



TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE  
FOR GRADES 9–12

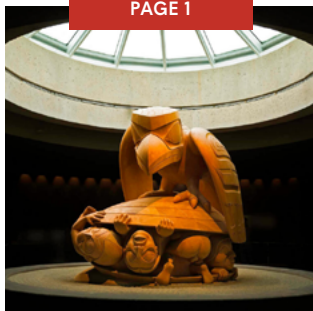
LEARN ABOUT  
**WAYS OF KNOWING**  
*through the art of*  
**ILJUWAS BILL REID**

ART CANADA INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN



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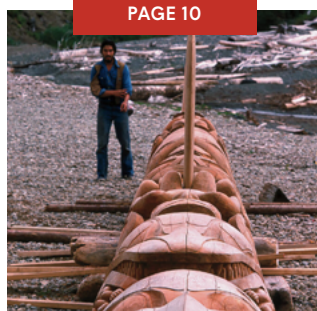
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### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

READ ONLINE



### ILJUWAS BILL REID: LIFE & WORK BY GERALD MCMASTER

DOWNLOAD



### ILJUWAS BILL REID IMAGE FILE

## RESOURCE OVERVIEW

*This teacher resource guide has been written to complement the Art Canada Institute online art book [Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work](#) by Gerald McMaster. The artworks within this guide and images required for the learning activities and culminating task can be found in the [Iljuwas Bill Reid Image File](#) provided.*

Iljuwas Bill Reid (1920–1998) is one of the most significant Northwest Coast art figures from the second half of the twentieth century, remembered as a skilled jeweller, a master carver, and a passionate advocate for Haida ways of seeing, making, and knowing. Over the course of his career, Reid embarked on a journey of discovery to reconnect with his Haida heritage, learning about the tools, carving practices, and stories that united him with the cultural knowledge he was eager to cultivate. This Teacher Resource Guide focuses on the theme “Ways of Knowing” through three thematic activities exploring different forms of knowledge transfer that were central to Reid’s life and work: learning through objects and tools; learning through making; and learning through land and community. Inspired by the work of this iconic maker, students will gain a deeper appreciation for the wisdom present in their own lives, families, and communities.

### Curriculum Connections

- Grades 9–12 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Studies
- Grades 9–12 Visual Arts
- Grades 9–12 English Language Arts
- Grades 9–12 Social Studies
- Grades 9–12 History

### Themes

- Cultural Heritage
- Northwest Coast Art
- Ancestral Knowledge
- Apprenticeship
- Community



Fig 1. Bill Reid, *The Raven and the First Men*, 1980. One of Reid’s most iconic large-scale works depicts a Haida creation story.

### Teaching Exercises

The exercises in this guide explore the theme “Ways of Knowing” as represented in artworks by Iljuwas Bill Reid.

- Learning Activity #1 – The Knowledge of Ancestors: Learning Through Objects and Tools ([page 4](#))
- Learning Activity #2 – The Knowledge of Elders: Learning Through Making ([page 8](#))
- Culminating Task – The Knowledge of Place: Learning Through Land and Community ([page 10](#))

### A Note on Using This Guide

Iljuwas Bill Reid engaged with visual knowledge systems that were culturally specific to the Haida community that his ancestors and family members belonged to and that he learned from. While this guide is oriented towards learning about Reid and the Haida ways of knowing that he was connected to, the student work and projects that are generated through the learning activities should be specific to students’ own cultural contexts. Many Haida visual motifs, themes, and styles come with heraldic rights, so teachers are urged to discourage any form of visual appropriation or replication by students who are not connected to Haida visual knowledge through their communities.

Lastly, part of the biographical and historical context that students will be engaging with in Learning Activity #1 involves discussions of the colonial violence that had a profound impact on intergenerational knowledge transference in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Teachers are urged to approach this subject matter with care.



## WHO WAS ILJUWAS BILL REID?



Fig 2. Bill Reid carving in Skidegate, 1976.

**Iljuwas Bill Reid (1920–1998) was born on January 12, 1920, in Victoria, British Columbia.** He belonged to the Raven-Wolf Clan of the Haida Nation. His father, William Reid (1884–1943), originally from Detroit, moved to Canada where he managed a hotel and met Reid's mother, Sophie Gladstone (1895–1985), a member of the Haida community. Sophie's upbringing had been devastatingly affected by the context of the Indian Act and the federal government's colonial attempts at assimilation, and as a result Reid and his siblings were raised without learning the Haida language or their mother's cultural traditions.

**Reid's childhood was split between Stewart, B.C., and Hyder, Alaska,** where his father worked and where Reid attended school. In 1932, William's business closed due to the Great Depression, and Reid moved back to Victoria, B.C., with his siblings and mother, who ran a dress shop there to support the family.

**During his school years,** Reid was exposed to a wide range of visual practices that would come to inform his own in later years. After graduating from high school, he enrolled in a general arts program at Victoria College (1936–37). In 1948, he moved to Toronto to pursue a position in radio broadcasting at the CBC. While there, he took goldsmithing classes at the Ryerson Institute of Technology (now Toronto Metropolitan University), beginning to master skills in jewelry-making and metalwork. His twenties also saw him beginning the process of reconnecting with his Haida heritage, visiting his relatives in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii—where his mother had grown up—and studying the Haida pole displayed in the stairwell of the Royal Ontario Museum.

**In the 1950s, Reid settled back on the West Coast** with his wife and their small child. He continued to seek out knowledge of his Haida roots, eventually getting the opportunity to learn directly from the Elder and master carver Naka'pankam (Mungo Martin) (1879–1962). This experience led to Reid's first large-scale carving work, propelling him to leave his job at the CBC and to pursue carving full time.

**By the 1970s, after stretches of time in London, U.K., and Montreal,** Reid had returned to the West Coast, where he took on major commissions. These included the creation of the *Skidegate Dogfish Pole* in 1978, which he carved in honour of his mother's ancestral home and community; a large-scale carving for the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 1980; and a monumental canoe for Expo 86 in Vancouver. This late period in the artist's career was pivotal in cementing his reputation as one of the most important contemporary artists in the country.

Iljuwas Bill Reid died on March 13, 1998, after living with Parkinson's disease for over two decades. Thankfully, Reid passed on the knowledge he had gained in carving and jewelry-making to younger generations of creators in the community, ensuring that the wisdom he cultivated over the course of his lifetime continues to resonate to this day.



Fig 3. Bill Reid, *Killer Whale Brooch*, c.1952–53. The Killer Whale appears in much of Reid's work, as in this delicately carved sterling silver brooch.



Fig 4. Bill Reid watching memorial pole being raised in the *Haida Village* at Totem Park at the University of British Columbia, 1962.



Fig 5. *Loo Taas* being paddled at the opening of the Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay, 2007.

## NATIONAL &amp; WORLD EVENTS



Fig 6. A view of the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67, 1967. The murals were painted by Francis Kagige. The Kwakiutl totem pole was carved by Tony and Henry Hunt.



Fig 7. Bill Reid seated beside *The Raven and the First Men* at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, c.1980.



Fig 8. *Loo Taas* at False Creek, Vancouver during Expo 86, 1986.

British Columbia ..... **1871**  
becomes part of Canada.

On April 12, 1876, the Indian Act  
is passed in Canada. .... **1876**

The potlatch ban, a devastating  
colonial mechanism introduced by  
the Canadian government as an  
1884 amendment to the Indian Act,  
is brought into effect; it prohibits  
Indigenous ceremonies, including  
the Potlatch, until 1951. .... **1885**

The Great Depression begins,  
marking a period of severe  
global economic depression  
that lasts until 1939. .... **1929**  
..... **1932**

The Canadian Broadcasting  
Corporation (CBC) is founded. .... **1936**

The Museum of Anthropology  
at UBC is founded. .... **1947**  
..... **1948**

Expo 67 is held in Montreal from  
April 27 – October 29. .... **1950s**  
..... **1967**  
..... **1968**

Greenpeace, an important  
environmental advocacy  
organization, is formed  
in Vancouver. .... **1971**  
..... **1972**

The Canadian Human Rights  
Commission is created. .... **1976**  
..... **1977**

Expo 86 is held in Vancouver  
from May 2 – October 13. .... **1980-1986**  
..... **1986**

**1998**

## ILJUWAS BILL REID'S LIFE

Iljuwas Bill Reid is born in Victoria,  
B.C., on January 12, 1920.

Owing to the Great Depression,  
Sophie moves Reid and his siblings,  
Peggy and Robert, back to Victoria,  
where she establishes her own  
dress shop to support the family.

Reid joins CBC Toronto as a news  
announcer. He takes goldsmithing  
classes at the Ryerson Institute of  
Technology (now Toronto  
Metropolitan University).

Reid and his wife settle  
in Vancouver with their young  
child, Amanda.

Reid moves to London to study  
at the Central School of Art  
and Design for one year. He  
subsequently moves to Montreal,  
where he lives for three years.

Reid moves back to Vancouver.  
In the mid-1970s, Reid meets  
Martine de Widerspach-Thor,  
whom he later marries.

Reid begins carving the  
*Skidegate Dogfish Pole*,  
which is completed in 1978.

Throughout the 1980s, Reid takes  
on major public and community  
commissions.

Iljuwas Bill Reid dies on  
March 13, 1998. His ashes are  
buried in his grandmother's  
ancestral village of T'aanuu.



Fig 9. Bill Reid with his mother and father, 1920.



Fig 10. Bill Reid at the CBC, 1950. Reid began taking goldsmithing classes while working as an announcer for the CBC.



Fig 11. Bill Reid, *Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, 1986. This is the most complex and best known of Bill Reid's sculptures.

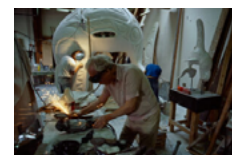


Fig 12. Bill Reid working on *Skaana—Killer Whale, Chief of the Undersea World*, c.1983–84. Reid employed methods traditionally used by Haida artists to develop his large-scale works.

## LEARNING ACTIVITY #1

THE KNOWLEDGE OF ANCESTORS:  
LEARNING THROUGH OBJECTS AND TOOLS

This activity focuses on ancestral knowledge as a way of connecting with cultural and family heritage. For Iljuwas Bill Reid, interacting with objects and tools that belonged to his great-great uncle Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw) became a significant gateway for learning more about his Haida cultural lineage, and the legacy of carving that was present for generations in his family. At the same time, as author Gerald McMaster points out, Reid's journey unfolded at a historical moment when the Canadian government was trying to "eradicate the continuation of Haida traditional ways" by implementing devastating policies and practices. In this activity, students will consider the restraints of Canada's cultural and political context in this period, before exploring the time-honoured importance of ancestral knowledge as a way of accessing cultural wisdom and how that knowledge can be facilitated through object-based learning.

## Big Idea

Understanding ancestral knowledge

## Learning Goals

1. I can understand different approaches to learning about cultural heritage.
2. I can analyze and discuss a critical text.
3. I can reflect on a theme relevant to my own cultural context.
4. I can work collaboratively to produce a final project that demonstrates my understanding of the importance of objects to people and place.



Fig 13. Iljuwas Bill Reid with his tools in Skidegate, 1976.

## Materials

- [Iljuwas Bill Reid Image File](#)
- [Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work](#)
- "Who was Iljuwas Bill Reid?" biographic information sheet ([page 2](#))
- Pens, pencils, paper
- Computers and internet access
- Audio recording equipment

## Process

1. Start by introducing students to Iljuwas Bill Reid through the biographical handout included in this guide.



Fig 14. Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw) with his works in Masset, British Columbia, c.1890.

*Learning activity #1 Continued*

2. Once students have taken in this context, move into a presentation on the importance of ancestral knowledge in Reid's life through an exploration of a series of objects that held sacred importance to him. Project the following images in the classroom, using the Image File:

- Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw), Bracelet, 1909
- Iljuwas Bill Reid, Bracelet, 1955
- Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw), Bracelet, c.1885
- Iljuwas Bill Reid, *Hinged Raven Bracelet*, c.1955



Fig 15. Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw), Bracelet, 1909. Bracelets have significance in Haida culture as worn, visual indicators of oral knowledge and family lineages.



Fig 16. Bill Reid, Bracelet, 1955. Reid regarded bracelets as integral to his practice and study of Haida forms.



Fig 17. Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw), Bracelet, c.1885. Reid was captivated by Haida design after encountering gold bracelets by Daxhiigang.



Fig 18. Bill Reid, *Hinged Raven Bracelet*, c.1955. This bracelet depicts the Raven (Xhuuya), a cultural hero and trickster in Haida stories.

Ask students to consider the following questions as they are looking at the images:

- What similarities do you see between these images?
- What do you notice about the design and materials used in creating these objects?
- Where do you think you would find these objects?



## Learning activity #1 Continued

3. As students continue to look at the images, appoint student readers to share the following two quotes from author Gerald McMaster's book *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work* on the importance of the bracelets and the tools that were used to carve them:

**Ancestral Objects** - "When news came of his grandfather's death in 1954, Reid returned to Skidegate. There he found a half-finished bracelet on his grandfather's workbench and completed it in time for the funeral. In another equally profound moment, he encountered two gold bracelets by Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw) [Reid's great-great uncle]; for Reid, "the world was not the same after that." Reid began to understand his artistic and cultural inheritance and his responsibility for its continuation. These bracelets became integral to his practice and study of Haida forms. In each art object he began to see 'a frozen universe filled with latent energy.'"

**Ancestral Tools** - "Over the course of his career, Bill Reid developed a sophisticated relationship with his tools, and his ideas about them help us understand his methodologies and beliefs. He possessed some of the tools that had been made and used by his great-great uncle Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw), such as his engraving tool dating from about 1880. For Reid, not only did these tools have an accumulated history and contain knowledge, but they also embodied the Elder's spirit. Either the blade or the handle of the tool could be replaced, but never both at the same time, since this would result in 'losing what the tool knows, which is its potential to work forward while possessing its accumulated past.'"



Fig 19. Bill Reid carving a clay model of the sculpture *Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, 1986.

4. Next, assign a short reading exercise about the cultural and political context of Canada that Reid was working in at the start of his career. Have them review the book section entitled "Canadian Political and Cultural Dynamics" in the "Significance & Critical Issues" chapter of *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work*. As they are reading, have students consider the following questions:

- What is your understanding of the following three colonial mechanisms?
  - *The Indian Act*
  - *The Residential School System*
  - *The Potlatch Ban*
- What were the implications of these three colonial systems for Indigenous cultural practices?
- How was Iljuwas Bill Reid affected by these political and cultural dynamics at the beginning of his career?

Once students have had a chance to individually reflect on the reading passage and corresponding questions, have the students discuss their reflections in pairs, with guidance from the teacher.



## Learning activity #1 Continued

5. Students have now thought about the significance of ancestral knowledge to Iljuwas Bill Reid—as well as important social context. Next, task students with selecting an object that holds ancestral significance for them. This could be an object that belonged to a family member, or it could be an object that allowed them to learn something about their family or heritage.

6. Have students make a short 3–4 minute recording telling the story of their object. Guiding questions might include:

- What is this object, and how did you come across it?
- What story does it tell?
- Why does it hold special significance to you?
- What connection does this object hold to your ancestry?

Create a class podcast or blog where students can share their recordings, and images of their chosen objects if they wish.



Fig 20. Bill Reid, *Dogfish Brooch*, c.1959. The dogfish is a common symbol in Haida culture.



Fig 21. Bill Reid, *Tschumos Brooch*, 1956. This brooch belonged to Bill Reid's mother, Sophie Reid (née Gladstone).

## LEARNING ACTIVITY #2

## THE KNOWLEDGE OF ELDERS: LEARNING THROUGH MAKING

As Gerald McMaster notes, “At the core of his practice, it was Reid’s fundamental aim, as he put it, to produce a ‘well-made object, equal only to the joy in making it.’” Learning Activity #1 focused on the ways in which Reid acquired knowledge about his cultural heritage and his ancestors—people who he never got a chance to meet—through sacred objects and tools. This learning activity explores the carving skills that Reid acquired from Elders in his community—people who he was able to learn from in person. Starting with a consideration of the apprenticeship model through Reid’s learning experience with Naka’pankam (Mungo Martin) (1879–1962), who reinvigorated his commitment to “upholding the stories and traditions of his culture” through the practice of carving, students will then reflect on skill acquisition in their own lives and community contexts, highlighting a meaningful process that they have learned from a trusted relative, friend, teacher, or community member.

## Big Idea

Learning through apprenticeship

## Learning Goals

1. I can understand different approaches to apprenticeship.
2. I can reflect on the importance of apprenticeship in different cultural contexts.
3. I can analyze a work of art using proper terminology.
4. I can create a visual representation of a skill that is important to me.

## Materials

- [Iljuwas Bill Reid Image File](#)
- [Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work](#)
- Art materials
- White board
- Pens, pencils, chart paper

## Process

1. Begin with a class brainstorm on the word “apprenticeship.” Give students 5–10 minutes to think of associations and definitions of this term, using the following guiding questions.
  - What do you understand the word “apprenticeship” to mean? What do you think it involves?
  - Have you, or has someone you know, ever had an apprenticeship?
  - What do you think we can learn through apprenticeships?



Fig 22. Bill Reid holding *Killer Whale*, 1982, c.1982. The tiny boxwood sculpture pictured here inspired Reid’s monumental bronze *Skaana—Killer Whale, Chief of the Undersea World*.



Fig 23. Bill Reid carving the *Skidegate Dogfish Pole*, c.1976.

## Learning activity #2 Continued

2. Next, have students consider a skill that they have learned or acquired through “apprenticing.” Guiding questions may include:

- What are some of the cultural values that impact the acquisition of a skill?
- Beyond the step-by-step process of learning how to do something, what else do you learn when you are acquiring a new skill?
- Think about a process that you yourself have learned and reflect on the context around it. For example, what stories come to mind when you think about acquiring the skill? What language or form of communication was used? Who was involved in teaching and showing you? Why is this skill important to you?



Fig 24. Bill Reid, *Haida Village*, 1958–62, 1966. *Haida Village* was installed at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and stands today as a showcase of Haida-style poles.

3. Give a presentation on the importance of apprenticeship in Iljuwas Bill Reid’s career. The book chapter entitled “Significance & Critical Issues” will be helpful in developing the presentation, and guiding points might include:

- Telling the story of Iljuwas Bill Reid’s connection to Naka’pankam, described in the “Significance & Critical Issues” chapter of *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work*.
- Highlighting that knowledge acquisition from a living Elder is different from the ancestral knowledge explored in Learning Activity #1.
- Exploring Gerald McMaster’s description of “apprenticeship” in the context of Haida culture.

4. Now that students have a solid understanding of the apprenticeship model, explore one of Reid’s major large-scale carving projects, *Haida Village*, 1958–62. He worked on this project after learning carving skills directly from Naka’pankam, whose teachings in the apprenticeship model have had a ripple effect on generations of Haida carvers:

5. As a final project, show students the following self-portrait Iljuwas Bill Reid created—one of the rare examples of self-portraiture in his work—in which he depicts himself carving with his ancestors watching over him:

- Iljuwas Bill Reid, Self-portrait illustration, 1965, from *Raven’s Cry* (1965), by Christie Harris

Have students create informal self-portrait sketches of their own, representing them learning a skill that is important to them, and taking into consideration the different aspects of learning explored in Steps 1 and 2.

6. To accompany their self-portraits, have students submit a short, written reflection on the significance of their skill and what learning in the apprenticeship model means in their own personal contexts.



Fig 25. Bill Reid, Self-portrait illustration, 1965, from *Raven’s Cry* (1965) by Christie Harris.



Fig 26. Cover of *Raven’s Cry* (1965) by Christie Harris. *Raven’s Cry* is a fictionalized account of Haida history that includes a character based on Reid.

## CULMINATING TASK

## THE KNOWLEDGE OF PLACE: LEARNING THROUGH LAND AND COMMUNITY

Central to Iljuwas Bill Reid's understanding of his ancestry, cultural heritage, and family was experiencing the places and sites that held sacred importance to the Haida. A visit to Skidegate, the community of his maternal family line, was pivotal in Reid's journey to understanding and becoming more connected to his Haida roots. He also became a master at pole carving, a practice that connects materials generated from the land, skills in Haida carving traditions, and the crucial importance of place and site. In this activity, students will explore the knowledge embedded in materials, community, and place through a consideration of Reid's master work, the *Skidegate Dogfish Pole*. Starting with a consideration of the pole itself and the materials and tools used in carving it, students will embark on a creative writing work that pays tribute to an important place in their own communities.

### Big Idea

Learning from land and community

#### Learning Goals

1. I understand the importance of materials in art making.
2. I can consider the culturally specific practice of pole carving in the Haida context.
3. I can reflect on the significance of the land in building community.
4. I can pay tribute to my community in a creative project, with a creative writing component.

#### Success Criteria

To be added to, reduced, or changed in collaboration with students.

1. You demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the historical and cultural context being presented through question responses, brainstorming, and analysis.
2. Participation in discussion demonstrates respectful listening, exchange, and collaborative learning.
3. The final project, including your poem and brainstorm, demonstrates your knowledge of the creative writing process and meaningful engagement with the response questions, with a focus on land and community.

### Materials

- [Iljuwas Bill Reid Image File](#)
- [Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work](#)
- Art materials and writing materials
- Internet connection and A/V equipment

### Process

1. Start with a discussion of site-specific knowledge, having students consider the following questions:
  - What can we learn by visiting a geographical place in person?
  - Can you think of a trip or visit to a specific location that resonated with you in terms of understanding something about your family, community, or culture?



Fig 27. Haida Gwaii community members carrying the *Skidegate Dogfish Pole*, 1978.



## Culminating Task Continued

2. Introduce students to the story of Reid's visit to his mother's community and ancestral home through a consideration of his trips to Skidegate [see the Biography and Significance & Critical Issues chapters of *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work*]. Reinforce the importance of these early visits in Reid's journey to connect with his family and cultural heritage.
3. Next, consider the ways in which Reid was able to express his understanding of place, land, and the natural materials it generates, through a consideration of the 1971 poem he wrote in tribute to cedar trees—an important material in many of his carvings. Appoint student readers to engage the class through a reading of the poem:

Oh, the cedar tree!  
 If mankind in his infancy  
 Had prayed for the perfect substance  
 For all material and aesthetic needs  
 An indulgent god could have provided  
 Nothing better. Beautiful in itself,  
 With a magnificent flared base  
 Tapering suddenly to a tall, straight trunk  
 Wrapped in reddish brown bark,  
 Like a great coat of gentle fur,  
 Gracefully sweeping boughs,  
 Soft feathery fronds of gray green needles.  
 Huge, some of these cedars,  
 Five hundred years of slow growth,  
 Towering from their massive bases.

4. One of Reid's most important carving projects was the *Skidegate Dogfish Pole*, which was carved out of cedar. Project the photographs of the pole raising ceremony from the Image File to introduce students to the pole, emphasizing the role of community involved in creating and erecting it.



Fig 28. *Skidegate Dogfish Pole* raising ceremony in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, 1978. The raising ceremony was a community endeavour involving a two-day potlatch and the production of new regalia.



Fig 29. *Skidegate Dogfish Pole* raising ceremony in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, 1978.



Fig 30. *Skidegate Dogfish Pole* raising ceremony in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, 1978.



Fig 31. Rooftop cheer after *Skidegate Dogfish Pole* raising (left to right: Ernie Wilson, Phil Gladstone, Wes Pearson), 1978.

*Culminating Task Continued*

5. Reid's knowledge of carving totems grew over time and through his connections with community and place. To contextualize the time-honoured importance of totem carving in Haida tradition more broadly, show students the following learning video featuring James Hart, a student of Reid's and one of the most senior carvers living and working today, speaking about one of his own cedar carvings:

[https://www.sfu.ca/brc/online\\_exhibits/jim-hart-salmon-screen.html](https://www.sfu.ca/brc/online_exhibits/jim-hart-salmon-screen.html)

As they watch, have them write down their impressions on chart paper based on the following three categories:

- The role of ancestry
- The role of family and community
- The importance of materials

6. In order to integrate Reid's own voice into the classroom, project the following quote from Reid about the role and importance of community in his creation of the *Skidegate Dogfish Pole*—a project that he described as a way of giving back to the community:

"It is a gesture of thanks on my part to all the great carvers, and all the people who supported them in the past. For the last eight thousand years, at least, people have been carrying on the art of the Haidas on these islands. And it is that heritage that I drew on to do whatever little things that I have been able, to perpetuate this great art form."

7. Creation of tribute poems: inspired by Reid's poem to the cedar tree, have students integrate thinking about place-based knowledge by writing a poem that gives thanks to a place and a community that holds significance and meaning for them. Let students know that they will be submitting a written copy of their poem along with answers to the brainstorming questions below, and that they will be invited to read their poems aloud (optional).

The poem should function as a gesture of thanks in tribute to the land associated with their chosen place, and the community that they associate it with. To assist students in brainstorming their poems, have them start with a series of open-ended questions:

- When you think of a community that is important to you, what comes to mind? Who is part of that community?
- What place or space do you associate with that community? Where is that place located?
- What do you know about the land connected with your chosen place? What natural elements do you appreciate about the environment surrounding your chosen place?
- Why is this place important to you? What does it teach you?

8. As an optional community component for this culminating activity, take students to an outdoor space that is connected to the school community or neighbourhood (for example, a nearby park or campus space). Invite students to share their poems in a gathering outdoors.



Fig 32. Skidegate longhouse designed by Rudy Kovach (left) with totem pole by Bill Reid (right), 1978.



Fig 33. Rudy Kovach, *The Skidegate Project*, 1977. In this painting, the artist envisions the *Skidegate Dogfish Pole* raised in situ, one year before the pole was completed.

## HOW ILJUWAS BILL REID MADE ART: STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Here are a few of the important artistic concepts that characterized the art of Iljuwas Bill Reid.

For more information see the [Style & Technique chapter](#) of *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work* by Gerald McMaster.

### HAIDA VISUAL KNOWLEDGE

As author Gerald McMaster describes, “Visual knowledge, like medicine, hunting, storytelling, or architecture, is a form of intelligence that is learned, practiced, and refined over time. Its purpose is to preserve memories and local knowledge, which are passed on through family and community.” For Iljuwas Bill Reid, Haida visual knowledge was learned through close study of the designs of Haida artists, including those of his ancestors. One of the unique features of his work is its combination of this visual knowledge with European fabrication techniques—a reflection of his own dual heritage and his position of working in the “contact zone” between Western and Haida worldviews.



Fig 34. Bill Reid, *The Final Exam*, 1964. Reid made this small silver box while studying collections of Haida art.



Fig 35. Bill Reid, *Cedar Screen*, 1968. This was Reid's first large-scale attempt to combine multiple mythic narratives in a rectilinear relief panel instead of a linear panel or pole.

### JEWELLER AND GOLDSMITH

Jewelry has been important to Haida culture for centuries, and for Iljuwas Bill Reid, it was a gateway into learning about his heritage. Reid's jewelry training began in Toronto, where he attended goldsmithing classes at the Ryerson Institute of Technology (now Toronto Metropolitan University) and learned European jewelry-making and metalworking techniques. Eventually, he incorporated Haida designs into his gold and silver work, mastering precise, small-scale carving. Tools were a significant component of Reid's jewelry practice, and he took great care to honour his ancestral tools, believing that they accumulated history and knowledge that evolved over time.

### LARGE-SCALE CARVING

Later in his career, Iljuwas Bill Reid created large-scale wood carvings that were made from materials like cedar. He learned to carve through the apprenticeship model that was central in Haida culture, spending time with master carver Naka'pankan (Mungo Martin) to gain skills in working on a larger scale. To accommodate the creation of monumental works like totem poles, Reid often placed the raw materials he was working with horizontally, and he adopted a “backstroke” carving direction that is unique to Northwest Coast tools. This method requires carvers to pull the tool towards themselves, rather than to push it away.

### RELATIONSHIPS AND MENTORSHIPS

As author Gerald McMaster notes, in Iljuwas Bill Reid's body of work, “Each project relied on, or resulted in, relationships with other makers, scholars, or art world professionals.” From his dedication to learning through the objects, designs, and tools of his ancestors, to his apprenticeship with Haida carvers like Naka'pankan (Mungo Martin) and his collaborative work with peers, Reid can be understood as an artist who was always working in relation. He brought forward the skills he learned from Elders later in his career, mentoring the next generation of Haida carvers.



Fig 36. Bill Reid, *Spirit of Haida Gwaii: The Black Canoe*, 1991. This work appears in the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Supplementary Materials Provided by the Art Canada Institute

- The online art book *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work* by Gerald McMaster: <https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/iljuwas-bill-reid>
- [Iljuwas Bill Reid Image File](#) with artworks and images related to this lesson.
- “Who Was Iljuwas Bill Reid?” biographic information sheet ([page 2](#))
- Timelines of national and world events and Artist Name’s life ([page 3](#))
- “How Iljuwas Bill Reid Made Art: Style & Technique” information sheet ([page 13](#))

## 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](#).

### Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw) (Haida, 1839–1920)

One of the most renowned Haida artists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Daxhiigang is known for creating extraordinary argillite carvings, silver bracelets, and, with his wife, Isasbella Edenshaw, woven baskets and hats. Highly innovative, his works draw on Haida traditions while responding to modern colonialism.

### Naka’pankam (Mungo Martin) (Kwakwaka’wakw, 1879–1962)

A leading Kwakwaka’wakw artist, Naka’pankam was known principally as a carver. Despite the oppressive potlatch ban, he maintained traditions of carving, creating new totem poles and overseeing the totem pole restoration program at the University of British Columbia. He became a mentor to several artists, including Henry Hunt and Iljuwas Bill Reid.

### Potlatch

From the Chinook word *patshatl*, the potlatch is a ceremony integral to the governing structure, culture, and spiritual traditions of various First Nations living on the Northwest Coast and in parts of the interior western Subarctic. It redistributes wealth; confers status and rank upon individuals, kin groups, and clans; and establishes claims to names, powers, and rights to hunting and fishing territories. Potlatches called on the skills of cultural practitioners such as singers, dancers, sculptors, weavers, and storytellers, thereby retaining and supporting the lived integrity and cultural richness of these communities and the relations among them.

### Potlatch Ban

As an 1884 amendment to the Indian Act, the potlatch ban was effective from 1885 to 1951. The ban deepened the devastating effects of government control over Northwest Coast and western Subarctic Indigenous groups. Colonists and missionaries saw the sharing of wealth that took place at potlatches to be excessive and wasteful, and understood that forbidding a practice that was integral to Indigenous cultures would advance the erasure of these cultures. In 1921, Chief Dan Cranmer’s six-day potlatch resulted in the arrest of fifty people, jail sentences for twenty-two, and the forced surrender of countless cultural objects that became part of colonial museum collections.



Fig 37. Bill Reid, *Killer Whale Box with Beaver and Human*, 1971. This container illustrates Reid’s ability to both honour and transform important crests in Haida culture.



## 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.*

**Museum of Anthropology at UBC's online collections**

<https://moa.ubc.ca/>

**Bill Reid Gallery Education resources**

<https://brgeducation.com/>

**Discovering Haida Art: A Personal Journey with Master Artist Robert Davidson (talk)**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLevrRE4gjs&ab\\_channel=SealaskaHeritageInstitute](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLevrRE4gjs&ab_channel=SealaskaHeritageInstitute)



Fig 38. Bill Reid, *Sgwaagan – Sockeye Salmon Pool Sgw'ag'ann*, 1991.

## FIGURE LIST

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Cover: Bill Reid, *Killer Whale*, 1982, Boxwood, 11.5 x 4.3 cm. SFU Bill Reid Collection, Vancouver, Bill and Martine Reid Founding Collection (2002.1.13). Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate.

Fig. 1: Bill Reid, *The Raven and the First Men*, 1980, yellow cedar, laminated and carved, 188 x 192 cm. Collection of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Walter C. and Marianne Koerner Collection, 1980 (Nb1.481). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate. Photo credit: Jessica Bushey.

Fig. 2: Bill Reid carving in Skidegate, 1976. Photograph by Martine J. Reid. Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver.

Fig. 3: Bill Reid, *Killer Whale Brooch*, c.1952–53, sterling silver, 2.4 x 4.5 cm. SFU Bill Reid Collection, Vancouver, Doris Shadbolt Collection (2002.2.1). Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate.

Fig. 4: Bill Reid watching memorial pole being raised in the *Haida Village* at Totem Park at the University of British Columbia, 1962. Photograph by George Szanto. Collection of the Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, George Szanto fonds (a035984). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver.

Fig. 5: *Loo Taas* being paddled at the opening of the Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Lhagaay, 2007. Photograph by J. Baird. Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver.

Fig. 6: A view of the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67, 1967. The murals were painted by Francis Kagige. The Kwakiutl totem pole was carved by Tony and Henry Hunt. Photograph by Laurent Bélanger. Creative Commons license CC BY-SA 3.0.

Fig. 7: Bill Reid seated beside *The Raven and the First Men* at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, c.1980. Photograph by William McLennan. Collection of the Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, William McLennan fonds (a035127c). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver.

Fig. 8: *Loo Taas* at False Creek, Vancouver, Expo 86, 1986. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver.

Fig. 9: Bill Reid with his mother and father, 1920. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Cindy Reid and the Reid Family, and the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver.

Fig. 10: Bill Reid at the CBC, 1950. Photographer unknown. Collection of CBC Radio Canada. Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver.

Fig. 11: Bill Reid, *Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, 1986, plaster and metal, 389 x 605 x 348 cm. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (92-51, IMG2016-0169-0038-Dm). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau. © Bill Reid Estate.

Fig. 12: Bill Reid working on *Skaana—Killer Whale, Chief of the Undersea World*, c.1983–84. Photograph by Tony Westman. Collection of The Bill Reid Centre at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby. Courtesy of The Bill Reid Centre at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby. © Tony Westman Photography.

Fig. 13: Bill Reid with his tools in Skidegate, 1976. Photograph by William McLennan. Collection of the Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, William McLennan fonds (a035194). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver.

Fig. 14: Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw) with his works in Masset, British Columbia, c.1890. Photograph by Harlan Ingersoll Smith. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (88926). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.

Fig. 15: Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw), *Bracelet*, 1909, gold, 3.5 x 6.3 x 5.2 cm. Collection of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Donated in memory of great-grandmother Martha Edenshaw, 2016 (3164/1). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver. Photo credit: Kyla Bailey.

Fig. 16: Bill Reid, *Bracelet*, 1955, gold, 2.3 x 6 x 5.4 x 5.8 cm, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver. Collection of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Elspeth McConnell Collection, 2017 (3260/51). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate. Photo credit: Kyla Bailey.

Fig. 17: Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw), *Bracelet*, c.1885, gold, 1.6 x 17.5 x 0.1 cm. Collection of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Elspeth McConnell Collection, 2017 (3260/178). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver. Photo credit: Alina Ilyasova.

Fig. 18: Bill Reid, *Hinged Raven Bracelet*, c.1955, gold, 4.3 x 5 x 6 cm. Collection of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Dr. Sydney Friedman and Dr. Constance Livingstone-Friedman Collection, 2011 (2923/1). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate. Photo credit: Kyla Bailey.

Fig. 19: Bill Reid carving a clay model of the sculpture *Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, 1986. Photograph by William McLennan. Collection of the Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, William McLennan fonds (a035106). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver.

Fig. 20: Bill Reid, *Dogfish Brooch*, c.1959, 22k gold, 7.6 x 3.8 cm. Collection of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Purchase, 1959 (A1499). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate. Photo credit: Kyla Bailey.

Fig. 21: Bill Reid, *Tschumos Brooch*, 1956, sterling silver, 3.9 x 6.6 cm. SFU Bill Reid Collection, Vancouver, Bill and Martine Reid Founding Collection (2002.1.2). Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate.

Fig. 22: Bill Reid holding *Killer Whale*, 1982, c.1982. Photograph by Tony Westman. Collection of The Bill Reid Centre at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby. Courtesy of The Bill Reid Centre at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby. © Tony Westman Photography.

Fig. 23: Bill Reid carving the *Skidegate Dogfish Pole*, c.1976. Photograph by William McLennan. Collection of the Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, William McLennan fonds (a035187). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver.

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Fig. 24: Bill Reid, *Haida Village*, 1958–62, 1966, cedar and paint. Photograph by Adelaide de Menil. The George and Joanne MacDonald Research Collection, The Bill Reid Centre at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby (3570). Courtesy of The Bill Reid Centre at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby. © Bill Reid Estate.

Fig. 25: Bill Reid, Self-portrait illustration, 1965, from *Raven's Cry* (1965) by Christie Harris, photo-mechanical transfer on paper, 28.5 x 21.2 cm. Collection of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Gift, 1988 (1323/5). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate. Photo credit: Kyla Bailey.

Fig. 26: Cover of *Raven's Cry* (1965) by Christie Harris. Photo credit: Art Canada Institute.

Fig. 27: Haida Gwaii community members carrying the *Skidegate Dogfish Pole*, 1978. Photograph by Ulli Steltzer. Collection of the Haida Gwaii Museum, Skidegate (Ph 08512). Courtesy of the Haida Gwaii Museum, Skidegate, and Princeton University Library, New Jersey.

Fig. 28: *Skidegate Dogfish Pole* raising ceremony in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, 1978. Photograph by Kuldip Gill. Collection of the Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Kuldip Gill fonds (a033410). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver.

Fig. 29: *Skidegate Dogfish Pole* raising ceremony in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, 1978. Photograph by Kuldip Gill. Collection of the Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Kuldip Gill fonds (a033407). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver.

Fig. 30: *Skidegate Dogfish Pole* raising ceremony in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, 1978. Photograph by Kuldip Gill. Collection of the Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Kuldip Gill fonds (a033426). Courtesy of the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver.

Fig. 31: Rooftop cheer after *Skidegate Dogfish Pole* raising (left to right: Ernie Wilson, Phil Gladstone, Wes Pearson), 1978. Photograph by Ulli Steltzer. Collection of the Haida Gwaii Museum, Skidegate (Ph 08576). Courtesy of the Haida Gwaii Museum, Skidegate, and Princeton University Library, New Jersey.

Fig. 32: Skidegate longhouse designed by Rudy Kovach (left) with totem pole by Bill Reid (right), 1978. Photograph by George F. MacDonald. Courtesy of The Bill Reid Centre at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby.

Fig. 33: Rudy Kovach, *The Skidegate Project*, 1977, watercolour on paper, 56.3 x 37.8 cm. SFU Bill Reid Collection, Vancouver, Bill and Martine Reid Founding Collection (2002.1.87). Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver.

Fig. 34: Bill Reid, *The Final Exam*, 1964, sterling silver, 10 x 9 x 8.8 cm. SFU Bill Reid Collection, Vancouver, Bill and Martine Reid Founding Collection (2002.1.4). Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate.

Fig. 35: Bill Reid, *Cedar Screen*, 1968, red cedar wood, laminated, 210 x 190 x 14.6 cm. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (16639). Image RBCM 16639. Cedar screen by Bill Reid, courtesy of the Royal BC Museum and Archives. © Bill Reid Estate.

Fig. 36: Bill Reid, *Spirit of Haida Gwaii: The Black Canoe*, 1991, plaster and metal, 389 x 605 x 348 cm. Collection of the Canadian Embassy, Washington, D.C. © Bill Reid Estate.

Fig. 37: Bill Reid, *Killer Whale Box with Beaver and Human*, 1971, 22k gold, 9.4 x 9.9 x 8.2 cm. Collection of the Royal BC Museum, Victoria (13902). Image RBCM 13902. Gold box by Bill Reid, courtesy of the Royal BC Museum and Archives. © Bill Reid Estate.

Fig. 38: Bill Reid, *Sgwaagan – Sockeye Salmon Pool Sgw'ag'ann*, 1991, serigraph, 56 x 76 cm. SFU Bill Reid Collection, Vancouver, Bill and Martine Reid Founding Collection (2002.1.43). Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate.