

EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

THE ART OF CULTURAL COMMEMORATION
INSPIRATION FOR INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

Explore the work of Indigenous artists with
resources from ACI's digital library.



Carl Beam, *Contain that Force*, 1978.

June is National Indigenous History Month in Canada, a time to recognize the diverse heritage and inspiring resilience of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities across the country. The Art Canada Institute's library of educational resources highlights many Indigenous creators who have shaped this country's visual culture, including Carl Beam (1943–2005), a groundbreaking artist who challenged assumptions about First Nations creativity and what it meant to be a contemporary Indigenous artist. We turn to the work of this inspiring changemaker to investigate history, but also to reflect on themes of reconciliation and innovation, as he paved the way forward for a generation of Indigenous creators. Today's newsletter is dedicated to a selection of Indigenous artists who, like Beam, honour cultural legacies, inspire new perspectives, and present opportunities for further learning. We hope the artworks shared here will generate important and enriching conversations in your classrooms this month.

Download the Teacher Resource Guide on Beam [here](#).

Learn more about this artist in
[Carl Beam: Life & Work](#) by Anong Migwans Beam.

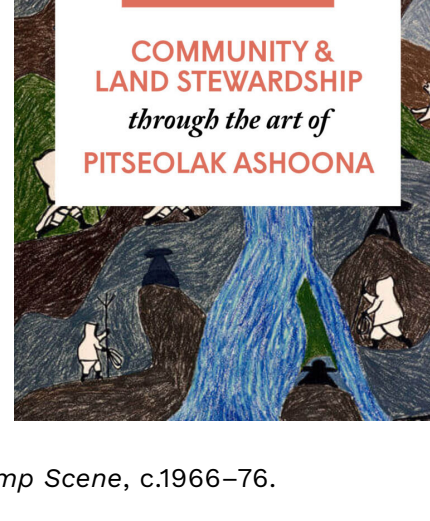
— The Art Canada Institute Education Team

AVENUES TO EXPLORE

Exploring Community



Pitseolak Ashoona, drawing for print *Summer Camp Scene*, c.1966–76.



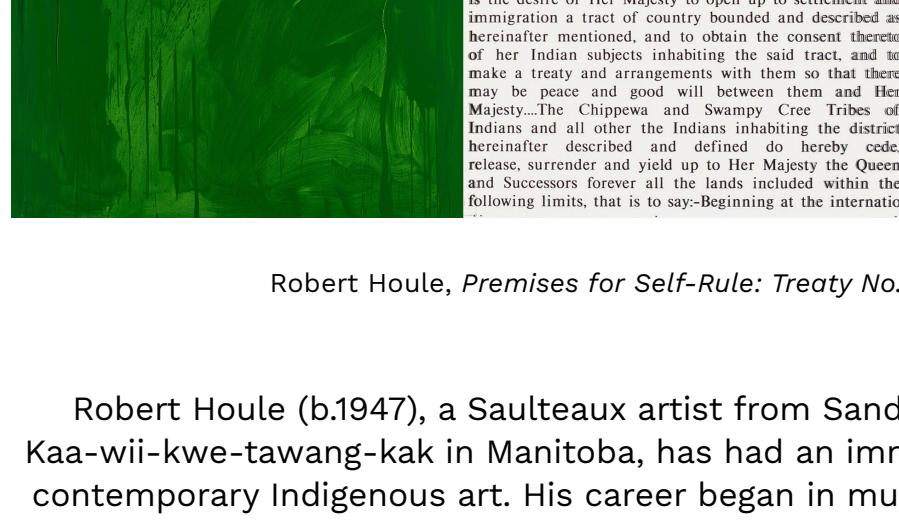
LEARN ABOUT
COMMUNITY & LAND STEWARDSHIP
through the art of
PITSEOLAK ASHOONA

Pitseolak Ashoona (c.1904–1983) was a trailblazing figure in the world of modern Inuit art. Known for her prolific drawing practice, Ashoona depicted moments of daily life with a whimsical simplicity that served as a means of personal expression. In the above drawing, Pitseolak uses bold colours and direct linework to depict a group of women gathered together to work. Through her art, Ashoona was empowered to document Inuit society and explore her role as a mother, artist, and community leader. She shared her life and culture with future generations of Inuit peoples, as well as with the rest of Canada, and for that, she is recognized as an icon of the North.

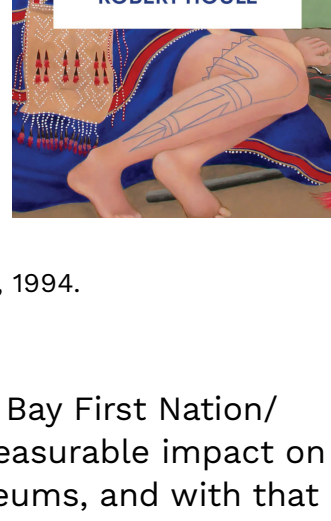
Download the Teacher Resource Guide [here](#).

Learn more about this artist in
[Pitseolak Ashoona: Life & Work](#) by Christine Lalonde.

Confronting History



Robert Houle, *Premises for Self-Rule: Treaty No. 1*, 1994.



LEARN ABOUT
DECOLONIZATION
through the art of
ROBERT HOULE

Robert Houle (b.1947), a Saulteaux artist from Sandy Bay First Nation/Kaa-wii-kwe-tawang-kak in Manitoba, has had an immeasurable impact on contemporary Indigenous art. His career began in museums, and with that perspective, Houle became acutely aware of the disconnect between the contemporary Indigenous experience and the colonial lens that dominated public portrayals of Indigenous cultures. With works such as *Premises for Self-Rule: Treaty No. 1*, Houle uses the visual vocabulary of colour field painting as political commentary about the unfair treatment of First Nations codified in antiquated treaties. Robert Houle's work makes difficult conversations about decolonization accessible to students.

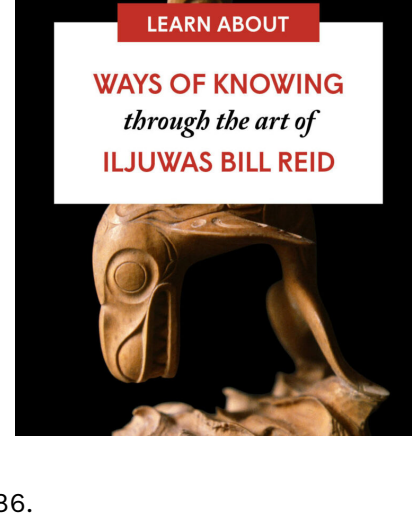
Download the Teacher Resource Guide [here](#).

Learn more about the artist in
[Robert Houle: Life & Work](#) by Shirley Madill.

Honouring Culture



Bill Reid, *Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, 1986.



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

Iluwas Bill Reid (1920–1998) was born in Victoria, B.C., and although his mother was Haida, he was denied access to his heritage. As Reid grew older, he developed an interest in artmaking as a means of reclaiming his culture, which led to a prolific fifty-year-long career. Reid's work pulls from the visual legacies of Haida culture, conveying myths, legends, and stories through sculptural works such as *Spirit of Haida Gwaii*. Permanently installed at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, this piece tells the story of life on Earth through a canoe filled with thirteen beings. Reid—one of the most significant Northwest Coast artists of the twentieth century—reminds us that cultural legacies are constantly evolving through the resilience, creativity, and diversity of Canada's Indigenous communities.

Download the Teacher Resource Guide [here](#).

Learn more about the artist in
[Iluwas Bill Reid: Life & Work](#) by Gerald McMaster.

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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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](#)

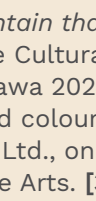
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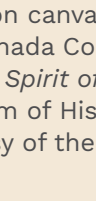
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