

RAG

RICHMOND ART GALLERY
School Art Program



Teacher Guide

Diyan Achjadi and Shawn Hunt: *Cultural Conflation*
October 15 to December 31, 2016

Table of Contents

Program Overview	3
Program Goals	3
Big Ideas explored.....	3
Before Your Visit	4
At the Gallery	5
About The Exhibition	5
About The Artists	8
After Your Visit	9
Resources	11
Glossary	12
Image Credits	13
School Program Supporters and Partners	13

Program Overview

Dear Teachers,

This guide contains information about the exhibition, the artists, and some classroom activities that will help you to prepare your students for their visit to the Richmond Art Gallery. Please review this package with your students to get the most out of your gallery visit. The suggested activities require a minimum of materials and are adaptable to the needs of different grade levels.

Throughout the guide you will find art vocabulary words in bold that are defined in the vocabulary section, and resource links have been included for further topic explorations.

Program Goals

The goals of the gallery tour and art workshop are to encourage students to:

- Describe and respond to works of art and explore artists' intent
- Observe and share how artists use processes, materials, and techniques to express ideas
- Explore personal experience, community, and culture through art making
- Examine the relationship between art and the wider world
- Create artworks using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

Big Ideas explored

- People create art to express who they are as individuals and as a community
- People connect to others and share ideas through the arts
- Exploring works of art exposes us to diverse values, knowledge, and perspectives
- Works of art influence and are influenced by the world around us
- Artistic expressions differ across time and place
- Experiencing art challenges our point of view and expands our understanding of others

Before Your Visit

Diyan Achjadi and Shawn Hunt draw upon their cultural backgrounds to create works inspired by tradition with a contemporary twist. By combining visual and thematic elements from different nations, peoples, and ethnic groups, these artists ask us to think about how we define and understand different cultures, and how culture is represented.

Primary (K-3) Discussion: What is Culture?

In this activity students will begin to identify what it means to be a part of a culture. Pose the question 'what is culture' on a whiteboard or piece of paper and write down their answers. Show pictures of various cultures to the students and ask them what they notice or question. After the students have looked at the photos get them to describe our Canadian culture and discuss the similarities and differences to the cultural images they have looked at.

Pictures of various cultures: <http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/photo-of-the-day/people-culture/>

Intermediate/Secondary Discussion: How is culture expressed?

Culture itself is difficult to define, as it is experienced from within, but one way to start examining this notion is to consider what elements make up a culture, and how culture is expressed. Pose this question to the class, and ask them to think of examples drawing from their own lives, and from groups they may have studied in class. Compile a list on the board of ways that culture can be expressed, such as with art, story, clothing, food, myths, festivals, or customs. Now ask students to think of examples where different cultures meet or interact. What are some advantages to cultures mixing? What are the possible problems that can occur? What mindset should we have if we want to avoid misunderstanding a culture different from our own?

Activity: Culture is all around us

Ask each student to bring something to class that represents "culture" to them. It can be an actual item, or a cultural expression such as a dance, a song, a festival, or a story. In a circle, have students take turns sharing their cultural "item" with the group, and why it is important to them.

Extension: Cultural Alphabet Book

Create an alphabet book about culture as a class, or have students create one individually using the lesson plan Promoting Culture Through Alphabet Books: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/promoting-cultural-values-through-1134.html?tab=4#tabs>

At the Gallery

Your visit will start with a gallery tour of our current exhibition *Cultural Conflation*. During the tour we will look at various artworks in depth, and discuss the overall themes of the exhibition.

Ideas explored through this exhibition:

- The ways that culture is expressed through art, and the role art plays in different cultures
- The ways that Indigenous cultures adapted and responded to trade and colonization
- How artists today use traditional art styles and techniques in ways that explore contemporary issues

After the tour, we will go into the gallery classroom and look at the ways patterns and symbols can represent different aspects of culture. Using printmaking and mixed media techniques, students will use shape, symbols, and repetition to create patterns which will combine to reflect their own cultural heritage.

About The Exhibition

[Cultural Conflation](#) brings together the artwork of Diyan Achjadi and Shawn Hunt, which on first glance, look very different. But uniting the work is the theme of culture, specifically the ways in which culture is expressed and understood from within a society, the ways certain cultures have been viewed by outside groups, and how cultures change and evolve through contact with other cultures.

Diyan Achjadi is a Vancouver-based artist born in Jakarta, Indonesia. Her father is West-Javanese while her mother is English-Canadian. Her formative years span several countries which fostered her fascination with analyzing how different educational, political, and cultural systems contribute to the art of a society.

The Republic of Indonesia is an incredibly diverse nation, with a population of 215 million people from more than 200 ethnic groups. Geographically, it is the world's largest archipelago, made up of literally thousands of islands, contributing to the diversity of cultures found there. In addition to Indigenous cultures, Indonesia has been influenced by many outside nations through trade,



immigration, and colonization. In the face of this diversity, Diyan Achjadi has grappled with the question “How does one define Indonesian identity or culture?”

Images, such as maps, patterns, or illustrations are powerful communication tools, and our ideas about a people or a place are often shaped by what we see. Diyan started her process of examining this question of Indonesian identity by looking at images that had been produced of or about Indonesia throughout history. Achjadi’s artwork blends 18th century Dutch maps, 16th century drawings of exotic animals, and European wallpaper designs with traditional Javanese **Batik** fabric patterns, figures from Indonesian folk tales, and pop-culture references such as **ben-day** dots from comic book illustrations, creating a cultural **mash-up** that reflects the complexity of modern-day Indonesian culture.

While paintings and drawings are art mediums that readily come to mind, Achjadi reminds us that art encompasses many more forms of expression, such as decorative arts and crafts like wallpaper and fabric designs, commercial printing and reproductions, illustrations, maps, and animation. The diversity of art mediums Achjadi uses mirrors the diversity of cultures, patterns, and visual references found within her artwork.





Shawn Hunt combines traditional Northwest Coast carving with European art history in his sculptures. He is of Heiltsuk and European-Canadian ancestry, and is the son of prominent Heiltsuk artist Bradley Hunt, from whom he learned carving. Carving is essentially a subtractive process, where one starts with a whole, and then removes materials to reveal the sculpture beneath. For *Cultural Conflation*, Hunt wanted to push the boundaries of traditional carving, and turned to **assemblage** as a means to create a **mash-up** of Northwest Coast and European art.



Assemblage is a type of sculpture which is additive, rather than subtractive, and involves taking separate elements and putting them together to create a whole. In the art studio he shares with his father and brother Dean, who is also an artist, Shawn found lots of smaller pieces such as carved masks, canoes, totem poles, feast dishes, and tool handles which were either unfinished or smaller models for larger artworks. Taking these separate pieces that reflect the Heiltsuk culture, Hunt assembled them into a sculpture of a figure in a pose you would typically see in Western art history.

In doing so, these artworks ask us to consider both the issue of **cultural appropriation**, as Hunt is appropriating Western art conventions in much the same way Indigenous art has been appropriated throughout history, and the efforts of the Canadian Government and church organizations to assimilate Indigenous peoples in Canada by outlawing their cultural practices and beliefs and replacing them with European ones.

“I have never felt like I really belonged to any one particular movement, culture, category, or clique. As an artist this has given me an incredible amount of freedom. I don’t feel that my work is conceptual, traditional, artifact or craft. It is neither ancient nor modern. Instead, I feel as though my work has elements of all of these categories. This is a freedom that allows me to distort, subvert, hijack and remix these categories in order to offer new points of view. I want to challenge the viewers’ preconceptions. I like the idea of art being like a catalyst, or a flash point. I think art is most powerful when it poses questions, not when it gives the viewer the answers. My goal is to make the viewer think.” (Source: shawnhunt.net)

About The Artists

Diyan Achjadi

Born in Jakarta, Indonesia to a West-Javanese father and an English-Canadian mother, Achjadi grew up moving between Jakarta, Hong Kong, London, and Washington DC. Her formative years were spent negotiating different educational, political, and cultural systems, leading to an ongoing interest in how our understanding of ideologies is influenced and informed by the visual popular culture that surrounds us. She holds a BFA from the Cooper Union School of Art in New York and a MFA from Concordia University in Montreal. Achjadi currently resides in Vancouver, BC where she is an Associate Professor of Visual Arts and Material Practice at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design.

Artist’s website: diyanachjadi.com

Shawn Hunt

Shawn Hunt received a diploma in studio art from Capilano College and holds a BFA from the University of British Columbia where he majored in sculpture and drawing. Hunt comes from a family of artists; his father is J. Bradley Hunt, a prominent Heiltsuk artist with whom Shawn apprenticed for five years, learning wood and jewelry carving as well as traditional design. Hunt is represented by the Macaulay & Co. Fine Art in Vancouver. Hunt’s work has most recently been exhibited at *An Agreeable State of Uncertainty* at the Vancouver Art Gallery, *Shapeshifter*, Burrard Art Foundation, Vancouver; and *Artifake*, Macaulay Fine Art, Vancouver. He was born in Vancouver and is of Heiltsuk, Scottish Canadian ancestry, now living in Sechelt, BC.

Artist’s website: shawnhunt.net

After Your Visit

Art Activity: Patterned textile art inspired by Indonesian Batik

Batik Fabrics are one of the world's most beautiful textile arts, and encompass a wide range of patterns that relate to Javanese history and culture, as well as the many different ethnic groups that have migrated to or colonized Indonesia. Batik is done by drawing patterns onto fabric with melted wax, submerging the cloth into dye solutions, and then heating once dyed to remove the wax, leaving the pattern behind. To achieve the same resist effect, in this lesson we will substitute flour paste and paint for wax and dye to create classroom-friendly textile art inspired by Batik.

Materials

Flour
Water
Sieve & mixing bowls
Liquid tempera or liquid acrylic paint
Masking Tape
Plain white cotton fabric
Cardboard
Squeeze bottles or icing bags and nibs

Cut the fabric into smaller, manageable pieces for students. Letter size is a good scale for this project.

Thinking of all the patterns they saw in the gallery, and the various ways in which culture can be represented visually, ask students to create a pattern for fabric that reflects their culture. Have students draw out their designs on paper first, ensuring the total design is smaller than the fabric size to leave a border.

Cut the cardboard into pieces larger than the fabric, so it can be a flat base for taping down the fabric. Place the drawing down first, then the fabric, then tape them both down well to the cardboard.

Mix the flour and water in a 50:50 ratio, stirring well. Sieve the mixture into a second bowl to eliminate any lumps then fill the plastic squeeze bottles or icing bags.

Have students trace over their designs, or younger students can just draw a pattern directly onto the fabric. This pattern can consist of dots and lines, or larger shapes filled in with the paste.

Set aside to dry overnight. The fabric will pucker due to the moisture, this is to be expected and will not affect the design.

The next class re-tape the now dried fabric to the cardboard bases, straightening the fabric out as much as possible. Tape a clean border around the design. Optionally you can gently crumple up the fabric before taping it to create cracks in the paste which will give you a crackle effect in your final artwork.

Mix liquid tempera (good quality like *Chromatemp*) or liquid acrylic paint with some water to make it slightly more watery and easier to paint with. Students can paint the entire fabric with one colour, or paint sections of the design with different colours. Make sure students paint up to the lines, and over the paste if the crackle effect is desired. Set aside to dry overnight.

The next class, peel off the flour paste revealing the pattern. You may iron the finished fabric to flatten it if desired.

Video demonstrating this process: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hi3cG4RxNE>

Video about Batik by the Indonesia Batik Museum
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wylWYSHkzoQ>

UNESCO page on Indonesia Batik <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/lists?RL=00170>

Resources

Javanese Culture:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javanese_culture

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio/timeline-dutch-history/1820-1950-indonesia-and-decolonisation>

Heiltsuk Culture:

Heiltsuk Nation <http://www.heiltsuknation.ca/about-2/heiltsuk-culture/>

Historical Notes <http://www.hcec.ca/heiltsuk.html>

CCIRA <http://ccira.ca/site/communities/heiltsuk.html>

Heiltsuk History <http://www.heiltsuknation.ca/about-2/history/>

Cultural Appropriation:

Lesson plan on cultural appropriation:

<http://sites.tufts.edu/luissoltero/files/2010/09/Appropriation.pdf>

Good articles on cultural appropriation:

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/appreciating-culture-treaty-payments-problematic-colouring-books-and-getting-back-to-the-land-1.3675693/art-appropriation-and-the-damaging-economic-effect-on-indigenous-artists-1.3677636>

<http://racerelements.about.com/od/diversitymatters/fl/What-Is-Cultural-Appropriation-and-Why-Is-It-Wrong.htm>

Mash-ups:

Lesson ideas for artistic mash-ups:

<http://www.ipadartroom.com/mixing-making-and-mash-ups/>

Glossary

Assemblage	A form of sculpture created by assembling or putting together separate objects, either man-made or natural, to create an artwork.
Batik	A method of creating patterns on cloth by drawing patterns first with melted wax, submerging the cloth into dye solutions, and then heating the cloth to remove the wax. Batik is still an integral part of daily life in Java, Indonesia, with many patterns holding significant cultural and social meaning.
Ben Day Dot	A technique for producing shading and colour in printed images by using a pattern of dots. When overlaid, these create different colours, shades, and tones in the final image.
Conflation	The combination or fusing of two or more elements into a single unit or identity.
Contemporary Art	Artwork that is produced in this current time, generally considered to be artworks made from 1970 to the present. Contemporary art is a very broad term, including artworks made in almost any medium and incorporating many different themes and ideas.
Culture	The behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group.
Cultural Appropriation	The adoption or use of elements of one culture by members of another culture. It is problematic when this is done without understanding or permission by the borrowing culture.
Mash-up	Something created by combining elements from two or more sources
Medium	The material or technique used by the artist to make an artwork. For example, paint is the medium used in a painting.
Sculpture	A sculpture is a three-dimensional work of art. Sculptures may be a carved, modeled, constructed or cast object that can be made of many different art materials.

Image Credits

Cover: Diyan Achjadi, *A Series of Impositions* (detail), 2014, Ink, gouache, acrylic and silkscreen collage on paper

Page 5: Diyan Achjadi, *Fragmentary Creature 2* (detail), 2012-2016, Cut paper, prints

Page 6: Diyan Achjadi, *It started as a story about a mountain, the end*, 2016, Ink, gouache, and pencil on paper

Page 7: Upper Image: Shawn Hunt, **Foreground** *Reclining Figure*, 2016, Red cedar, yellow cedar, horsehair. **Background** *The Storyteller*, 2016, Red cedar, yellow cedar, paint, horsehair

Lower Image: Photo of Shawn Hunt installing *Goddess*, 2016, Red cedar, yellow cedar, horsehair

School Program Supporters and Partners



The Richmond Art Gallery School Art Program is one of many gallery programs made possible by the Richmond Art Gallery Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to extending the reach of our gallery exhibitions through community programming.



Generous support for the School Art Program provided by [TD Bank Group](#)



We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia



Canada Council for the Arts
Conseil des arts du Canada



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