

Culturally Responsible Art Education

Teaching About Native/Indigenous Cultures and/or Artists of the Americas

Questions to ask yourself –

- Whose ancestral land do I live on?
- Why am I teaching Native American Art?
- Where can I learn more?
- Where can I find first-person resources?
- How can I teach authentically?
- What do I know about Native American Tribes/Nations, is it truthful, whose lens frames the information?
- What are the meanings of Native American symbols/images?
- What do I know about traditional or ceremonial artforms?
- What is the difference between traditional and contemporary Native artists?

Things I can do -

- Talk about Native Americans in the present.
- Make direct connections with tribal communities and the artists
- Understanding Native peoples encompass the entire Western Hemisphere.
- Engage with contemporary artists first, then explore the connections between past and present.
- Invite artists and elders into your classroom.
- Build community and seek relevant and multiple resources
- Respect the sacred and spiritual - do not copy or recreate sacred symbols
- Avoid stereotypes
- Avoid appropriation – respect someone's right to their cultural patrimony, engage with the story/message, do not copy the art form or symbols
- Discover the message/story, what is seen and unseen
- Engage dialogue about changing positions of power, struggle, and identity
- Create a dialogue that explores how meaning is significant to the maker first, then engage cross-cultural connections

Contemporary Native Artists.....

- **Negotiate the physical and social environment**
- **Adapt new ideas, materials, and circumstances**
- **Link to tradition, to survive and change**
- **Contextualize life and worldview as alive and evolving**
- **Construct connections to past, present, and future**
- **Explore human themes**
- **Battle stereotypes and assumptions**
- **Reclaim cultural heritage through a native voice**