

Northwest Coast Hall

BACKGROUND FOR EDUCATORS

Overview of Student Worksheets

Using worksheets in the hall, students observe and talk about four Indigenous treasures. They will learn to recognize the basic shapes of an Indigenous art tradition called Formline, as well as learn about the stories that cultural treasures tell about the people who made them.

What is Formline?

Northwest Coast cultures create art using wood carving, painting, weaving, and other techniques. Regional styles draw on different design elements. An art tradition called Formline is a distinctive compositional form among the people of the northern Northwest Coast. Shapes and colors in this flowing style express balance between opposites, a guiding principle of Northwest Coast aesthetics. Many designs represent crests that belong to clans. Artists apprentice for years both to learn techniques and to gain a deep understanding of spiritual and cultural histories.

Recommended Resources

[Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form](#) by Bill Holm (book)

[Northern Northwest Coast Art](#) by Smarthistory (article)

[USPS Stamp: Lingít Formline Art](#) by KTOO (article)

[Drawing Pacific Northwest Coast Traditional Designs](#) by Issaquah Schools Foundation (lesson plan)

[Northwest Coast Formline Design](#) by Sealaska Heritage (curriculum)

[Northwest Coast Educator Resource Guide](#) by Seattle Art Museum (curriculum)

Correlation to Standards

This activity supports the following New York State Standards for the Arts:

Visual Arts Standard 11

Connecting • Interrelate, Extend

Relating Artistic Ideas and work with personal meaning and external context

Anchor Standard 11: Investigate ways that artistic work is influenced by societal, cultural, and historic context and, in turn, how artistic ideas shape cultures past, present, and future

Enduring Understanding 11.1: Works of art and design embody and influence the needs, beliefs, traditions, and values of people within a culture