



# Storytelling

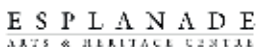
Christina Wallwork | Haley Bassett | Adrienne Greyeyes | Laurie McCallum

Alberta Foundation for the Arts

# TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) has supported a provincial travelling exhibition program since 1981. The mandate of the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program is to provide every Albertan with the opportunity to enjoy visual art exhibitions in their community. Three regional galleries and one arts organization coordinate the program for the AFA:

**Northwest Region:** The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie  
**Northeast and North Central Region:** The Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton  
**Southwest Region:** The Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary  
**Southeast Region:** The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat



Each year, more than 300,000 Albertans enjoy many exhibitions in communities ranging from High Level in the north to Milk River in the south and virtually everywhere in between. The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program also offers educational support material to help educators integrate the visual arts into the school curriculum.

Exhibitions for the TREX program are curated from a variety of sources, including private and public collections. A major part of the program assists in making the AFA's extensive art collection available to Albertans. This growing art collection consists of over 8,000 artworks showcasing the creative talents of more than 2000 artists. As the only provincial art collection in Alberta, the AFA collection reflects the development of the vibrant visual arts community in the province and has become an important cultural legacy for all Albertans.



# Storytelling

Christina Wallwork | Haley Bassett | Adrienne Greyeyes | Laurie McCallum

Curated by Jamie-Lee Cormier and Christina Wallwork

Starting with story,

When she was a young girl her Métis culture was hidden from her by the people who raised her because of what they had to endure. But while lying in bed at night she heard the stories being told by the men around the table. There were stories about the land and where they came from, fishing stories, and stories of the best places to harvest blueberries. During the day while her grandmother was baking bread, an aunty would stop in for a while to teach the young girl how to bead, "This is the design your grandmother taught me, and this is what it means." On rainy days her mother would whisper to her about supernatural things and how to avoid them. When her grandfather would drive her places, he would not tell her stories about his experience in a Residential School. But when she would get out of the vehicle he would say to her, "Don't forget who you are." She pieced her identity out and to express it she turned it into art. Through art she could tell the story of her family.<sup>1</sup>

The exhibition *Storytelling* shares the voices and traditions of four Indigenous artists, Haley Bassett, Adrienne Greyeyes, Laurie McCallum, and Christina Wallwork. The artworks in this exhibition uses traditional materials and mediums such as beading, finger weaving, sewing, painting, print making, moosehide and plants harvested from the land. The relationships with the land, nature, plants, and animals influences their art. Some of the artists use their art to form connections with their past that has been severed. Some create to honour those whose lives were taken too soon. They use their art as a form of expression to reclaim their culture and share it so that the world knows that the Indigenous people are still here.

Art connects us and allows us to be storytellers, to bring people from all walks of life back into our story and makes us all a part of a larger one. Storytelling has been around since human existence. It predates the printed word, exists in every culture and tradition, and connects us to our ancestors. Storytelling allows us to make sense of our world, where we came from, and why. It shares lessons with us, teaches morals, and shares adventures and trials from the past.

The artworks in this exhibition have a story behind them. Indigenous storytelling uses oral tradition, dance, music, and art to express the history of our people. These stories have been passed down through the generations not only as an oral history, but to share where to find certain places to harvest and hunt, along with vital information for survival. Stories often go hand in hand with survival including sharing knowledge on which waterways to take, or which plants to grow and eat. Stories were told for everybody (young and old) and were a mixture of supernatural and everyday life. Storytelling could vary between households. They were told around the fire at night or the kitchen table. Sitting together telling stories created lots of laughing and singing and shared what previous generations told.

Finishing with story,

My favorite memory as a child. The soft moss is under my feet as I step through the bush to get close to Nohkom. She has a small blanket or scarf under her knees so that her pants don't get blue from squishing berries. Nimosompan is off somewhere near by picking berries as well. Nohkom asks to see my bucket and examines it for leaves and sticks and reminds me to pick clean. Once I've had enough of picking and eating blueberries. My sister and I find sticks then search for a patch of dead spruce trees. Once we find one with small dead branches, they become ninjas or pirates which we then must defend ourselves against. We swing sticks wildly busting the little branches from the trees to defeat them. Nohkom and Nimosompan always on the watch for bears while they pick, and we play.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Christina Wallwork

<sup>2</sup> Adrienne Greyeyes

The Traveling Exhibition Program Region 1:  
Northwest Alberta is thankful for our generous  
sponsor this year:



Lawyers for the journey ahead

# Christina Wallwork

Christina Wallwork is a Métis artist from Peterborough, Ontario who currently resides in Grande Prairie Alberta. Wallwork studied Culture and Religion at Nipissing University and has a Visual Arts and Design diploma from Grande Prairie Regional College. Wallwork's pieces are displayed in many private and public collections across Canada. She is an active member in the Federation of Canadian Artists. Wallwork's expressive abstract art focuses on wildlife, nature, storytelling, and spirituality which she uses to convey elements of the human spirit. She works primarily in sumi and India inks, and acrylic paint. Her process is very intuitive, and her pieces inspire the viewer to grow in appreciation of the planet and the indomitable human spirit.





Clockwise from top left

**Christina Wallwork**  
*Connection*  
 2023  
 Acrylic on Canvas  
 24" x 24"  
 Collection of the Artist

**Christina Wallwork**  
*Ingredients*  
 2023  
 Acrylic on Canvas  
 24" x 24"  
 Collection of the Artist

**Christina Wallwork**  
*I Am My Silence*  
 2023  
 Acrylic on Canvas  
 24" x 24"  
 Collection of the Artist

**Christina Wallwork**  
*Story of Turtle Island*  
 2023  
 Acrylic on Canvas  
 24" x 24"  
 Collection of the Artist

*Where do you find your inspiration?*

CW: I find my inspiration for my art in nature, from spirituality, and from experiences and memories that happened throughout my life. A lot of my inspiration comes from my family, and the place where I grew up.

*Describe one or two of your art pieces, and what they mean to you.*

CW: *Spark of the Phoenix* represents my sister, my mother, and I, breaking generational trauma. This trauma was passed down to my mom from her dad and the trauma he brought from being in a Residential School. My mom was able to break free from her trauma to allow my sister and I to thrive, and our daughters will be able to take flight even further.

*Do you have any wisdom that you think is important for young Indigenous artists to know?*

CW: I think the advice that I would give to young Indigenous artists is to be themselves, to speak their truth, and to be proud of who they are and the stories they want to show to the world.

*Your exhibition is called 'Storytelling' so can you share one or two stories about where the inspiration from one of your pieces comes from?*

CW: I painted *Ingredients* to tell the story of my Metis heritage, and how I grew up in eastern Ontario. My grandmother would cook on a cast-iron wood stove. It would be on from morning to night, cooking our food and heating our home. One of the first things I learned was to never touch it because you could easily be burned. The trees in the forest where I grew up always seemed to be alive to me. It felt as if they knew us and kept the memories and stories of my ancestors. I would run along the forest trails and the light would shine in-between the trees and I would never lose my way. Like birds flying away, time passes and what is left is the ingredients of what makes me who I am.



**Christina Wallwork**  
*Spark of the Phoenix*, 2023  
Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 24"  
Collection of the Artist

# Haley Bassett

Haley Bassett is an award-winning interdisciplinary artist and arts administrator of Métis and Eastern European descent. Born in 1991 to cattle-rancher parents, she lives and works in Sunset Prairie, BC, which is in the traditional territory of the Dene, Dane-zaa, and Cree, encompassed by Treaty 8 and the Métis Homeland.

Having studied painting and drawing at the Florence Academy of Art, she was later mentored by Peter von Tiesenhausen and Brendan Tang. In May 2020, she completed her BFA in Visual Arts from Emily Carr University, during which time she was awarded the BCAC Scholarship twice. She also received the BCAC Early Career Development Grant in 2020 and the Distinguished Award from the Regional Juried Art Exhibition in 2021.

Although Bassett started out as a painter, her visual practice has since broadened to include sculpture, installation, beadwork, found objects, natural materials, and textiles. Her practice explores how time, place, family histories, and personal traumas converge as formational aspects of the self. Her work draws inspiration from her Métis and Eastern European heritage.



## **Haley Bassett**

*Fire Bag*

2022

Contemporary and antique seed beads, stroud cloth, sinew, yarn, thread, twill tape, and cotton fabric  
20.5" x 13.5"

Collection of the Artist







Clockwise from top left

**Haley Bassett**

*Indian Paintbrush*  
2022

Contemporary and antique seed beads, stroud cloth, sinew, yarn, thread, twill tape, and cotton fabric 20.5" x 13.5"  
Collection of the Artist

**Haley Bassett**

*Prairie Fire*  
2022

Contemporary and antique seed beads, stroud cloth, sinew, yarn, thread, twill tape, and cotton fabric 20.5" x 13.5"  
Collection of the Artist

**Haley Bassett**

*Sage and Wolf Willow*  
2022

Contemporary and antique seed beads, stroud cloth, sinew, yarn, thread, twill tape, and cotton fabric 20.5" x 13.5"  
Collection of the Artist

**Haley Bassett**

*Wild Rose*  
2022

Contemporary and antique seed beads, stroud cloth, sinew, yarn, thread, twill tape, and cotton fabric 20.5" x 13.5"  
Collection of the Artist

*Where did you grow up and how does that influence your work?*

HB: I have a strongly place-based practice rooted in the Peace River Region of northeastern BC. Where and how I grew up in the country, surrounded by family, heavily influences my artwork.

*What mediums do you use, and why is that important? Do they have a deeper meaning?*

HB: I often use locally harvested natural materials, or reference native plants in my beadwork designs. They represent the Homeland, and how my relationship with the land has shaped me.

*Do you want your art to reflect Reconciliation?*

HB: I think recognizing and appreciating Indigenous culture as art is one small aspect of reconciliation. It's a big deal for a Métis artist like me to be able to explore and reclaim my culture openly and proudly in my art practice because it was suppressed for so long.

*Do you have any wisdom that you think is important for young Indigenous artists to know?*

HB: Don't ever deny the fact that you are an artist. Be who you are. Your voice is needed. There is room for you.

*Your exhibition is called 'Storytelling' so can you share one or two stories about where the inspiration from one of your pieces comes from?*

HB: While I worked on my Fire Bag, I thought about its weight, and how it would feel to hold it in my hands. That is why it is so heavily beaded. As someone who did not grow up with this tradition, it feels incredibly fulfilling to hold a piece of my culture.

Our teacher, Gregory Scofield, encouraged us to think of these bags as heirlooms. As I am working to revive these traditions in my family, I have been experimenting with the faded rose as a new ancestral pattern.

# Adrienne Greyeyes



**Adrienne Greyeyes**

*cāpānis*

2022

Gel transfer and glass beads  
on canvas

19" round canvas

Collection of the Artist

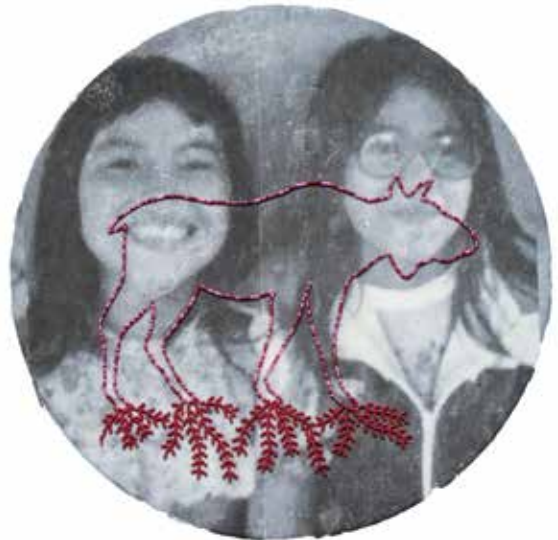
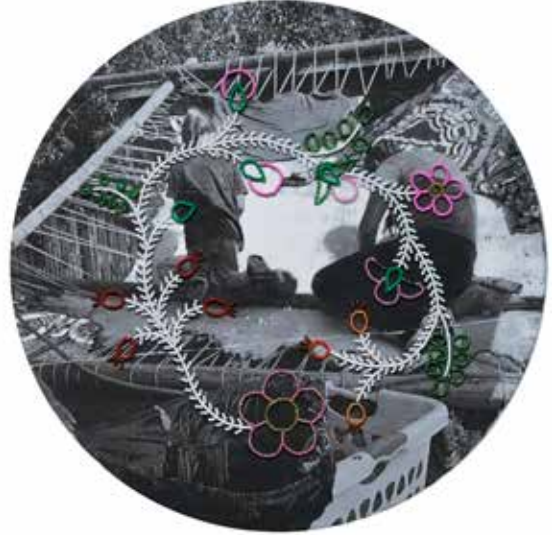
Adrienne Greyeyes is a nehiyaw from the Bigstone Cree Nation in Northern Alberta. She pursued teachings of cultural arts since she was a teenager and spent many hours with her nohkomak, elders, and teachers learning and perfecting her skills. In addition, Adrienne is a graduate of the Emily Carr University of Art and Design.

The purpose of her work is to honor traditional practices by focusing on a minimalist design that serves to emphasize the natural beauty of the traditional materials. The work involved in obtaining a moose hide and processing it takes considerable skill, time and knowledge and the finished hide is so precious and beautiful on its own. There is much patience and skill required to complete a beaded project as well as honour in being able to carry on family designs. Adrienne's beadwork reflects the lifecycles of medicines and stories emphasizing the importance of relationship between land and identity.



*Where did you grow up and how does that influence your work?*

AG: I grew in Fort st. John and lived with nohkom and nimosompan. It influences my art in multiple ways. When I was small they used to take me to stay in bush camps with them while nimosompan worked. I spent a lot of time playing in the trees and creating my own toys out of whatever I found. Nohkom would sometimes sit with me and we would cut out women and dresses from gossip magazines or build things out of toothpicks and match sticks. In addition, Fort st. John is a community that is fueled by industry and has high amounts of racism. This results in mean of the social issues that we see our people and community face. One theme that I am more consistently exploring now is how industry has shaped the land and how resource extraction has changed my relationship with he land and how is connect my children to the land.



Clockwise from top left

**Adrienne Greeyes**

*Cāpān*

2022

Gel transfer and glass beads  
on canvas

19" round canvas

Collection of the Artist

**Adrienne Greeyes**

*omisimāw*

2022

Gel transfer and glass beads  
on canvas

19" round canvas

Collection of the Artist

**Adrienne Greeyes**

*okāwīmāw*

2022

Gel transfer and glass beads  
on canvas

19" round canvas

Collection of the Artist

**Adrienne Greeyes**

*Ohkomimāw*

2022

Gel transfer and glass beads  
on canvas

19" round canvas

Collection of the Artist

### *How do you express your culture through your art?*

AG: Through the use of traditional mediums. In essence all of my work is nehiyaw since I am a nehiyaw woman. My work speaks a lot to my identity and understanding of the world from a cultural perspective.

### *Do you want your art to reflect Reconciliation?*

AG: My work would reflect how colonialism and resource extraction has changed our traditional relationship with the land through generations in my family. In order for the work to step into the realm of reconciliation the viewer would have to reflect on their own lifestyle and relationship with the colonial history of the country people call Canada. It would require the viewer to develop an understanding of how theirs and the Canadian lifestyle has been a source of the rifts in Indigenous identity. Which results in so many of us dedicating our lives to revitalization and ensuring that the next generation doesn't go without.

### *Why is a Metis / Indigenous artistic voice important in today's world?*

AG: I often reflect on the challenges that some of my favorite artists must have faced as they created and shared with the world. They persevered in times where violence and racism towards indigenous peoples was more widely accepted and chose to continue to be vulnerable and honest about their ways of knowing and experiencing the world. When we are given a drive and gifts to tell our stories and perspective it is our responsibility to honor that gift as well as honor the path that previous Metis and Indigenous artists have paved for us.

### *Do you have any wisdom that you think is important for young Indigenous artists to know?*

AG: When you look at artwork that you absolutely love and feeds your spirit. There is a good chance that the artist who created had self-doubt and fear of sharing their work and being vulnerable. We all work through it. Your work matters honor yourself and share your work.

### *Your exhibition is called 'Storytelling' so can you share one or two stories about where the inspiration from one of your pieces comes from?*

AG: This series is derived from examining the relationships that each generation of my family has with the land. This particularly comes from my favorite memory as a child. The soft moss is under my feet as I step through the bush to get close to nohkom. She has a small blanket or scarf under her knees so that her pants don't get blue from squishing berries. Nimosopan is off somewhere near by picking berries as well. Nohkom asks to see my bucket and examines it for leaves or sticks and reminds me to pick clean. Once I've had enough of picking and eating blueberries. My sister and I find sticks then search for a patch of dead spruce trees. Once we find one with small dead branches they become ninjas or pirates which we then have to defend ourselves against. We swing sticks wildly busting the little branches off of the trees to defeat them. Nohkom and nimosopan always on the watch for bears while they pick and we play.

# Laurie McCallum

Laurie McCallum currently lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta. She grew up in Northern Saskatchewan, and later moved to British Columbia with her husband where they raised their 3 children. They eventually settled in Alberta, the middle mark between their now grown children and extended families.

Laurie is a self-taught acrylic artist of Cree/Metis descent. She creates original paintings and custom artwork, from pet portraits to oilfield art. But her passion lies in painting thought provoking Indigenous pieces which speak to viewers in many different ways. When she is not creating art, she enjoys reading, fishing, and spending time with her grandchildren, her husband and their beloved dogs.

Laurie's artwork is collected by clients across Canada and the USA. She recently had some of her work make its way to Germany, Japan, Great Britain and New Zealand.



## *Artist Statement*

I always knew that I would love to be an artist, and dreamed of someday living out my life painting and sketching under an endless summer sky. Some of my favourite memories as a child are laying on the floor drawing and colouring horse after horse. The subjects of my artwork have changed since then, but I still love the thrill of creating something beautiful from a blank piece of paper or canvas.

Most of my work portrays a strong focal point with one subject dominating the canvas. My inspiration comes from what I see around me every day and from inspiring photos sent to me by clients, friends and family.

I work with acrylics, layering colour upon colour to conceive something realistic that will move the viewer and open their eyes to the beauty that surrounds us in everything, from wildlife, to landscapes and to something as plain as piece of equipment. It is a great honour to be able to create memories and beauty for all to enjoy.





Top

**Laurie McCallum**  
*Kokum's Camp Stove*  
2022  
11" x 14"  
Acrylic on Canvas  
Collection of the Artist

Above

**Laurie McCallum**  
*Cleaning Berries*  
2022  
16" x 20"  
Acrylic on Canvas  
Collection of the Artist

Right

**Laurie McCallum**  
*Another Empty Dress*  
2022  
24" x 18"  
Acrylic on Canvas  
Collection of the Artist



**Laurie McCallum**  
*Adelaide*  
2022  
20" x 16"  
Acrylic on Canvas  
Collection of the Artist



**Laurie McCallum**  
*Kokum's Gift*  
2022  
14" x 14"  
Acrylic on Canvas  
Collection of the Artist

*Where did you grow up and how does that influence your work?*

LM: I grew up in Northern Saskatchewan, surrounded by good hardworking men and women. We were taught to have good work ethics, and to take pride in our accomplishments, and what we chose to do with our lives. I believe this has influenced my art greatly, as I love to paint men and women working at the jobs they love and take pride in. Living in Alberta and surrounded by people in the energy sector, I find myself constantly painting pipeline scenes and welders. I very much appreciate all of my hardworking oilfield clients and their support.

*Describe one or two of your artworks, and what they mean to you.*

LM: My favourite and most meaningful I have created thus far is "Adelaide". I created her in honour of my Great-Grandmother whom I never met. She passed at a very young age, only 38 years old. I have always felt that I have some kind of connection with her. I never understood why, but I recently learned that she passed from kidney failure, and I myself am a survivor of kidney disease. I created the painting of her imagining how she may have looked had she had the privilege of living a long life.

*Do you have any wisdom that you think is important for young Indigenous artists to know?*

LM: Don't let anyone dictate what you paint or create, or how you get to the end product. There is no right and no wrong, no absolute way you must paint, or draw, or sculpt etc. Just do what makes you happy and gives you fulfilment at the end of the day.

*Your exhibition is called 'Storytelling' so can you share one or two stories about where the inspiration from one of your pieces comes from?*

LM: "Another Empty Dress" was inspired by and created in honour of MMIW. Hearing the stories of all these beautiful people taken far too soon I just couldn't stop thinking of all that had been robbed from them and their families. These beautiful souls who would never get to finish this dance we call life, and so I created this painting hoping to bring some peace to those who see it, knowing that they continue their dance wherever they are. I made her faceless and bodiless so one can imagine their own friend or relative, and because there are so many missing and murdered, how do you put a face on that?



**Haley Bassett**  
*Sage and Wolf Willow*, 2022  
Contemporary and antique  
seed beads, stroud cloth,  
sinew, yarn, thread, twill  
tape, and cotton fabric  
20.5" x 13.5"  
Collection of the Artist



# *Storytelling*

## *Education Guide*

### Table of Contents

How to Look at Art	22-23
Educator's Guided Tour	24-27
A Closer Look	28-31
Art Activities	
Pattern with Pointalism	32-33
Spirit Animal Painting	34-35
Telling Your Story	36-37

# How to Look at Artwork



## Based on the Four Stages of Criticism

Age Levels:

K-Grade 3: Do stage 1 and possibly stage 2

Grades 4-6: Do stage 1, 2 and possibly 3

Grades 7-12: Do all four stages

## Stage 1: Description

*What do we see when we look at a work of art?*

- List or describe all that you see. Hint: Start with what you know.
- Describe the subject. What is this a picture of? Landscape, nature, people, animals, flowers, still life, etc.
- Describe the materials used to make this art (medium/materials): Is it an acrylic or watercolor painting? Drawing? Photograph?
- Describe the type of lines. What kind of shapes are used? Natural or geometric? Is there any texture to the surface of the artwork (rough/smooth//dry/wet). Does the work have areas (values) of dark and light?

For Grades 10-12: Describe the style of work. Is it realistic or abstract? Does it have a theme or subject? Can you describe a style that it resembles? For example, Impressionism, Expressionism, Surrealist.

## Stage 2: Analysis - Observing Relationships

*How is this artwork (composition) arranged?*

- List and describe the principles of design (movement, contrast, unity, balance, emphasis, rhythm, scale and space).
- Are there contrasts of light and dark colors?
- Are colors or shapes repeated to create unity or rhythm? Is there a sense of motion?
- Do the objects seem to be close up and in a shallow space or move far back to create deep space and distance?
- Is there one object that stands out and is more emphasized than other objects?

For Grades 10-12:

- Does the artist use complimentary colors against each other to create balance?
- What type of balance is it (symmetrical or asymmetrical)?



## Stage 3: Interpretation

*What meaning or reasons did the artist have in making this artwork?*

This stage is a statement to help make sense of all the observations made in previous stages. It is the most difficult, yet most creative stage. It is the process that makes connections between the artwork and the viewer's personal experiences.

- What do you think this work is about?
- What mood or feeling do you get from this work?
- Why did the artist create this work?
- What do you think the artist thinks or feels about their world?
- Give an explanation of the work or describe the problem the artist is trying to solve. Remember there are no right or wrong answers in the interpretation. Each viewer will bring their own ideas and life experience into their explanations.

## Stage 4: Final Conclusion About the Work

*What do I think or feel about this work?*

Decide what you like or dislike about the work. This is purely subjective, however the decision should be backed with valid explanations and possible ideas as to how the artist could have changed it to make it better.

- Do you like the work? Why or why not?
- What are the strengths about this work?
- What are the weaknesses and how would you change them?
- Has your impression of the work changed after observing and analyzing the piece?

# Educator's Guided Tour

The exhibition *Storytelling* shares the voices and traditions of four Indigenous artists, Haley Bassett, Adrienne Greyeyes, Laurie McCallum, and Christina Wallwork. The relationships with the land, nature, plants, and animals influences their art. Some of the artists use their art to form connections with their past that has been severed. Some create to honour those whose lives were taken too soon. They use their art as a form of expression and to reclaim their culture.

Haley Bassett's pieces takes organic and inorganic materials and constructs symbols of history and identity. The authenticity of her pieces reflects northern communities. Each bead is carefully positioned and in doing so threads together ideas and stories of time and place. Flat backgrounds emphasise the intricacy and characteristics of her works. Much like a storyteller, from afar her pieces draw in the viewer to entice them to examine not only the works, but how they make the viewer feel. A labyrinth of natural depictions transports the viewer to fields of texture. Each point can be seen as part of a whole by the viewer, as they drift down through the soft draperies to the thread work below.

In *Fire Bag* both contemporary and antique seed beads are used weaving past and present items. Popular with the Métis people, fire bags were used to carry items like flint and steel, tobacco, and / or a pipe. The design

and floral aspects of the piece are resonating Métis dot art. The colours in this piece burst forth like a spark in darkness. A myriad of flowers showcasing the diversity of western fauna. The roots running deep like ancestral heritage and the history of the families that interacted with the natural world.

Adrienne Greyeyes' works in contrast to Haley's, emphasize the background as much as the added materials. Each piece has two different stories of overlapping lifecycles. Historical practices and imagery are underscored through the colourless photos and it is these historical practices that generate vibrant relationships with the land and identity. Her beadwork utilizes minimal bright imagery to create new stories. Dual focal points shift the viewer between varying knowledge and skillsets, honouring traditions and family stories.



**Haley Bassett**

*Fire Bag, 2022*

Contemporary and antique seed beads, stroud cloth, sinew, yarn, thread, twill tape, and cotton fabric  
20.5" x 13.5"

Collection of the Artist





**Adrienne Greeyes**

*Ohkomimāw*

2022


Gel transfer and glass beads  
on canvas

19" round canvas

Collection of the Artist

The contrasting imagery of the gel transfer picture and the glass beads are positioned almost independently in Adrienne's artwork, *Ohkomimāw*. The work and skill in processing hide is not covered up by the beads, presenting a frozen moment of patience, skill, knowledge, and beauty. The beadwork, although minimal, also takes patience, skill, and knowledge to create a beautiful image. The beadwork seeming to be applied to the background bag, as traditional practice would have beadwork applied to bags, clothing, and pouches. Two different focal points allow the viewer to think about each artform independently.

Laurie McCallum's pieces each portrays a strong focal point, and a depth of storytelling that the viewer becomes enveloped in. The stories can vary from hard statements to soft reflections. Each piece unique to the story that inspired Laurie to layer colours upon canvas. Shadows, colours, and wavy lines dance upon the pieces, exposing the viewer to concepts of beauty. From each piece a different story flows out ready to be told and interpreted by the viewer.



*Another Empty Dress* was inspired by and created in honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. The imagery represents the beautiful souls who will never get to finish this dance called life. The piece is meant to bring peace to those that view it. The focal point is the regalia with the dancer being made faceless and bodiless so that the viewer can imagine their own loved ones. The bright red contrasts with the stark black background. The possibility of light and life but then so quickly can become engulfed in darkness.

Two words to describe Christina Wallwork's pieces are reflection and spirituality. Christina's colours on canvas are each an independent experience with emotions that surface up, but are also grounded and connected to nature to express feeling. The images are brief poems telling stories of beginnings and endings, transformation, and creation. Spirit is the divine relationship between body and soul, and the deeper connections and questions about life are reflected in stories and teachings.

In *Connection*, Christina Wallwork uses abstraction in acrylic to paint a picture of her deep connection to nature and animals. The work shows an Indigenous woman who is becoming part of the Earth and the Earth is becoming a part of her. It also shows us how we as humans are dependent on the Earth and are a part of it. We need to treat the Earth as we would treat ourselves. The imagery is organic, and similar to nature does not follow any hard lines or have a viewable order.

This exhibition showcases different artistic mediums used to convey Indigenous imagery in the spirit of storytelling. As the viewers see the exhibition, it is the hope that they stop to think about the story that they would want to tell. What is your story and how would you express it to the world?

**Laurie McCallum**  
*Another Empty Dress*  
2022  
24" x 18"  
Acrylic on Canvas  
Collection of the Artist



# A Closer Look

## The Use of Materials in Indigenous Art

The art of beading has been very important in telling the stories of Indigenous people. Indigenous people were beading for at least 8000 years before settlers came to Turtle Island. The beads they used before settlers came, were made by mother nature. They used pearls, animal bones, shells and natural stones and would form the materials with stone or carving tools. They would then use these beads for a lot of the same things we use beads for today, decorating clothing, jewelry, and pouches. Beading patterns could also record events or agreements. Weaved patterns on Wampum belts recorded treaties between the settlers and Indigenous people. Beading was used for trade, ceremony, or everyday life. Families passed their beading patterns down from one generation to the next and this is still done today. Some patterns use floral designs, some are geometric, and some are abstract. Medicine bags and medicine pouches were also beautifully beaded and held inside them sacred medicines, such as tobacco, sweet grass, sage, and cedar some cases other objects that were sacred to the wearer and protected them. Medicine bags are still used today either for special occasions or for everyday use. Fire bags were used to carry items like flint and steel, tobacco, and a pipe and were popular with the Métis people.



Soapstone beads from the Hidden Springs site. From (asiheritage.ca)



Image of a totem pole. (indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca)

Totem poles are monumental sculptural forms of storytelling. The poles are typically made from cedar. Gratitude is offered to the tree selected for use in creation of a totem pole. Once carved, the poles could left unpainted or painted with synthetic paints or natural pigments like charcoal or ochre. Totem poles are created to tell the stories of Indigenous families and documentation of important events, family histories, or even legends. Totem poles are intrinsic to six west coast first nations. A raising ceremony is held for the totem pole where the community gathers to witness the generational depictions, share stories, and celebrate.

Another interesting art style used by Indigenous people in Canada was birch-bark biting. These artworks were typically created by the Anishinaabe, Cree and Algonquin people. Birch bark had many uses for them such as in the building of canoes and pictographic scrolls. Birch bark biting required birch bark to be thin and folded and then bitten in order to create beautiful patterns. They were also used as templates for creating other artworks with porcupine quills or beads. Quillwork uses dyed porcupine quills uses art to decorate items like regalia, clothing, and bags. Quillwork art is more than just artistry, it is a traditional knowledge system and is very rare.

## Why is Storytelling Through Art Important for Indigenous People?

There have always been stories to tell. Think back to the old days, then think back further to the beginnings of civilizations. People needed a way to share their experiences, dreams, or their fears, to share vital information through one generation to the next, or to explain their place in the world. For example, there are many stories about Turtle Island which you may know it by other names such as North America. Stories about Turtle Island were shared orally and through art, sculpting, weaving, and dancing. Traditional Indigenous storytelling was done orally, but through art it expands on sharing cultural heritage, and is another means to describe and animate history. Symbolism through art can show connection to the land, experiences, and spirituality. Artistic expression through storytelling is a huge part of being human and not only to Indigenous peoples but to people from all over the world.

Our story is the story of Turtle Island. Indigenous people are still fighting against discrimination and the effects of colonialism to this day. The voices of artists keep Indigenous people's culture, spirituality, wisdom, and history alive through storytelling. Storytelling and art create relationships between us other people both now and in the past. Utilizing artistic techniques, Indigenous people have been sharing information and stories for thousands of years. Storytelling is important in Indigenous culture both in the past, the present, and to the future.



Peterborough Petroglyphs Detail View. Parks Canada Agency/B. Morin, 1993.

Carved between 900-1400 C.E., the Peterborough Petroglyphs have the largest concentration of rock carvings in Canada. The carvings are both realistic and abstract showing animals, human forms, and symbolic imagery. Another location, the Agawa site is centuries old and is a place where generations commemorated dreams and spirits. Similar to the Petroglyphs, the Agawa site includes depictions of interactions with nature, including the spirit of water 'Mishipeshu'. Being created with red ochre, the Agawa site's images although resilient, have faded over time so there could have been many more depictions lost to natural conditions interacting with the imagery.

Indigenous people for thousands of years have had stories and ways to express them. Western bias and colonialism used stories against Indigenous peoples to create false myths, prejudice, stereotypes, and to silence Indigenous voices. Indigenous stories and information was being lost and destroyed. This impacted Indigenous communities as the stories and the culture and identities tied to these stories were silenced. Indigenous voices were being usurped by colonial perspectives. Slowly, Indigenous people have been taking back storytelling and asserting their right to share their voices, Indigenous people are once again being included in the narrative and shaping their own expression. History, ideas, and culture are being reclaimed and shared.

"My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back."

- Louis Riel

# A Closer Look

## The Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporated

An important group of artists, referred to as the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporated was formed in the 1970s. They came together to fight for their right to show their work in the Canadian art mainstream. They challenged the political and cultural context of pre-conceived notions of Indigenous art. They wanted to show that Indigenous artists are an important part of Canada's past and future. Together they had the ability to challenge barriers that would have been harder to counter individually. Many of their inspirations came from their ancestors, oral traditions, their own life experiences, their culture, their spirituality, and from storytelling. Stories animate the oral history and link the history of Indigenous communities. The imagery provided non-western stories and related to how individuals fit in with the land and connecting to non-human entities. Storytelling maintains connections and traditions. The artists of the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporated utilize their art to engage with their communities and kept current traditional ways. The group paved the way for Indigenous artistic autonomy and influenced the future of Indigenous artists. The following highlights a few members of the group.

Daphne Odjig was born in 1919 on Wikwemikong (or Manitoulin Island). She won many awards including the Order of Canada, the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, and was recipient of many honorary doctorates. Using bright bold colours, she mixed traditional Indigenous styles with cubist and surrealist styles. Her work has been both a celebration of her life, as well as spotlighting political issues such as colonization. She was a member of the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporated group.

Norval Morrisseau is considered the grandfather of contemporary Indigenous art in Canada. He founded the woodlands school of art and was a member of the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporated group. He painted artworks about the legends and culture of Indigenous peoples, spirituality, mysticism, and colonialism. He faced a lot of discrimination. His storytelling and the story his life is very important to Indigenous artists.

"This is my way of speaking to the public ... my visual language ... to convey what's inside my spirit."

– Alex Janvier



Windigo  
Norval Morrisseau, Windigo,  
tempera on brown paper, ca. 1963.  
(Glenbow Museum/64.37.9)



Thunderbird Man  
(courtesy Bernard Cinader  
collection/"Contemporary Indian  
Art: The Trail from the past to  
the future" Exhibition catalogue,  
Mackenzie Gallery, Native Studies  
Programme, Trent University,  
Peterborough, Ont, 1977).



*Morning Star (Gambeh Then)*  
by Alex Janvier  
(Canadian Museum of History)

# Pattern with Pointalism

Beading has a very long artistic and cultural history among Indigenous people in Canada. At least 8,000 years before Europeans came to Canada, First Nations people were using beads in elaborate designs and for trade. In Haley Bassett's Fire Bags, you will see beading onto fabrics, creating a bag which was used by her Méti ancestors to carry supplies for fires. Notice in Haley's work she uses glass beads along with materials found on her families land like wild rose hips and silver berries.

To create an activity for beginners, this pointillism activity gives a similar outcome to what traditional beading looks like.

## Materials

- Cardstock Paper
- Pencils
- Felt Markers

## INSTRUCTIONS

### Step 1

Look at the works in the exhibition and notice the patterns in Haley and Adrienne's beadwork and think about an image you would like to draw on your paper. It could be something from nature like a flower, tree, sun or animal. Just remember to keep the drawing simple. You can add some linework or shapes around your image and create a pattern.

### Step 2

Once you have the drawing done, take your markers and start creating points along the line. Do the points in segments, the example piece shows how we went around the edge of the leaf then moved in and did another line of points around the leaf until it was filled in, then moved to the next area.

### Step 3

You will see the points create a line pattern which looks similar to the beadwork in the exhibition.

### Step 4

Once the image is complete and move on to the linework or shapes that were drawn around the main image.





# Spirit Animal Painting



## Overview

Inspired by Christina Wallwork's painting, *Story of Turtle Island*, we will create a painting using an animal character that expresses us as a person. In the book, *Spirit Animals-Meanings & Stories* by Wayne Arthurson he says "Animals were important to North America's First People. They relied on animals for food, clothing, shelter, tools, weapons, medicines, ceremonies, jewelry and for many other purposes. They used every part of the animal. Native people believe animals had spirits and could gift individuals with healing and offer guidance. They paid attention to their behavior and gave them descriptions." The book is seen as a guide for you to read about what each animal's importance is to the Native people.

## Materials

- Canvas
- Printed Image of Animal
- Tracing Paper
- Pencil
- Acrylic Paint
- Paintbrushes
- Sharper Marker

## INSTRUCTIONS

### Step 1

Get the participants to choose an animal they have a connection with or are attracted to. Then you can search the animal in the 'Spirit Animal' book and explain what each animal stands for in the Indigenous culture.

### Step 2

Once they have the animal chosen, start drawing it onto the canvas if they feel comfortable doing so. If they want to trace the image onto the canvas, print out the animal on a 8.5 x 11 pieces of paper, make sure to scale image to fill paper and use the tracing paper behind the print out to draw it onto the canvas.

### Step 3

After they have the image drawn on the canvas, sketch some symbols into the animal that are meaningful to you. Add some shapes and pattern to fill in the animal. In the background add images like sun, moon, nature elements.

### Step 4

Trace pencil lines with black paint using a small brush or black sharpie if that's easier.

### Step 5

Start filling in your animal and shapes with paint. Then once the animal is complete fill in the background with colour and detail. You can have fun here with the background or stick with one solid colour.



(Optional) Display the text below on a label beside the painting.

Wolf – Throughout history, the wolf has been one of the most feared animals. Scorned for centuries, they were hunted almost to extinction in Europe and North America. Native peoples held different views about the wolf than Europeans. The wolf was not an animal to be feared. It was respected and honored by almost every Native. Like the bear, the wolf is thought to be like family to many Native peoples. It is called brother or cousin to humans.



# Telling Your Story

## Overview

The artworks in this exhibition have a story behind them. Indigenous storytelling uses oral tradition, dance, music, and art to express the history of their people. These stories have been passed down through the generations not only as an oral history, but to share where to find certain places to harvest and hunt, along with vital information for survival. In this activity, you will tell a story by choosing imagery that is important to you. If you look at Adrienne Greyeyes beaded canvas pieces, take in the stories that are expressed and told in these pieces. Also in Laurie McCallum's paintings, you will see that she has used imagery to tell her heritage and story. For this activity you will choose images that tell your story, whether its images of your favorite things to do, about your family's history, images of your family or friends, what you're passionate about (hockey, music, dance etc.) You get to choose what your canvas will tell the viewer.

## Materials

- Canvas (round or rectangle)
- Mod Podge Glue
- Your Images (printed on printer paper)
- Brush
- Scissors
- Water and Sponge
- Q-Tips
- Acrylic Paint

## INSTRUCTIONS

### Step 1

Find images that tell the story you want to tell. Print them out from a photocopier or printer.

Note: The images will come out backwards so if it has words on it or its an image you want to look the same as what it looks like on the screen, under tools you will find 'mirror image' or 'horizontal flip' button to edit the picture before printing.

### Step 2

Cut the image out of the paper and start laying them onto the canvas in the design you like. You can overlay the images a little if you like.

### Step 3

Place your images to the side in the layout you wanted. Get out the Mod Podge glue and brush it over the canvas in a thick layer. Then lay your images back down onto the canvas, image side down so it transfers. Press them down, so they are in complete contact with the canvas.

### Step 4

Let the canvas dry overnight. 24 hours is ideal for drying time.

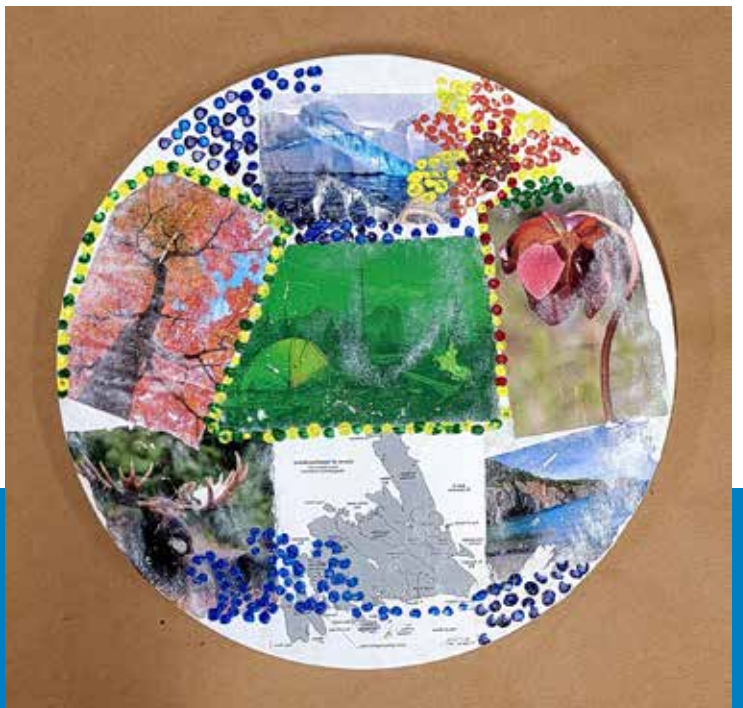
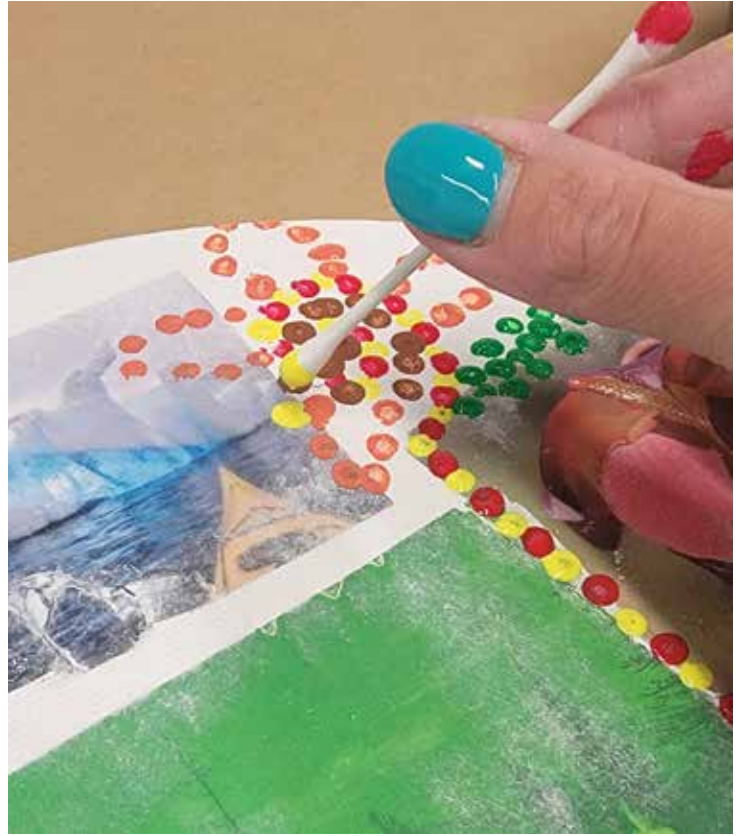
### Step 5

The next day get your water and sponge out and gently start rubbing the paper off in a circular motion. It will slowly start peeling off and revealing the image. Note: If you rub too hard you will take the image off the canvas, so be gentle and only remove the white paper backing, not the image transfer.

### Step 6

Once you have all the paper removed, we can move to the last step. As you see in Adrienne Greyeyes work, she has done photo transfer with beadwork stitched into the canvas. To replicate this beading, we will use Q-Tips and paint. Get your Q-Tip and dip it in the paint colours of your choice. You can outline your images with just a simple pattern, create a shape or object like a flower or anything related to the story you're telling.

Note: If you have an older group of participants, you could try beadwork on the canvas. Here is a video on YouTube to help with this demonstration.



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# Acknowledgements

TREX Northwest would like to credit the Alberta Foundation for the Arts for the Travelling Exhibition Program. We would like to thank the Art Gallery of Grande Prairie for supporting this region, as well as the following individuals who contributed to the preparation of this travelling exhibition:

Curator: Jamie-Lee Cormier  
Education: Christina Wallwork  
Art Projects: Jamie-Lee Cormier  
Catalogue Design : Melanie Jenner  
Published 2023

Special Thanks to:  
Gail Lint - Art Collection Consultant, Alberta Foundation for the Arts  
Robert Swanston - Chief Preparator, Art Gallery of Grande Prairie





# ART GALLERY of GRANDE PRAIRIE

Alberta Foundation for the Arts  
Travelling Exhibition Program



The Traveling Exhibition Program Region 1: Northwest  
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