

"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, July 4, 1885

Tapping into the creative energy of Indigenous youth is of the utmost importance in the maintenance and nurturing of Indigenous arts, and to provide youth a means to reinterpret customs with fresh trends and insights. *Aboriginal Arts & Stories* provides an opportunity for Indigenous youth to explore heritage and culture by reflecting upon meaningful cultural elements, and encourages them to transform their stories and visions into a personal and original form of art.

Your entry into the *Aboriginal Arts & Stories* competition must include a 200-400 word artist's statement that explains how your piece explores Indigenous heritage and culture and tells us a little about yourself. The prompts in the Artist's Statement section are guidelines; you may choose to express yourself differently.

You may enter online at our-story.ca or by mail.



▲ *Music of the Métis*, Amber Wilkinson, St. Andrews, Manitoba, Métis. Aboriginal Arts & Stories Winner, 2012.

PROJECT 1: The Many Patterns of Me

A. Introduction to the Project Idea

Create your own patterns with cultural symbols that express your beliefs and what is important to you. Create your own motif (a recurrent thematic element in an art piece). Select and/or research the meaningful symbols and patterns from your Indigenous community. Create an original art piece by arranging an interesting layout of the symbols and patterns. The layout and composition could be in a linear format or could even become the shape of a symbol.

B. Process: Understanding, Thinking and Sketching

- Generally, cultural symbols and patterned designs derive from a group's customs, beliefs and meanings in nature. Often there are symbols for the sun, moon, stars, water, fire, birds and other animals. There are good luck and bad luck symbols, and there are good and bad spirits. There are symbols that represent life, death, hope, fertility and abundance.

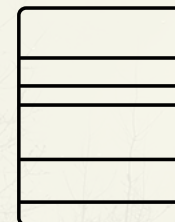
The top right is an example of a traditional pattern.

- In your sketchbook, brainstorm four lists:
 - Morals and values that are important to you
 - Things that are important to you
 - Character traits that describe you best
 - Things you like and like to do
- Now circle what is most important to you in the four lists.

- Do some research to come up with symbols and patterns that represent the circled items from your brainstormed lists. Feel inspired to create your very own symbol(s) and/or pattern(s).
- Sketch and create your symbols and patterns. Create a rough sketch of your composition. Practice techniques.

C. Creation of Art Piece

Create a composition using your symbols and patterns. You could create a symmetrical design, or you could create an abstract design where your symbol is repeated in different sizes and configurations. Your layout and design could be linear (e.g. patterns within horizontal spaces) or be in the shape of a symbol (e.g. patterns in the feather shape and in the rectangular spaces).



e.g. linear



e.g. shape of symbol

Media Suggestions: You could use acrylics, printmaking (stencil, softoleum), pencil crayon, image transfer, or mixed media to create your pattern.

D. Artist's Statement: 200 – 400 words

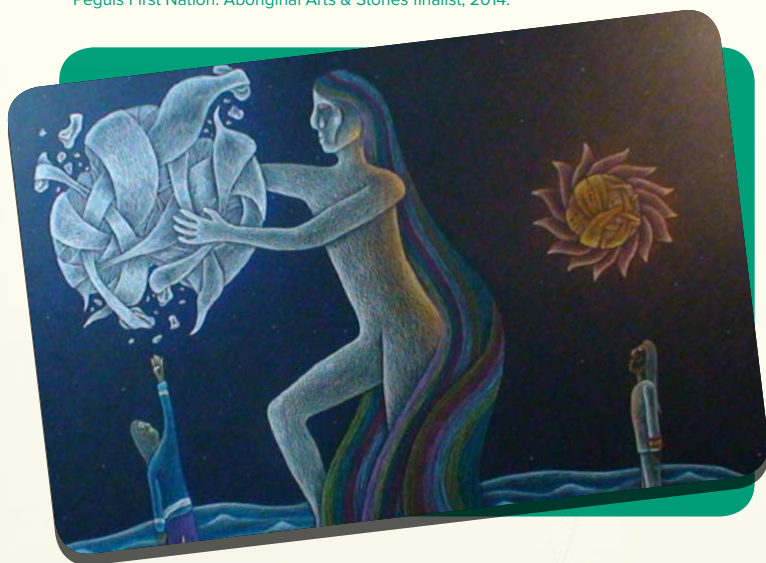
Visit our-story.ca for examples.

PROJECT 2: A Story Comes to Life

A. Introduction to the Project Idea

As a child you probably had a few favourite myths or legends that were told to you with great enthusiasm by your family, friends or teachers. These myths and legends offered you insight as to how things came to be and the understanding of a set of moral values distinct to your culture and community. Select one story to depict as a comic strip or collage illustration. Create an original art piece that illustrates your chosen story.

▼ *Wisakedjak and the Moon*, Jordan Stranger, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Peguis First Nation. Aboriginal Arts & Stories finalist, 2014.



B. Process: Understanding, Thinking and Sketching

1. Decide upon the story you will use as a reference for your art piece. You may need to research the story. Find your story and print it out.
2. In your sketchbook, create three lists:
 1. Morals and values of the story
 2. Main characters of the story
 3. Symbols within the story
3. Now circle what is most important to you in the lists.
4. Using the information from your lists, sketch and create your composition in either a comic style or collage illustration style. Practice techniques.

C. Creation of Art Piece

Create a well-balanced and original composition (comic strip or collage illustration) that illustrates the story.

Media Suggestions:

Comic Strip: marker, pencil crayon, watercolour, mixed media
Collage Illustration: marker, pencil crayon, watercolour, image transfer, mixed media

D. Artist's Statement: 200 – 400 words

PROJECT 3: My Logo is Me

A. Introduction to the Project Idea

Music artists, bands, clothing designers, food products and sports teams all use original logos to advertise their product. A logo is a symbol or label of the person, company or designer. It identifies the 'who' and 'what' of the product, with the aim of establishing an instantly recognizable graphic mark to an audience.

Your goal is to create a personal logo that represents who you are and what you are all about, within the confines of simple graphics and icon-like symbols. Today's logo designs tend to be simple and to the point. Clarity and concision are important design qualities.

B. Process: Understanding, Thinking and Sketching

1. Your personal logo should include references to your heritage, symbols that are important to you and parts of your personality.
2. In your sketchbook, brainstorm three lists that reflect:
 1. Your culture
 2. Symbols that are important to you
 3. Your personality

3. Now circle what is most important to you in the lists.
4. Using the information from your lists, sketch simple yet illustrative logo designs that reflect important parts of who you are.

Example of a personal logo design. 28131742
© Artyom Yefimov | Dreamstime.com



C. Creation of Art Piece

Create a well-balanced personal logo design.

Media Suggestions:

- a) The logo design can be rendered by hand using pencil crayon, markers/fine liners, or gouache.
- b) If a graphics software program is accessible (i.e., Adobe Illustrator or Adobe Photoshop) then the logo design can be created using one of these programs. The hand-rendered logo design can also be scanned and then 'cleaned-up' in these programs as well.

D. Artist's Statement: 200 – 400 words

PROJECT 4: My Sense of Place

A. Introduction to the Project Idea

This digital photography project is inspired by a Canadian artist named Marlene Creates. Creates' work explores the idea of one's 'Sense of Place.' This project explores images that address the idea of one's own 'Sense of Place':

1. Think of a place in your school, community, or home that brings you a sense of comfort. Choose a place that is distinctive to you, that holds significance, and where you feel connected.
2. Write about the image(s) that represent a 'Sense of Place' to you. In your writing, explore why this place (or these places) are special to you.

Interior of a Longhouse. A photograph of a reconstructed longhouse interior. ID 7067060 © Christopher Meder | Dreamstime.com



B. Process: Understanding, Thinking and Sketching

1. Think of a special spot or location in your school, your home, or your community.
2. Imagine the kind of photographic shot you would like to capture for each 'Sense of Place.' Then, in your sketchbook, draw each of the spaces and for each, think of the kind of shot you want to compose (i.e., close up, medium shot, bird's eye, worm's eye, etc.) Decide if you (or a part of you, or another person) will be in the composition.

Decide if the images will be in full colour or in black-and-white. If you have access to hand colouring supplies (e.g., watercolours) then you could hand colour parts of your black-and-white photograph in order to highlight or enhance particular subject matter. If Adobe Photoshop or another photographic editing program is accessible, then photographs can be enhanced using the tools provided in the program.

Note: The use of digital or photographic editing programs is optional.

3. For each shot, think of one statement or reaction to your 'Sense of Place.' Write each statement on a separate piece of paper. You could photograph the statements with the photographs themselves, or you can leave the photos to speak for themselves.

C. Creation of Art Piece

1. Using your digital camera, you are now ready to take several shots of each 'Sense of Place' that you have realized.
2. Decide on your best photographic compositions for each 'Sense of Place' and its corresponding statements. Be sure the images are in focus and well-balanced.
3. If you would like, you can print these images on photo-quality paper or have them printed at a photography or print store. You can also leave them as digital images.

D. Artist's Statement: 200 – 400 words

For additional ideas and inspiration for your piece, visit our-story.ca to read about our past winners and our jury of celebrated artists.