



Hi Year 6! I hope you are all happy, safe and well! Here's another art activity for you to try. Miss you all. Take care, ash.

Norval Morrisseau X-Ray Painting



Summary:

Children will learn about artist Norval Morrisseau as they create an x-ray painting in the Eastern Woodland Style.

Background

Before you begin painting, have look at some of Morrisseau's works above and below.

Think about what the symbols mean. Also, discuss with your friends and family how the work makes you feel. Remember, there are no wrong answers. Do not be afraid to brainstorm and share ideas and opinions because everyone will have a different way of looking at the work. The most important thing is to express how you feel about what you see, and why you feel that way.

About Norval Morrisseau:

Norval Morrisseau was born in the early 1930s on the Sandy Point Lake Reserve north of Thunder Bay in Ontario Canada.

He was raised by his Grandparents and through them learned traditional Ojibwa customs, values and beliefs. It was in his youth that he received – from his Grandfather – his “mission” to share through art, all those things he was taught to respect about Ojibwa culture.

During the 1950s, Morrisseau was hospitalized with Tuberculosis. While in hospital, he began painting and drawing his visions on birch bark and brown paper bags... he painted visions which were uniquely his own. Later, in the 1960s he travelled widely to bush communities in Canada and visited some northern Minnesota reservations where he met with many who today are considered knowledgeable elders, both to learn from them and to teach. He taught by painting, as well as writing.

A medicine man or shaman, Morrisseau developed a style which has since evolved and been used by many Native American.

Vocabulary:

Image – An image is essentially a picture ... something seen in a work of art. In Morrisseau's work, we see images of people and animals.

Ground – This is what the artist has created his work on ... this could be birch bark, paper, canvas or wood.

Media or Medium – This is what the artist uses to create his/her work. Paint (tempera, acrylic, watercolour, oil), pencil, crayon, chalk pastel ... all are known as media.

Symbol – A symbol is a picture or image that tells a story without using words.

Some examples of Symbols in Morrisseau's work:

Circle – The circles in Morrisseau's work tell us about the life cycle, the sun, the moon and directions (North, South, East, West).

Lines - Energy Lines. You can see them extending from the hand or the body of a figure. Sometimes they are connected ... sometimes they are alone or isolated.

Eyes – Large eyes that see all can be found in Morrisseau's work. These eyes are a symbol of a shaman or medicine man.

X-Ray – This is a style attributed to Morrisseau. The X-Ray technique shows the interior as well as the exterior of a figure. The various parts of a body for example are expressed with different colours and lines.

What You Need:

- Heavy paper or cardboard (about 12" x 14"3)
- Thick water-based paint like Acrylic
- Paintbrushes & water
- Examples of Morrisseau's art (see examples below) and research on the internet.
- Images of animals for reference or from the internet or books, magazines.

What You Do:

1. Norval Morrisseau used what is referred to as an X-Ray technique when he painted a work of art. Not only do you see the person or animal that has been painted, but you also see the energy within the animal or person.
2. Choose a subject for their painting – a fish, a bird, a turtle, etc.
3. Sketch the outline of their subject on their paper.
4. Think about the interior of their subject – the energy and emotion inside.
5. Draw lines (using ink, crayons, oil pastels etc), colours (using paint, oil pastels, cut up paper etc.) and shapes inside the subject ... the more the better.
6. Let imagination take over as the paper is filled with paint.

*You can also try this lesson using crayons or pencil crayons instead of paint.

One Step Further:

- Seek out symbols in Morriseau's work and create a story based on what they see.
- Next, create their own "symbol story". Have them tell a story on paper using absolutely no words. Then pass the symbol stories around the room to see how other students "read the work".

