

Kansas City Young Audiences

Teacher Program Guide

Art and Culture of the Plains and Prairie Indians

Artist: Sharyn Brooks Katzman

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Contact KCYA for more information on this and other programs.

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Workshop Description

This 45-minute presentation introduces art production and the culture of the Prairie and Plains Indians. The presentation focuses on groups living in the Kansas City area.

The workshop begins with a discussion of the Plains Indians' cultural diversity, such as differences among their family members, neighborhoods, towns, and states.

The students will further examine how and why Native peoples decorated everyday objects, their dwellings, clothing, and themselves. These adornments served as symbolic signals that identified social place, membership, spiritual beliefs, and numerous other ideologies. This iconography was also used to show respect to the historical relationship the Plains people

had to the bison and the land.

The students will be given an opportunity to appreciate the wide variety and innovative uses of natural materials used by these semi-nomadic cultures. Participants will be given the opportunity to dispel inaccurate expectations and stereotypes of Plains and Prairie cultures and appreciate the contribution these native peoples gave to contemporary art, spirituality, and modern culture.



Educational Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Be introduced to the art production of the indigenous people of the Plains and Prairie
- Understand how and why they decorated everyday object, dwellings, and clothing

National Behavior Standards:

- Know how a culture's art and artifacts reflects its values

History Standards

- Know what individuals and groups have played major roles in historical events

Special Points of Interest:

When Indians were moved onto reservations, the U.S. government saw traditional dancing as incendiary and banned all public performances. The ban was eventually lifted in 1933.

Special REQUIREMENTS:

Screen and extension cord; slide projector recommended but not required

Artist Bio: Sharyn Brooks Katzman

A lecture or demonstration with Sharyn Brooks Katzman is dynamic and engaging. Sharyn holds degrees in history and art history, has written art criticism, works for museums and schools, and has a global view from living and working in various European and Asian countries. With experience in curating exhibitions and developing programs, she is attuned to a wide variety of audiences.

Formerly a printmaker, Sharyn creates jewelry and wear-

able art and loves to teach at all levels. While grounded in academics and tied to curricula, her experience in local theater infuses her presentations with verve and fun. She is particularly knowledgeable in the fields of women's studies, African and African-American art, and Native American art and culture. Her programs aid critical and creative thinking, build self-esteem, encourage inquiry, and inspire ongoing study on the part of students.



Vocabulary

indigenous: originating in and typical of a region or country

nishnabe'negIn (Potawatomi:) are you Indian?

pe'besiyuk (Potawatomi:) beads

Plains Indian: a member of any of the Native American peoples that in the past lived on the Great Plains of North America

Totem pole: among some Native North American peoples, a tall wooden pole carved with totems that symbolize family and historical relationships

travois: a sled made of two poles connected by a frame and pulled by an animal

Wíblaha (Kanza:) Thank you

Witómbe ta minkhé (Kanza:) I'll be seeing you

List of Resources

BOOKS

Daily Life in a Plains Indian Village 1868 by Michael Terry (Author), Clarion Books, August, 1999
ISBN: 0395974992

Life in a Plains Camp (Native Nations of North America) by Bobbie Kalman
Crabtree Pub; Illustrated edition, April 2001
ISBN: 0778704610

Buffalo Hunt
by Russell Freedman
Holiday House, October 1988
ISBN: 0823407020

Post-Workshop Activities

1. Discuss how the art shown and discussed illustrated the interrelationships of Indian art and culture.
2. Ask students if, how, and why their initial perspectives on the Plains and Prairie Indians have changed.
3. Have students research a well-known Native American Plains Indian and make a drawing of that specific person or an event that took place during that time period. Next, have them write a short paragraph about the picture they have drawn.
4. Ask students to bring in materials from home (paper, cloth, shoeboxes, etc.) to construct a model of the Native American lodges and teepees that were shown on the slides in the presentation.

