INTERWOVEN POWER:

NATIVE KNOWLEDGE / NATIVE ART

UNIT 2: RELATING TO PLACE AND NATIVE RESISTANCE

MAM

INTERWOVEN POWER:
NATIVE KNOWLEDGE / NATIVE ART

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How can art demonstrate Indigenous relationships with nature?
- How can you strengthen your relationship with the land you live on?
- How can art demonstrate Native American resistance?



Installation view of *Interwoven Power: Native Knowledge / Native Art*, 2024
(Jason Wyche/Montclair Art Museum)

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Native American resilience can be viewed through historical and contemporary art that responds to Native American history and issues.

Native American art embodies Indigenous knowledge and that art often represents relationships with the natural world.

SETTING AN INTENTION

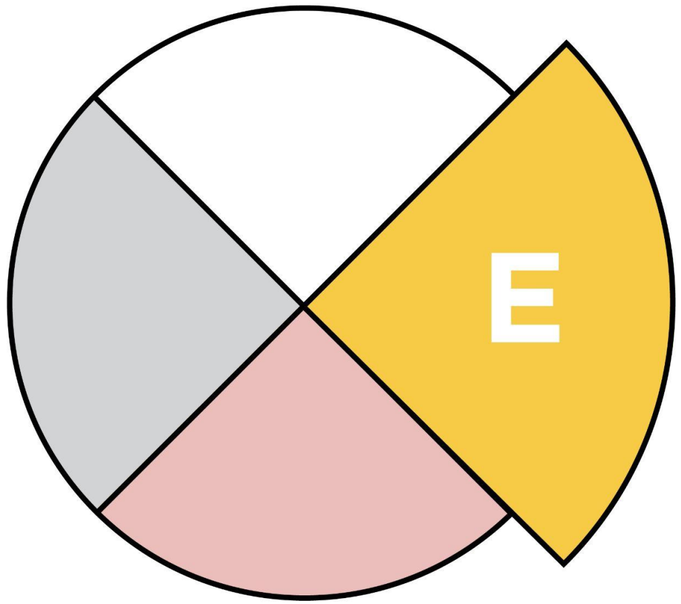
Before beginning the unit, students can set an intention for what they might learn, feel, or do while learning about the Lenape. Try to be mindful while you are learning this information that the place where you learn has been walked on by the Lenape since the beginning of time.

Native American thought indicates that all experiences are important and have meaning if we make the time to see and feel them. When we experience Native art, we are learning what the artist learned and experienced. Living with intention helps us learn and grow.

THE EAST: BEGINNINGS AND AWARENESS

Explore ideas about Thanksgiving and the Natural World

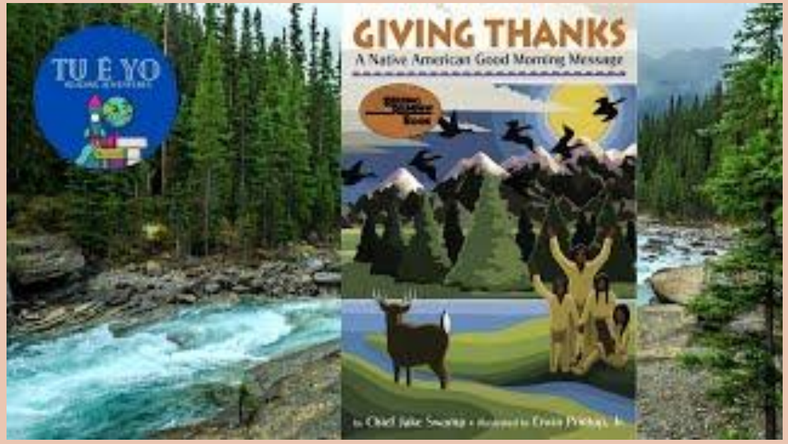
Goal: For students to experience the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving address and examine reciprocity with the natural world



The East represents our infancy and the beginning of a journey that will take us around the medicine wheel. The East is associated with the rising sun and the spring season reminds us that we are spiritual beings. Consider how learning can help us grow intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

GIVING THANKS

Hear the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address.





Hear an elder explain the Thanksgiving Address.

OPTIONAL VIEWING

Learn more about the benefits of remembering to be thankful in this Ted Talk by Katsitsionni Fox.



OPTIONAL VIEWING

The First Blade of Sweetgrass by Suzanne Greenlaw demonstrates relationships with the natural world.



INTERWOVEN POWER:
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LOOK

- What do you notice about this artwork?
- Does it remind you of anything you've seen before?
- How do you think it was made?
- How do you think it was used?

Native artists in Alaska, such as Inuit and Yup’ik people, make bags from salmon skins. The skins are cleaned and dried, then sewed together with strong thread. The bags can carry and store important items, such as sewing supplies, while keeping them dry.



Salmon skin bag, ca. 1875. Artist once known (Inuit, probably Yupik). Salmon skin, hide, sinew, commercial thread, natural dye. Montclair Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Henry Lang in memory of her mother, Mrs. Jasper R. Rand 1931.1111

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REFLECT

This salmon skin bag is more than 100 years old.

- What makes this artwork special?
- How is it different from bags you carry to school?
- What are ways we can be grateful for fish?
- How does the salmon skin bag reflect the ideas in the Thanksgiving Address?

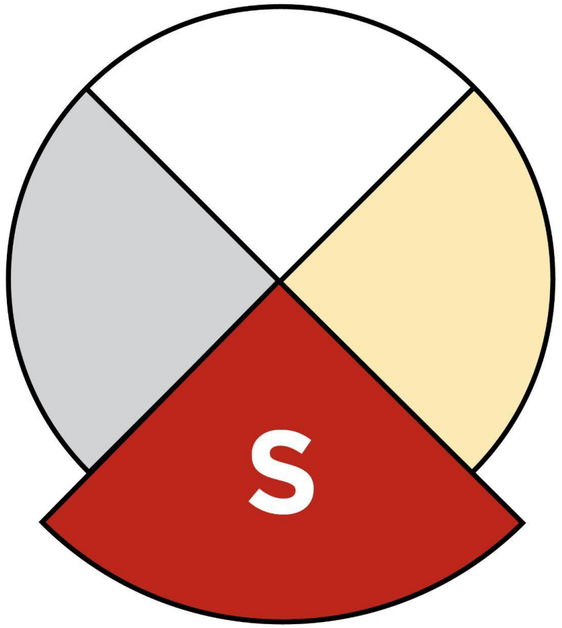


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SOUTH: EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS

Reflect on connections with nature

Goal: For students to experience an emotional connection to the material and explore their own feelings related to their experiences



The South represents our youth in the cycle of life and is symbolized with the growth associated with summer. The South reminds us of our emotional selves and the ability to connect with others.

The South emphasizes emotional connectedness and creativity and is associated with the creation and viewing of art.

WATCH

Learn about Lenape relationships with the national world.



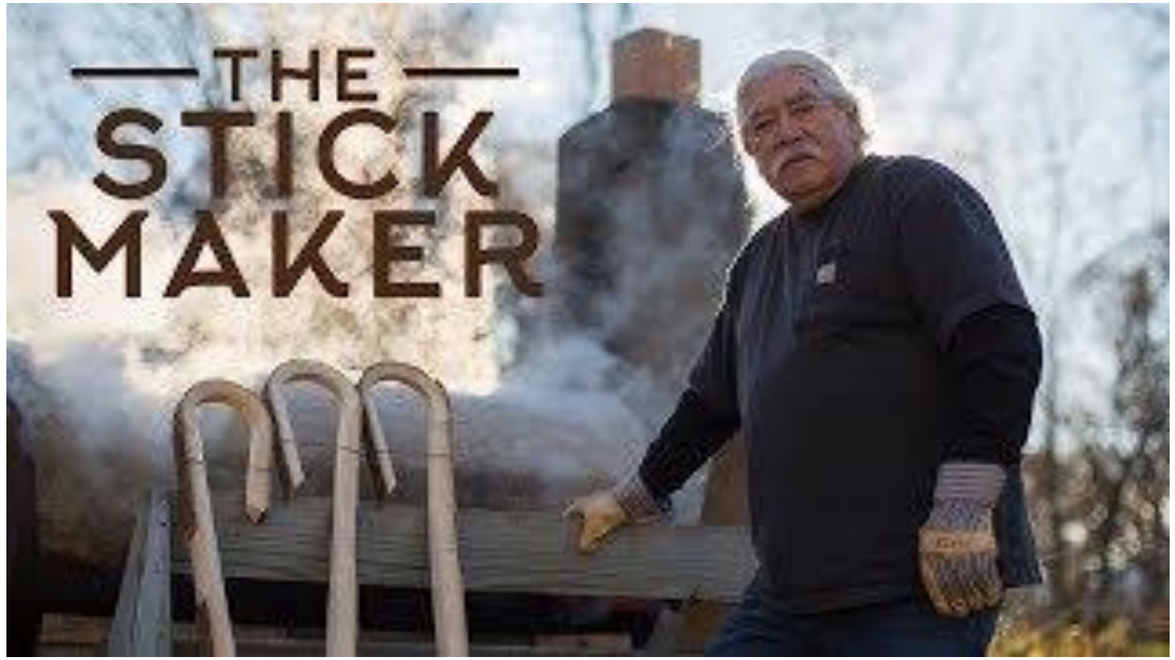
OPTIONAL VIEWING

- How have humans impacted the Earth?
- What are ways we can positively impact our environment?



WATCH

Legendary stick maker Alf Jacques discusses making traditional lacrosse sticks.



INTERWOVEN POWER:
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LOOK

- What do you notice about this artwork?
- Does this remind you of anything you have seen before?
- How do you think it was made?
- What makes this special?



Haudenosaunee Lacrosse Stick, 2024. Brandon Lazore (Onondaga Nation, Snipe Clan, b. 1981) and Jack Johnson (Akwesasne Mohawk, b. 1979). Hickory, cowhide, rawhide, nylon cord, acrylic paint, varnish. Montclair Art Museum, Museum purchase, Acquisition Fund 2024.2

WATCH

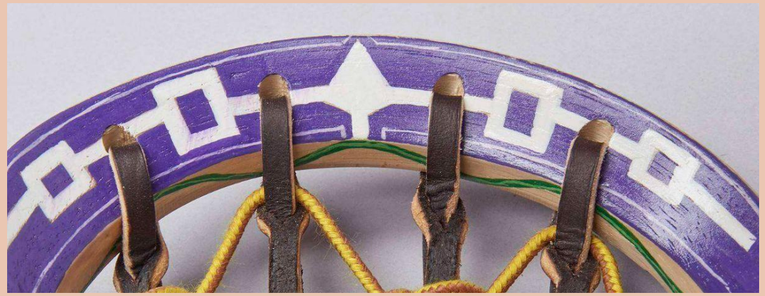
Montclair Art Museum Executive Director Todd Caissie (Osage) describes *Haudenosaunee Lacrosse Stick* created by artists Brandon Lazore (Onondaga Nation, Snipe Clan) and Jack Johnson (Akwesasne Mohawk).



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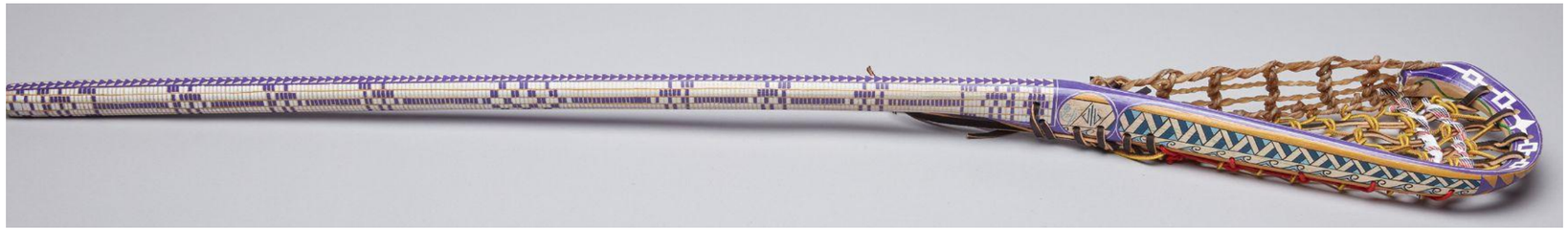
EXAMINE

Haudenosaunee Lacrosse Stick (details), 2024. Brandon Lazore (Onondaga Nation, Snipe Clan, b. 1981) and Jack Johnson (Akwesasne Mohawk, b. 1979). Hickory, cowhide, rawhide, nylon cord, acrylic paint, varnish. Montclair Art Museum, Museum purchase, Acquisition Fund 2024.2



The Hiawatha Wampum Belt design across the top is from one of the most important wampum belts in existence. It is a visual record of the union of the first five nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

The right of the shaft shows the role of stickball in the Sky Woman creation story. Her twin sons played a game for control of the newly created world.



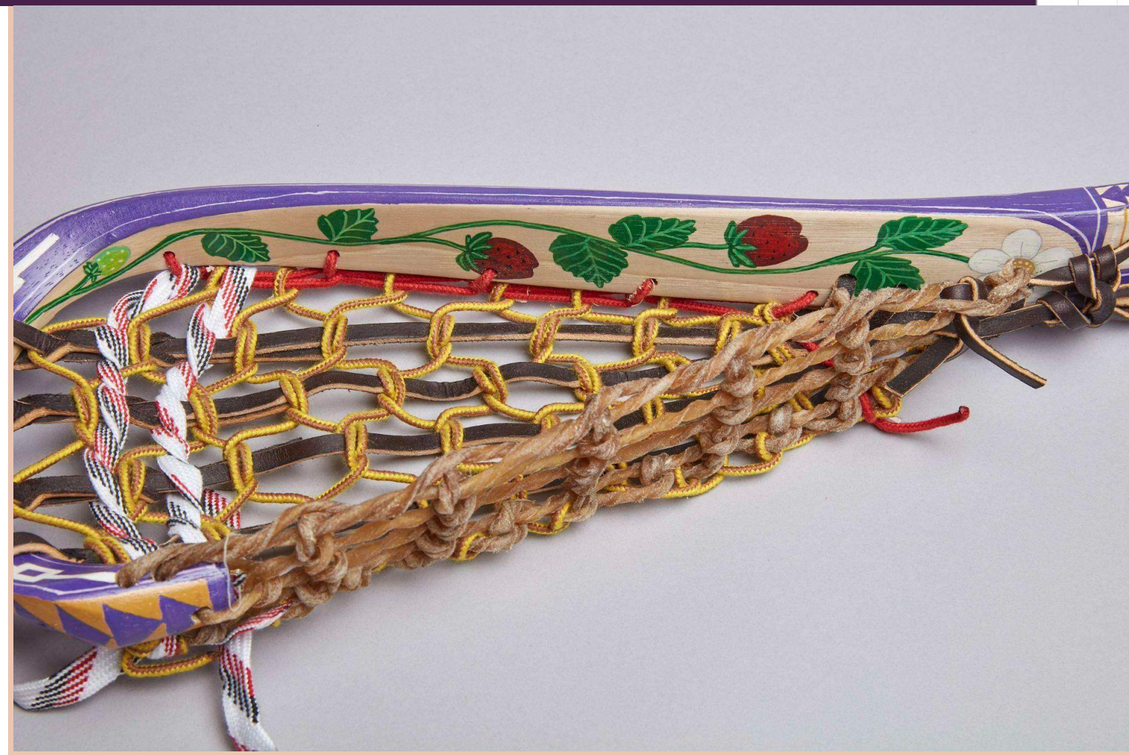


Ever-Growing (Peace) Tree Design is from a very old wampum belt called the Dust Fan Belt. It symbolizes the Peace Tree that helped to unite the five nations.

PLANT RELATIONSHIPS

- What plants do you see?
  Strawberries are a medicinal and ceremonial gift from the Creator.

  The Skydome Pattern below represents the three sisters (corn, beans, and squash) with domes separating the Sky World from earth.
- What plant relationships are important to you and your family?



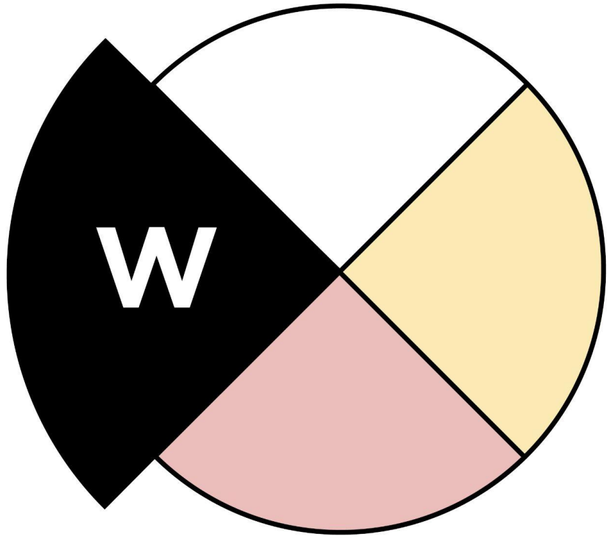


Haudenosaunee Lacrosse Stick (details), 2024. Brandon Lazore (Onondaga Nation, Snipe Clan, b. 1981) and Jack Johnson (Akwesasne Mohawk, b. 1979). Hickory, cowhide, rawhide, nylon cord, acrylic paint, varnish. Montclair Art Museum, Museum purchase, Acquisition Fund 2024.2

WEST: PLACE, PHYSICALITY, AND HEART

Learn about basket weaving and relationships to place

Goal: For students to explore the relationship between nature and weaving



The West represents the fall season and grounding ourselves in our physical reality. The West is represented by adulthood where we acknowledge our relationship with our bodies and the places we live. The teachings of the West remind us that the mind and body are connected and we, in turn, are connected to each other and the earth. The West reflects perseverance, awareness, and the respect for other people and their experiences.

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Nesting baskets, 1911. Artist once known (Chitimacha). Split river cane, white oak, dyes. Montclair Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Henry Lang in memory of her mother, Mrs. Jasper R. Rand, X1914.354qr, X1914.354uv.

EXAMINE

These Chitimacha nesting baskets are 100 years old.

- What do you notice about these baskets?
- What colors and patterns do you see?
- What materials do you think were used?
- What makes these baskets special?

WATCH

John Darden explains the process of selecting river cane for weaving from the Chitimacha Reservation in Louisiana.

- How are the materials collected and prepared for the baskets?
- How does this demonstrate important relationships with the Earth?



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WATCH

Learn about the importance of Chitimacha baskets and the artwork of Sarah Sense (Chitimacha/Choctaw).





INTERWOVEN POWER:
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LOOK

- What do you notice about this artwork?
- What similarities do you see with the historic Chitimacha baskets?
- How is this artwork different?
- How does Sarah Sense and other current basket weavers remind us that Native people are resilient and their knowledge is powerful?

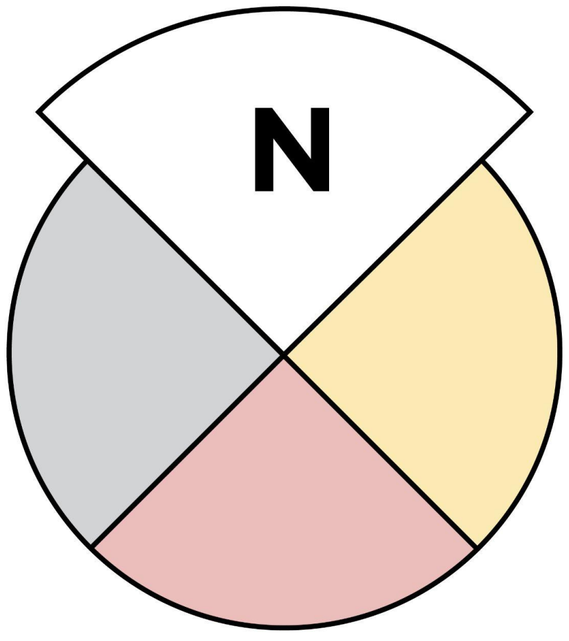


Montclair Dots, 2024. Sarah Sense (Chitimacha/Choctaw b. 1980). Woven archival inkjet prints on Hahnemuhle bamboo paper and Hahnemuhle rice paper, tape. Montclair Art Museum, Museum Purchase, Acquisition Fund 2024.12.

NORTH: WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

Consider how art can be used as resistance

Goal: For students to reflect on art as resistance and their own understandings

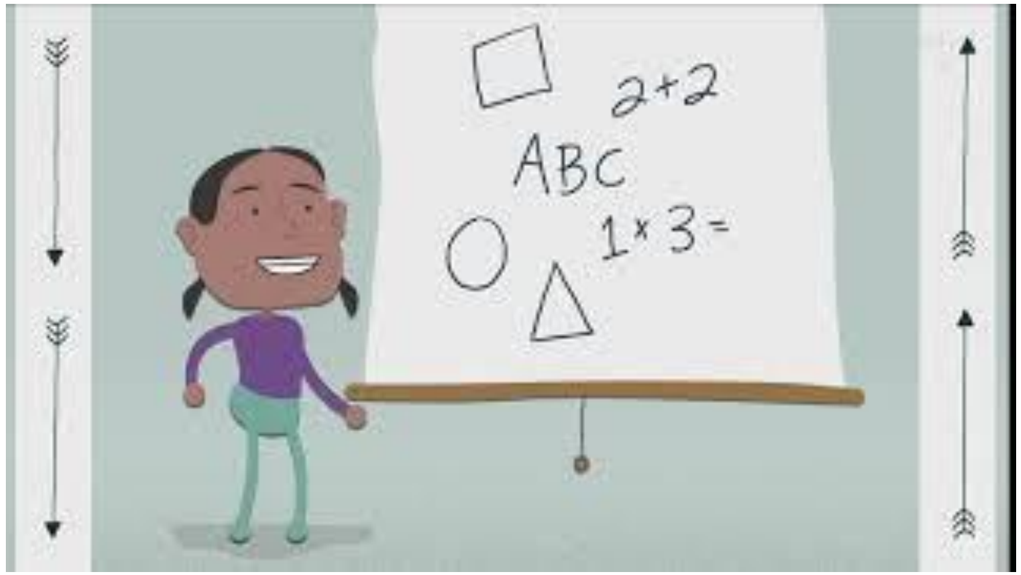


The North represents the winter, our elders, and the intellectual side of our life. The North lessons help us use our wisdom and engage our thinking and problem solving skills. The North helps us see how things fit together and reflect at the end of our journey.

WATCH

Learn about federal Indian boarding schools.

- How would you feel if you had to leave your home and family to attend school?



WATCH

Curriculum Author Dr. Lisa Lynn Brooks (Choctaw) discusses the basket by artist Shan Goshorn (Southeast, Eastern Band Cherokee) *Educational Genocide; The Legacy of the Carlisle Indian Boarding School.*



INTERWOVEN POWER:
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LOOK

- What do you notice about this artwork?
- Compare the inside and the outside of this basket.
- What similarities and differences do you see?
- Why did the artist use a different color on the inside of the basket?



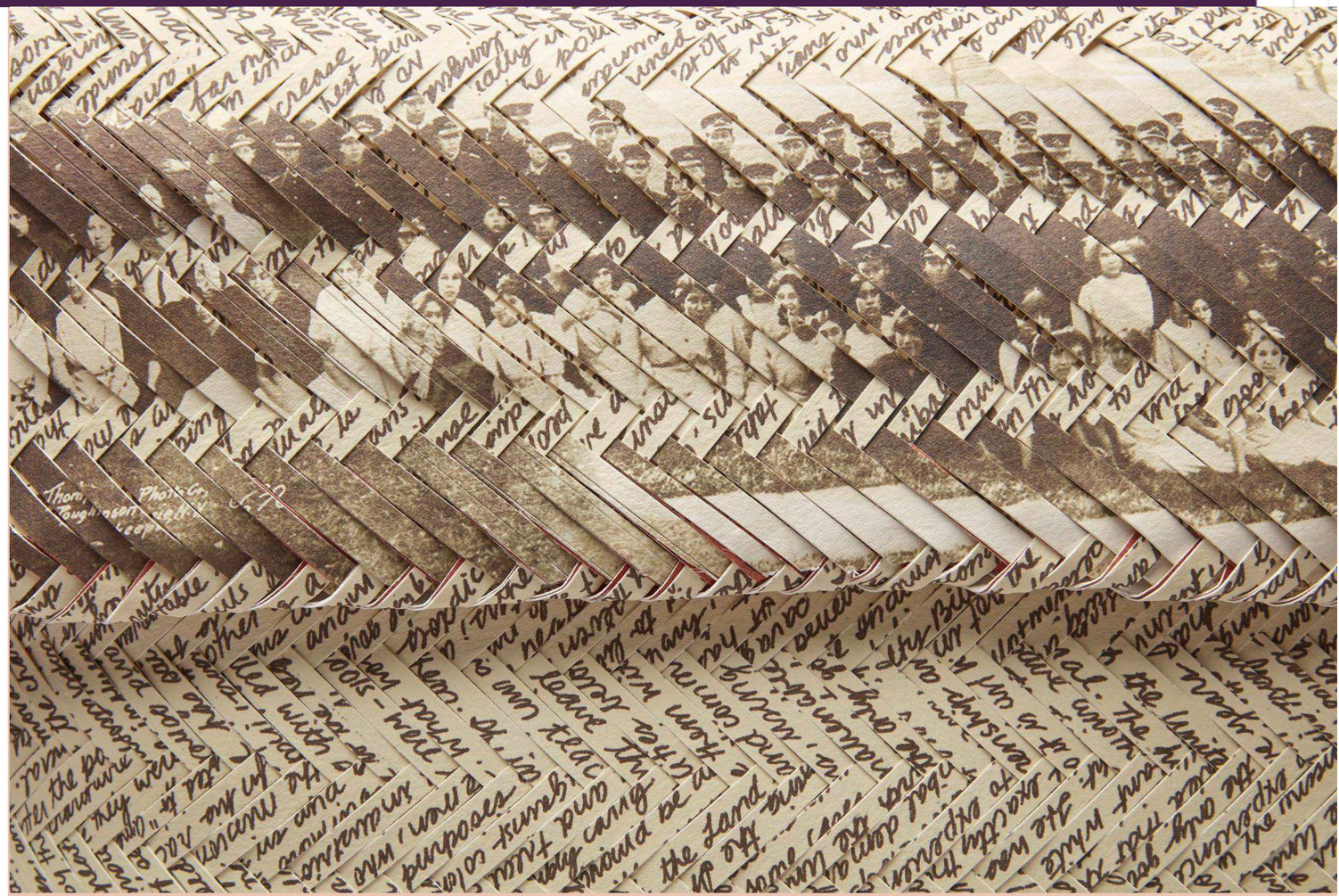


Educational Genocide; the Legacy of the Carlisle Indian Boarding School, 2011. Shan Goshorn (Cherokee Nation, Eastern Band, 1957–2018). Arches paper, ink, acrylic paint. Montclair Art Museum, Museum Purchase, Acquisition Fund 2015.12 A-B.

INTERWOVEN POWER:
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ANALYZE

- Why did the artist weave names and photos of boarding school residents into her work?
- What message was Shan Goshorn trying to give us through this basket?
- How does this artwork show the resistance and resilience of Native people?



Educational Genocide; the Legacy of the Carlisle Indian Boarding School, 2011. Shan Goshorn (Cherokee Nation, Eastern Band, 1957–2018). Arches paper, ink, acrylic paint. Montclair Art Museum, Museum Purchase, Acquisition Fund 2015.12 A-B .

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WATCH

Artists from Red Road Reclamation, an Indigenous-led organization, demonstrate how to weave a basket.

The artists want students to know that basket weaving is more than a craft, it’s a relationship with the land, our ancestors, our community, and ourselves.

Every strand woven together reminds us that all things are connected. Basketweaving teaches that we are not separate from nature but part of a living system of reciprocity.



REFLECT

Reflection is an important part of Indigenous learning. Taking time to think about your experiences and appreciate the knowledge that has been shared across generations helps deepen your understanding and strengthens the lessons you carry forward.

- How did you make your basket strong?
- What memories will it contain?
- What will you keep inside it that is special to you?
- How can we express gratitude to the artists for sharing their knowledge with us?

