashoona’s intimate vignettes of life in the Arctic. An iconic Inuk artist, Pitseolak produced thousands of drawings depicting the northern region of Qikiqtaaluk (Baffin Island), representing key principles, practices, and teachings central to Inuit belief systems and principles of knowledge. Community is one of those themes, and many of Pitseolak’s images, including this drawing, focus on the vitality and strength of Inuit women and the work they perform together. In her art, she celebrates the people closest to her, their responsibilities, their games, their traditions, and their land. Compelling and often colourful, her drawings might also be presented as inspiration for student creations centered on their own communities.

[Download a Teacher Resource Guide on Pitseolak Ashoona](#)

[View an Online Exhibition of Pitseolak Ashoona’s Art](#)

[Watch a Video on Pitseolak Ashoona](#)



GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST

Pitseolak Ashoona
c.1904/8–1983

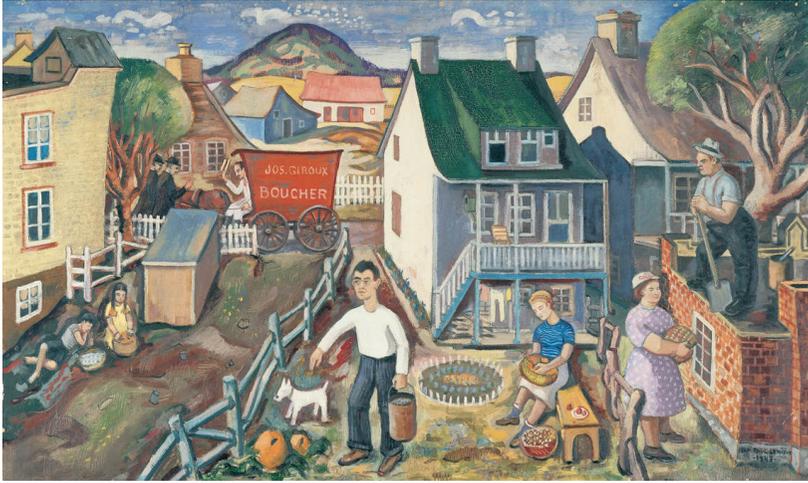
Place of Birth:
Tujakjuak (Nottingham Island)

Place of Death:
Kinngait (Cape Dorset),
Nunavut

Best known for:
Prints and drawings
celebrating Inuit life
and community

JEAN PAUL LEMIEUX

“The View from My Window: Mapping My Neighbourhood”



Jean Paul Lemieux, *Portrait of the Artist at Beauport-Est (Portrait de l'artiste à Beauport-Est)*, 1943, oil on panel, 63.5 x 106.6 cm.

The lively landscapes and cityscapes of Quebec City artist Jean Paul Lemieux paint a vivid picture of the places he knew best and provide a glimpse into the communities he was a part of from the 1930s to the 1980s. His artworks reveal a deep love for the natural environment, and an interest in the transformation of the land into urban space. In 1940, Lemieux and his wife moved out of the city to an old stone house surrounded by gardens, which he recorded in the painting pictured here. This beautiful glimpse of Lemieux's home is an excellent starting point to inspire students to create artworks related to their own immediate surroundings, such as the street they live on, the neighbourhood they live in, or the view from their window.

[Download a Teacher Resource Guide on Jean Paul Lemieux's Art](#)

[Read More about Jean Paul Lemieux](#)



GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST

Jean Paul Lemieux
1904–1990

Place of Birth & Death:
Quebec City, Quebec

Best known for:
Painting in Quebec City and experimenting with representational art

PRUDENCE HEWARD

“Trailblazing Women”



Prudence Heward, *At the Theatre*, 1928, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 101.6 cm.

A prominent painter in the 1920s and 1930s, Prudence Heward celebrated strong, independent women in her vibrant, modern portraits. She was one of the famed Beaver Hall artists, a group working in Montreal who claimed a historic number of women as affiliates, and her art is admired for capturing the spirit of some of the seismic shifts occurring for women in the twentieth century. A great example of her dazzling visual style, *At the Theatre*, 1928, pictures two young women out in public on their own, waiting for a performance to begin. Their independence is noteworthy, and her work more generally is an inspiration for artworks and portraits related to the lives and contributions of women.

[Download a Teacher Resource Guide on Prudence Heward's Art](#)

[Watch a Video on Prudence Heward](#)



GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST

Prudence Heward
1896–1947

Place of Birth:
Montreal, Quebec

Place of Death:
Los Angeles, California

Best known for:
Modern figure paintings
representing women

EDWARD MITCHELL BANNISTER

“The Majesty of Nature”



Edward Mitchell Bannister, *Moonlight Marine*, 1885, oil on canvas, 55.9 x 76.8 cm.

The majesty of nature is front and centre in the dramatic seascapes of nineteenth-century Black Canadian American painter Edward Mitchell Bannister. Born in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, Bannister went on to forge a successful career in the United States, creating many remarkable landscapes and seascapes, several of which depicted coastal towns and communities and the awe-inspiring force of the ocean. *Moonlight Marine*, 1885, is a testament to Bannister’s deep appreciation of the forces of nature. From the movement of the waves to the glow of the moon in the night sky, this painting offers a wealth of inspiring starting points for creating artworks that pay tribute to the natural world.

[Download a Teacher Resource Guide on Edward Mitchell Bannister](#)

[View an Online Exhibition of Edward Mitchell Bannister’s Art](#)



GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST

Edward Mitchell Bannister
c.1828–1901

Place of Birth:
St. Andrews, New Brunswick

Place of Death:
Providence, Rhode Island

Best known for:
Striking landscapes
and seascapes

EMILY CARR

“Environmentalism”



Emily Carr, *Loggers' Culls*, 1935, oil on canvas, 69 x 112.2 cm.

The enchanting paintings of Emily Carr are a beloved cornerstone of Canadian art history. A contemporary of the Group of Seven, Carr is celebrated for her expressive use of colour and her dedication to painting trees, landscapes, and the natural world. What is less commonly known about Carr is that she was an adamant environmentalist, documenting the effects of practices like clearcutting on the landscapes of British Columbia. This painting is a good example of her visual environmentalism: in *Loggers' Culls*, 1935, the tree stumps in the foreground remind us of the importance of advocating for the earth. The work is a compelling starting point for students interested in exploring environmentalism and advocacy in art.

[Download a Teacher Resource Guide on Emily Carr](#)

[Watch a Video on Emily Carr](#)



GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST

Emily Carr
1871–1945

Place of Birth & Death:
Victoria, British Columbia

Best known for:
Dramatic modern paintings
of places in British Columbia

RAJNI PERERA

“Embellished Lenses”



Rajni Perera, *Aneela*, 2017, from the Embellished Lens series, mixed media on paper.

In 2017, Rajni Perera created a series entitled Embellished Lens, a work that references the history of painted photographs in India. This medium was often used as a form of royal spectacle, and Perera suggests that it made “impossible worlds for the exalted and untouchable.” The other-worldly quality of the portraits brings together themes of identity, history, and personal narrative that are rich sources of inspiration for the creation of artworks. Perera’s portrait *Aneela* is a fantastic point of departure for exploring portrait projects that offer fantastical visual depictions that go beyond the photograph.

[Watch a Video with Rajni Perera](#)

[Read a Spotlight Feature on Rajni Perera’s Art](#)



GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST

Rajni Perera
b.1985

Place of Birth:
Sri Lanka

Best known for:
Exploring culture and fantasy
in highly inventive images
and objects