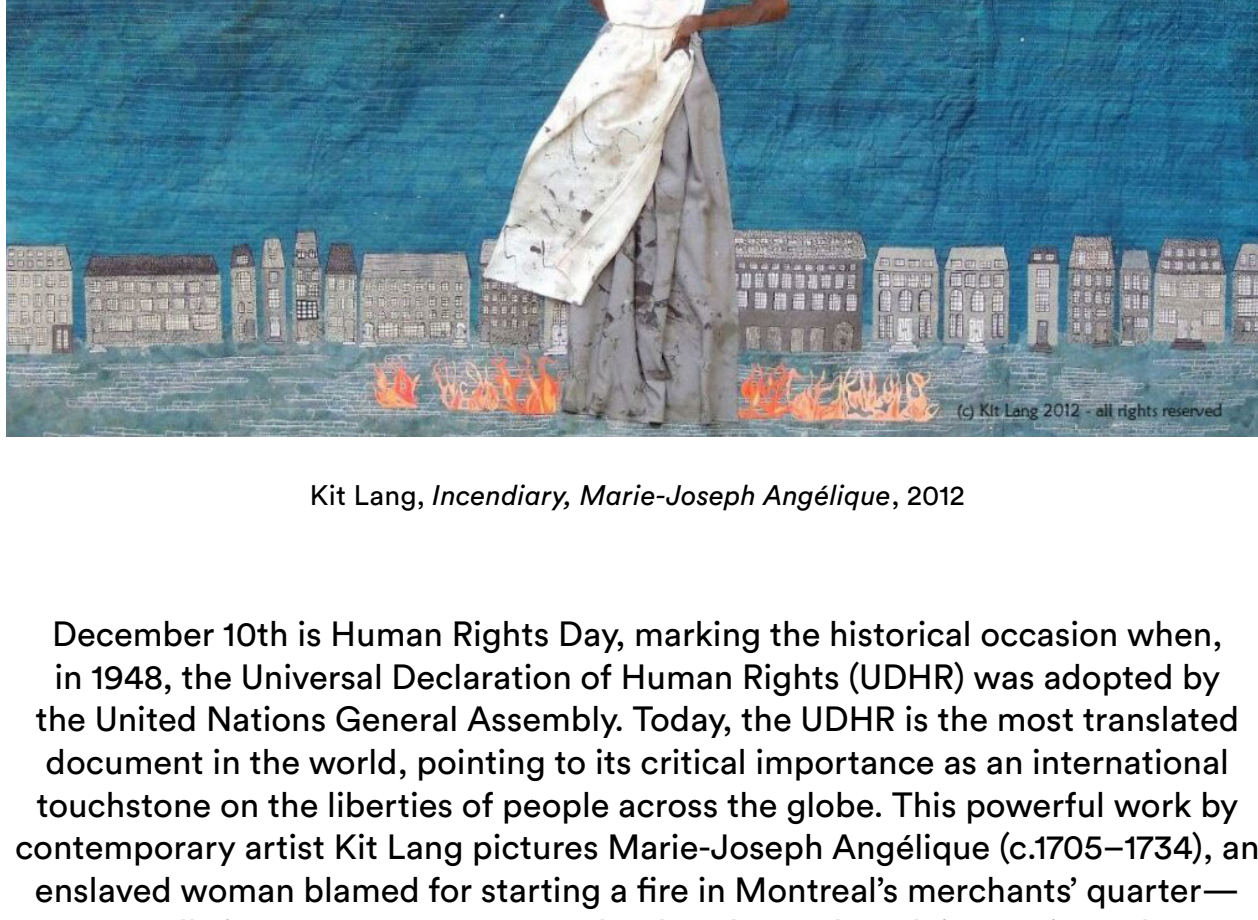


## EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

DIGNITY, FREEDOM, AND JUSTICE FOR ALL  
CANADIAN ART FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Five artists on resistance, advocacy, and representation

Kit Lang, *Incendiary, Marie-Joseph Angélique*, 2012

December 10th is Human Rights Day, marking the historical occasion when, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. Today, the UDHR is the most translated document in the world, pointing to its critical importance as an international touchstone on the liberties of people across the globe. This powerful work by contemporary artist Kit Lang pictures Marie-Joseph Angélique (c.1705–1734), an enslaved woman blamed for starting a fire in Montreal's merchants' quarter—purportedly in an attempt to escape her bondage. Though it remains unknown whether she started the fire, she was convicted and hanged for the crime. From this important reminder of Canada's own history of egregious human rights violations to acts of resistance and representational advocacy, the works we are sharing this week pay tribute to the essential importance of fighting for dignity, freedom, and justice for all.

Learn more about this work in the online exhibition [Black Art Matters here](#).

— The Art Canada Institute Education Team

## AVENUES TO EXPLORE

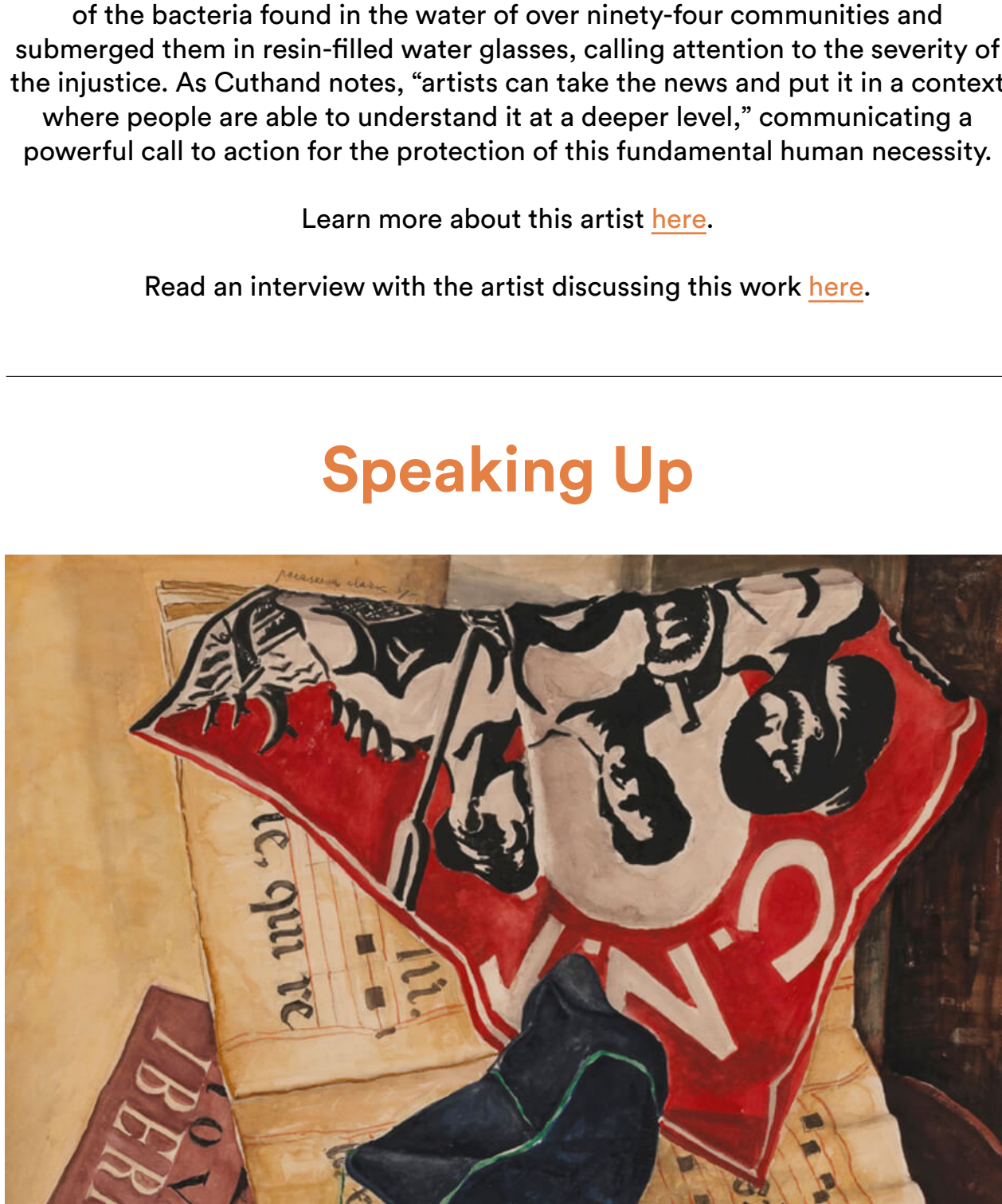
## Resisting Injustice

Zacharie Vincent, *Self-Portrait*, n.d.

Nineteenth-century Huron-Wendat painter Zacharie Vincent (1815–1886) is a unique figure in the history of art in this country. During the time that he was active, many inaccurate and damaging representations of Indigenous people were produced at the hands of settler-colonial artists. Using paint and canvas as tools of defiance, Vincent created a number of powerful self-portraits that celebrate the heritage, lineage, and cultural connections that he held dear—an act of resistance that resonates across generations of historical heroes.

Looking to facilitate classroom discussion about structures of injustice?  
Download our teacher resource guide about  
Systemic Racism and Resistance [here](#).

## Raising Awareness

Ruth Cuthand, *Don't Breathe, Don't Drink*, 2016

Saskatchewan-born artist Ruth Cuthand (b.1954), who is of Plains Cree and Scottish ancestry, created the remarkable installation *Don't Breathe, Don't Drink* in response to the alarming reality of boil water advisories present in many First Nations communities across Canada. For this work, she beaded representations of the bacteria found in the water of over ninety-four communities and submerged them in resin-filled water glasses, calling attention to the severity of the injustice. As Cuthand notes, “artists can take the news and put it in a context where people are able to understand it at a deeper level,” communicating a powerful call to action for the protection of this fundamental human necessity.

Learn more about this artist [here](#).

Read an interview with the artist discussing this work [here](#).

## Speaking Up

Paraskeva Clark, *Presents from Madrid*, 1937

This image by Russian émigré artist Paraskeva Clark (1898–1986) participated in the fight against fascism in the 1930s. Created one year after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), Clark's work features mementoes that the artist received from a contact in the country: a banner of the CNT (*Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*); medieval sheet music; a cap worn by the International Brigades, a military unit of Communist International; and an issue of *Nova Iberia*, an anti-fascist publication. Speaking out is a central component of Clark's interest in the role of the artist as activist and is explored in our learning activity on empathy and personal responsibility, inspired by her work.

Download the learning activity in our Teacher Resource Guide [here](#).

## Reclaiming Representation

Sanaz Mazinani, *Schoolgirls, Shrine of the poet Saadi, Shiraz*, 2006, from the series “Iran Revisited”

Thinking deeply about the core tenets of dignity, freedom, and justice involves a consideration of the right to representation—something that shines through in the photo series “Iran Revisited” by contemporary Iranian Canadian artist Sanaz Mazinani. Opposing the media's misrepresentation of the region and its sensationalist focus on images of conflict, Mazinani states, “the absence of real portraits of Iranians who work hard daily to make their communities better places to live compels me to promote greater understanding of my country of origin.” From portraits of family and community to photographs of students enjoying a school trip, Mazinani's series introduces the critical component of representational autonomy back into the visual landscape of contemporary Iran.

Learn more about this artist [here](#).

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.

SIGN UP

S'INSCRIRE

If you enjoyed this newsletter, please share it.

SHARE

READ PAST NEWSLETTERS

## 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](#)

## Thank You to Our Benefactors

We gratefully acknowledge the Founding Sponsors of  
The Canadian Schools Art Education Program:  
The Hal Jackman Foundation, The McLean Foundation,  
and Power Corporation of Canada.

The ACI is a not-for-profit educational charity that receives no government financing or public support. Our work is made possible by an important circle of [friends, patrons, and benefactors](#).

If you would like to support our important work, please see [this page](#).

Follow us on social media



Facebook  
[artcaninstituteeducation/](#)



Instagram  
[@artcaninstitute\\_education](#)



Twitter  
[@ArtCanInstEdu](#)

Image Credits: [1] Kit Lang, *Incendiary, Marie-Joseph Angélique*, 2012, mixed media. © Kit Lang. [2] Zacharie Vincent, *Self-Portrait*, n.d., oil on paper, 62.5 x 53 cm. Collection of the Musée de la civilisation, Québec City. [3] Ruth Cuthand, *Don't Breathe, Don't Drink*, 2016, 112 vessels with glass beads and resin, hand-beaded blue tarpaulin tablecloth, and 10 MDF “gas board” panels, installed dimensions variable. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, purchase, with funds from Karen Schreiber and Marie Schreiber through The American Friends of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Inc., 2017. © Ruth Cuthand. Photo courtesy of dc3 Art Projects. [4] Paraskeva Clark, *Presents from Madrid*, 1937, watercolour over graphite on wove paper, 51.5 x 62 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, purchase, 1980 (23666). © Clive and Benedict Clark. Photo credit: National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. [5] Sanaz Mazinani, *Schoolgirls, Shrine of the poet Saadi, Shiraz*, 2006, from the series “Iran Revisited”. Copyright: Sanaz Mazinani / courtesy of Stephen Bulger Gallery.