

Colour, Shape, and Line

Studio from Home

Lesson plan prepared by Aiden Gillis, Indigenous Arts Programmer at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Suggested Grade/Age Levels

Suitable for school age children and older but can be modified for younger children.

Subject Areas

- Visual Arts
- Social Studies
- Indigenous Studies
- Math
- Colour Theory

Introduction

This simple drawing activity can be done at home and is inspired by techniques used in creating Mi'kmaw quillwork designs. Ktaqamkuk [dah-hum-gook], Mi'kmaw artist Jordan Bennett takes his inspiration from the shapes, lines and colours in Mi'kmaw quillwork baskets and chair seat covers from the late 1800's to early 1900s.



Left: Installation view of Jordan Bennett, "Ketu'elmitajjik," 2018. Wall mural (latex paint) and chair back panel (porcupine quill, birchbark, spruce root)

Right: Chair Back Panel, artist once known.

In his installation piece, *Ketu'elmita'jik*, Jordan Bennett mounted the chair back panel (pictured above) on the gallery wall. He expanded the design of the quillwork past the edge of the piece, by painting the design over the whole wall to continue the story of the chair back and bring it to life.



Bridgett Ann Sack, *Nesting Baskets*. C. 1895.
(birchbark, porcupine quills, spruce root). From the
Ethnology Collection of the Nova Scotia Museum of
Natural History.

Quillwork artists, such as Bridgett Ann Sack (or Ms. Thomas Glode), would have used whatever they could find to create accurate shapes to achieve these intricate patterns and designs — such as bowls, or tools similar to a compass. The creators would draw their designs out with pencil first and then use that as a guide to lay down their quills.

Set Up:

- Large flat surface area
- Materials near by

Materials:

- Drawing materials: pencil, highlighters, markers, coloured pencils, crayons
- Pencil sharpener + eraser (optional)
- Paper, such as sketchbook, computer printer paper, or lined writing paper
- Traceable Objects: a ruler, cups + bowls, various objects

Process:

- Lay your paper on a flat + sturdy surface
- Select a larger object from your collection and trace it with pencil on the paper
- Trace another object inside of this shape (feel free to do different kinds of lines — dots, short lines with gaps, zigzags, waves, etc.)

- With your third object, place it half-way on a shape you already drew. Trace a shape without going all the way around, stopping when your pencil hits the line of the other shape – the goal is to make this shape appear to be behind the other shape, a technique called “layering”.
- Switch between using large and small traceable items
- Using coloured pencils or markers from your Analogous or Triadic Colour Scheme, make some areas solid colour with no paper showing through, and others with lines or designs.
- Experiment with using coloured pencil on highlighters and markers.
- Trace some lines with colour or black to make your shapes pop.

Resources:

• Jordan Bennett’s Website - <https://www.jordanbennett.ca/> - Here you can see more images of Jordan’s work and read about his art practice.

• Don's Adventures in Nova Scotia - Traditional Quillwork

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPo2n1BnPs8> - Before hosting Aboriginal Day Live & Celebration 2014 in Halifax Don Kelly went to the Nova Scotia Museum to learn about the traditional art of quillwork.

• *Jordan Bennett: Ketu'elmitajik* exhibition - <https://www.artgalleryofnovascotia.ca/exhibitions/jordan-bennett-ketuelmitajik> - More information about the installation at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

