

EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

ART, TRUTH, RECONCILIATION
A CALL FOR CHANGE

As the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation approaches, learn about the work of Indigenous artists across the country and their vital contributions to meaningful change.

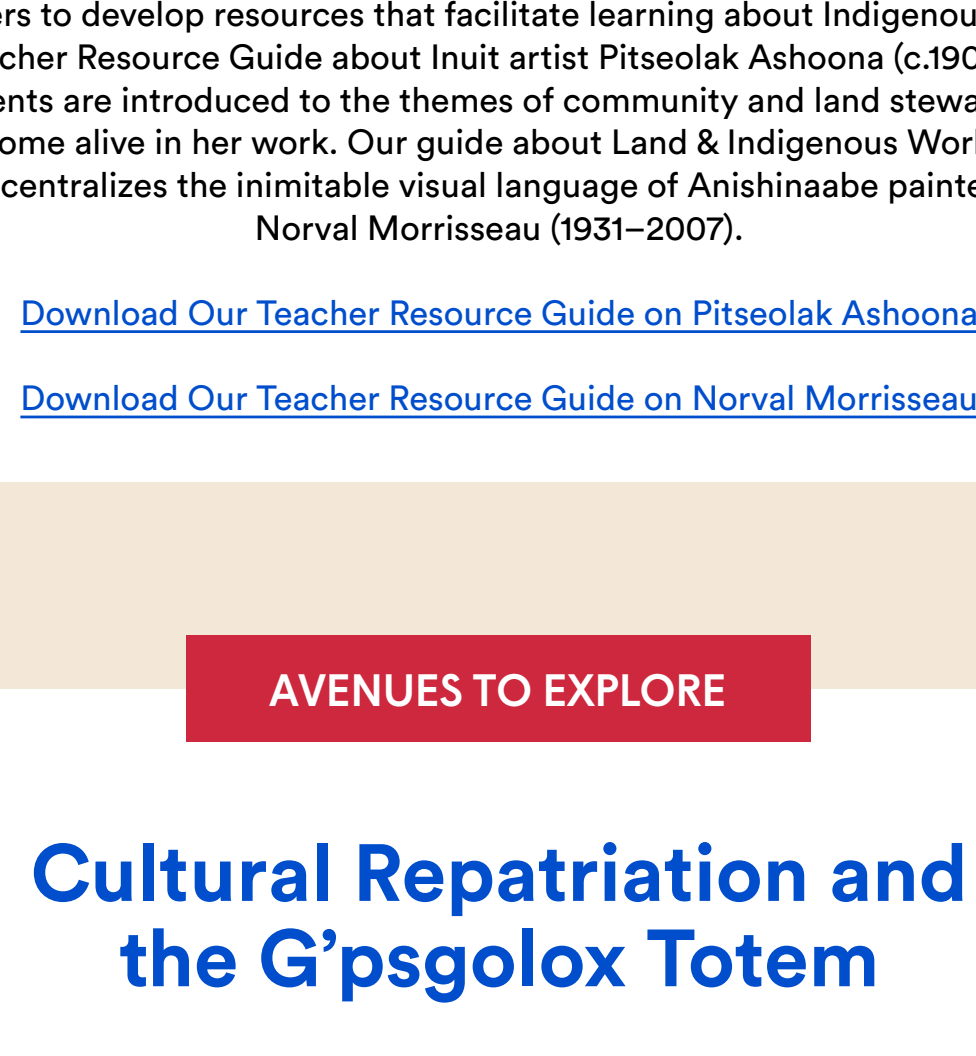


Lori Blondeau, *Asiniy Iskwew*, 2016.

This year, for the first time, Canada will observe September 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to officially reflect on and commemorate the legacy of residential schools in this country. It is a time to honour Indigenous people's strength, which is often apparent in art, as it is in this extraordinary photograph. Saskatchewan-born Cree/Saulteaux/Métis artist Lori Blondeau (b.1964) notes that in her work *Asiniy Iskwew* (Cree for "Rock Woman"), "I stand atop rocks, draped in blood-red velvet cloth, reflecting the resilience of Indigenous cultures." In its capacity to resonate across languages and cultures, visual art is imbued with the ability to tell stories and facilitate conversations. We know that education has a vital role to play in reconciliation, and we hope that this week's selection of resources invites meaningful dialogue.

Lori Blondeau's work was included in the 2017 Scotiabank Contact Photography Festival. Click [here](#) to read more about it.

— The Art Canada Institute Education Team

Connect with Indigenous
Art and Knowledge

Grades 9 to 12
First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies, Visual Arts, and more

We have been privileged to work in collaboration with educators and cultural advisers to develop resources that facilitate learning about Indigenous art. In our Teacher Resource Guide about Inuit artist Pitseolak Ashoona (c.1904–1983), students are introduced to the themes of community and land stewardship that come alive in her work. Our guide about Land & Indigenous Worldviews centralizes the inimitable visual language of Anishinaabe painter Norval Morrisseau (1931–2007).

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

[Download Our Teacher Resource Guide on Norval Morrisseau](#)

AVENUES TO EXPLORE

Cultural Repatriation and
the G'psgolox Totem

Original G'psgolox pole in the yard of the Ethnographic department of the Swedish Royal Museum in the city of Stockholm, 1929.

In 2006, the G'psgolox Totem became the first pole in Canada to be repatriated to its rightful home in the Haisla Nation, in British Columbia. Originally created in 1872, it was commissioned by Chief G'psgolox, but was then sold to the Stockholm Museum of Ethnography under dubious circumstances in 1927. Cultural repatriation is a vital component of the reconciliation process, and the Haisla Nation's advocacy to bring the G'psgolox Totem home is a profound story to learn from and discuss.

[Watch the NFB documentary Totem: The Return of the G'psgolox Pole](#) by Gil Cardinal

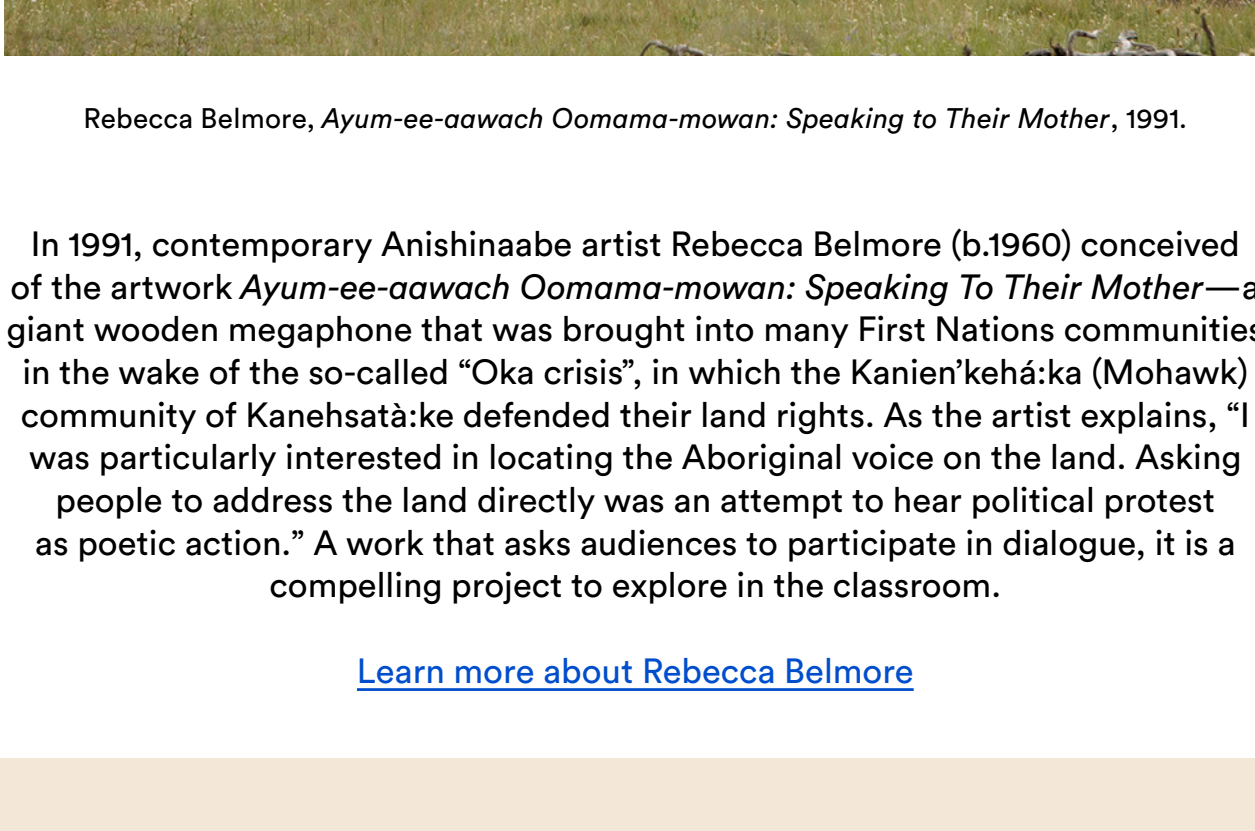
Robert Houle: Making Art
to Decolonize History

Robert Houle, *Sandy Bay*, 1998–99, Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Saulteaux artist Robert Houle (b.1947) has pushed the conversation about reconciliation forward in Canada, creating works that challenge and expose the realities of colonization. As a child, Houle attended residential school in Manitoba, and he later drew on his experiences there to create paintings like *Sandy Bay*, 1998–99. As author Shirley Madill notes, these images reflect "the cultural tradition of telling—remembering, recounting, and recording a difficult experience as a path to healing." They are powerful works to explore with students, and inspiring monuments to resilience.

[Visit our online exhibition Robert Houle: Making Art To Decolonize History](#)

[Download Our Teacher Resource Guide on Robert Houle](#)

Rebecca Belmore: Ayum-ee-
aawach Oomama-mowan
(Speaking To Their Mother)

Rebecca Belmore, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother*, 1991.

In 1991, contemporary Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore (b.1960) conceived of the artwork *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking To Their Mother*—a giant wooden megaphone that was brought into many First Nations communities in the wake of the so-called "Oka crisis", in which the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) community of Kanehsatà:ke defended their land rights. As the artist explains, "I was particularly interested in locating the Aboriginal voice on the land. Asking people to address the land directly was an attempt to hear political protest as poetic action." A work that asks audiences to participate in dialogue, it is a compelling project to explore in the classroom.

[Learn more about Rebecca Belmore](#)

As a bilingual organization, we are proud to offer our materials in both French and English, including this newsletter. Use the sign up links below to receive emails in your preferred language.

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About the
Art Canada Institute

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 who are dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

We are creating a central digital resource to tell the world about Canada's most important works of art and where they are located. By functioning as an online art museum, a [digital library](#), and an interactive Canadian art encyclopedia, the ACI is an indispensable resource on Canada's visual heritage.

Visit us at [aci-iac.ca](#)

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Image Credits: [1] Lori Blondeau, *Asiniy Iskwew*, 2016, inkjet print on vinyl, dimensions variable. [2] Original G'psgolox pole in the yard of the Ethnographic department of the Swedish Royal Museum in the city of Stockholm, 1929. [3] Robert Houle, *Sandy Bay*, 1998–99, oil on canvas, black and white photograph, colour photograph on canvas, Masonite, 300 x 548.4 cm. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, acquired with funds from the President's Appeal 2000 and with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance program (2000-87 a-e). © Robert Houle. [4] Rebecca Belmore, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother*, 1991, performance with sculpture, Johnson Lake, Banff National Park, Canada, 2008. Courtesy Rebecca Belmore and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre, Canada. Photo: Michael Beynon.