

Salish Weave Box Sets: Art & Storytelling Activities

Developed by Courtney Vance in consultation with Ashley Edwards, 2023.

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About the project

SFU Library's [Indigenous Curriculum Resource Centre](#) was created in response to the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action](#) in assisting the SFU teaching community with Indigenizing and decolonizing their curriculum. [The Salish Weave Box Sets: Art & Storytelling Project](#) is one research project the ICRC has created toward this goal.

Funded by the Salish Weave Fund held at the Victoria Foundation, the Salish Weave Box Sets: Art & Storytelling Project is centered around highlighting the voices of the artists within the [Salish Weave Collection Box Sets](#), following Indigenous research methodologies. In particular, this project's goal was to look into art as pedagogy and storywork, as described by Q'um Q'um Xiim in her 2008 book, [Indigenous Storywork](#).

The collection is recorded conversations between the artists, Ashley Edwards, and Courtney Vance. Within these conversations, artists share their influences, processes, what it's like being a First Nations artist, and how art is a source of knowledge sharing.

Ashley Edwards is Métis, Scottish, and Dutch, and a Métis Nation BC citizen. Ashley has her MLIS (University of Alberta), BA in Adult Education (University of the Fraser Valley / UFV), and a Library Technician diploma (UFV). Through her work and research, Ashley examines decolonizing education, the concept of literature, and Indigenous information literacy.

Courtney is Northern-Tutchone and German, and a member of Selkirk First Nation. Courtney has her BA in Sociology, and Gender Studies (SFU) and is currently completing her master's in Sociology (SFU). In her work and research, Courtney is interested in Indigenous planning, planning in Vancouver, and the concept of reconciliation.

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About the activities

The activities were developed after the recorded conversations took place and generated by Courtney Vance with the help of Ashley Edwards. The goal of these activities are to serve as an extension of the videos to help generate discussion in a classroom or group setting.

As a starting point, the activities are arranged first by the artist, then by suggested discipline. These suggested categories are based on our own experiences and interpretations, and it is encouraged to use the questions across disciplines where it seems appropriate.



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Activities by artists

lessLIE

lessLIE is of Cowichan, Penaklut and Equimalt Nations and of Irish, Italian, and French heritage. He began learning Coast Salish art during his undergraduate degree in First Nations Studies from Malaspina College. He often uses visual punning in his art which is related to his background in English literature.

- What is visual punning, described by the artist lessLIE? Try to create your own visual pun – this does not need to be an elaborate drawing, try sketching out your idea or describing your idea in words.
- lessLIE describes his cultural reality as grounded in a contemporary Coast Salish perspective that still draws on tradition. While this is in his work as an artist, reflect on what your cultural reality is as a student.
- lessLIE discusses Coast Salish ownership and appropriation of Indigenous cultures. What is cultural appropriation? Reflect on how lessLIE's piece *THEIRS* examines cultural appropriation.
- Reflect on what lessLIE describes when discussing art as a commodity, but also an educational piece. What are your thoughts on this?
- What did you learn about Coast Salish Spindle Whorls from lessLIE?
- How does lessLIE describe reconciliation? Reflect on your previous understanding of reconciliation, and how it has changed after viewing this video.
- In what ways does lessLIE describe art as literacy?
- What does lessLIE say about the written language? How does this relate to the language in historic treaties?
- lessLIE explains how he uses his art as a way to teach people about Coast Salish culture. What are 2-3 things you learned from his pieces shown in the recorded conversation?



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Maynard Johnny Jr.

Maynard Johnny Jr. is a Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw self-taught artist, who has been practicing for over thirty years. In his art, he often addresses First Nations identity, decolonization, and colonialism.

- Maynard Johnny Jr. explains that art allows people to feel comfortable enough to have an uncomfortable conversation. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
- What does Maynard Johnny Jr. have to say about the oppression of Indigenous peoples? Write a reflection on what you have learned from his conversation.
- Maynard Johnny Jr. discusses the importance of kinship ties, and how land is one of these ties. As a practice to engage in recognizing land as a relation, identify the Indigenous territories you currently occupy, and the Indigenous territories of where you are from if they are different.
- What does Maynard Johnny Jr. mean when he discusses the Coast Salish art renaissance? What does this mean to you?
- Maynard Johnny Jr. discusses the reciprocity of mentorship, and how he has learned things from his mentees as much as he has taught them. At the end of term, reflect and honour what you have learned from your students. Have one cue card for each student with one thing you learned from them over the course of the class. Give each student a cue card and have them write one thing they learned from you anonymously or signed depending on their preference.
- Maynard Johnny Jr. explains how he uses his art as a way to teach people about Coast Salish culture. What are 2-3 things you learned from his pieces shown in the recorded conversation?
- Maynard Johnny Jr. discusses art markets and the boundaries of not selling traditional pieces or commodifying Coast Salish culture. What is the best way to determine these boundaries?
- Reflect on what Maynard Johnny Jr. describes when discussing art markets and the concern about selling your culture. What do you think of this?



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Dylan Thomas

Dylan Thomas is a Coast Salish artist of Lyackson and Snuneymuxw First Nations, whose influences include Buddhism, and Coast Salish art practices like wood and stone carving.

- Identify the benefits of oral languages which Dylan Thomas describes. Can you think of others?
- What elements indicate Coast Salish art, as described by Dylan Thomas?
- What is a fractal, as described by Dylan Thomas? How does this alter your perception of his piece *Night and Day* mentioned in the recorded conversation?
- What are the aesthetics of geometry, as mentioned by Dylan Thomas? Create an image using rotation symmetry, multi-axis symmetry or radial symmetry.
- What did you learn about Coast Salish Spindle Whorls from Dylan Thomas?
- Dylan Thomas discusses the differences between Coast Salish art and Northern Indigenous art. What are 2-3 things that stood out to you?
- What does Dylan Thomas mean when he discusses the Coast Salish art renaissance? What does this mean to you?
- Dylan Thomas mentions using museum archives as a source of inspiration, while also reflecting on their history of stealing Indigenous artifacts. Write or draw a reflection of what this makes you feel/think.



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Activities by discipline

General

- Write a reflection on the recorded conversation you watched. What stood out to you? What surprised you? What is one thing from the video that you will share with others?
- Identify a passage from your chosen conversation's transcript and reflect on what you've learned from this.
- Before viewing the recorded conversation, choose one artist from the Salish Weave Box Sets: Art & Storytelling Project and browse their pieces on <https://salishweave.com/>. Pick one piece that stands out to you and reflect on what this image tells you. Then view the recorded conversation of that artist. Reflect on how you see the piece differently after viewing the artist's recorded conversation.
- All artists in the Salish Weave Collection Box Sets: Art & Storytelling Project discuss the importance of storytelling through art. Try to draw a visual representation of a story you want to tell. This can be in comic form, sketch, paint, digital, or any other way you might want.

Activities for teachers

- Maynard Johnny Jr. discusses the reciprocity of mentorship, and how he has learned things from his mentees as much as he has taught them. At the end of term, reflect and honour what you have learned from your students. Have one cue card for each student with one thing you learned from them over the course of the class. Give each student a cue card and have them write one thing they learned from you anonymously or signed depending on their preference.

Indigenous Studies

- Elements required for positionality statements include heritage or lineage, your occupation, paying respects to the lands which you occupy and... After listening to the artists share their positionalities, draft your own statement.
- Identify the benefits of oral languages which Dylan Thomas describes. Can you think of others?
- lessLIE discusses Coast Salish ownership and appropriation of Indigenous cultures. What is cultural appropriation? Reflect on how lessLIE's piece *THEIRS* examines cultural appropriation.



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- How does lessLIE describe reconciliation? Reflect on your previous understanding of reconciliation, and how it has changed after viewing this video.
- What does lessLIE say about the written language? How does this relate to the language in historic treaties?
- What does Maynard Johnny Jr. have to say about the oppression of Indigenous peoples? Write a reflection on what you have learned from his conversation in relation to things learned in the course so far.
- Dylan Thomas mentions using museum archives as a source of inspiration, while also reflecting on their history of stealing Indigenous artifacts. Write or draw a reflection of what this makes you feel/think.
- Maynard Johnny Jr. discusses the importance of kinship ties, and how land is one of these ties. As a practice to engage in recognizing land as a relation, identify the Indigenous territories you currently occupy, and the Indigenous territories of where you are from if they are different.
- Maynard Johnny Jr. discusses art markets and the boundaries of not selling traditional pieces or commodifying Coast Salish culture. What is the best way to determine these boundaries?

English

- Identify the benefits of oral languages which Dylan Thomas describes. Can you think of others?
- In what ways does lessLIE describe art as literacy?
- In what ways do the artists in the conversations describe art as literacy within their work?

Sociology & Anthropology

- Based on your chosen recorded conversation, which sociological concepts best describe some of the topics shared by the artist?
- Choose which recorded conversation you would like to view based on their descriptions, and then compare two sociological theories in relation to the topics they mention.
- All artists describe residential schools and the effects they have had on Indigenous peoples. Choose one recorded conversation and reflect on what elements of total institutions they mention.



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Visual Arts

- Reflect on what lessLIE describes when discussing art as a commodity, but also an educational piece. What are your thoughts on this?
- Reflect on what Maynard Johnny Jr. describes when discussing art markets and the concern about selling your culture. What do you think of this?
- Maynard Johnny Jr. explains that art allows people to feel comfortable enough to have an uncomfortable conversation. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
- What elements indicate Coast Salish art, as described by the artists in their conversations? Choose one or more to draw from.
- What is a fractal, as described by Dylan Thomas? How does this alter your perception of his piece *Night and Day* mentioned in the recorded conversation?
- Dylan Thomas mentions using museum archives as a source of inspiration, while also reflecting on their history of stealing Indigenous artifacts. Write or draw a reflection of what this makes you feel/think.
- Maynard Johnny Jr. explains how he uses his art as a way to teach people about Coast Salish culture. What are 2-3 things you learned from his pieces shown in the recorded conversation?
- lessLIE explains how he uses his art as a way to teach people about Coast Salish culture. What are 2-3 things you learned from his pieces shown in the recorded conversation?
- What does Maynard Johnny Jr. mean when he discusses the Coast Salish art renaissance? What does this mean to you?
- Dylan Thomas discusses the differences between Coast Salish art and Northern Indigenous art. What are 2-3 things that stood out to you?

Mathematics

- What is the aesthetics of geometry, as mentioned by Dylan Thomas? Create an image using rotation symmetry, multi-axis symmetry or radial symmetry.
- What is a fractal, as described by Dylan Thomas? How does this alter your perception of his piece *Night and Day* mentioned in the recorded conversation?



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