

TEACHER STUDY GUIDE **WINTER 2027**

the x is where our paths cross

On the Road: Journeys through Japanese Woodblock Prints

Into the Wosk Collection: Discovery & Wonder

ART GALLERY
OF GREATER VICTORIA

Contents

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria Teacher Study Guide for *the x is where our paths cross, On the Road: Journeys through Japanese Woodblock Prints* and *Into the Wosk Collection: Discovery & Wonder*

Introduction 3

Get to know Peter Morin and Leah Decter 4

Get to Know Utagawa Hiroshige 8

Get to Know Anne Brigman 13

Further Learning and Resources 18

ON THE COVER: Anne Brigman, *Untitled (A stylized portrait, possibly depicting Brigman herself with friends)*, c.1910, gelatin silver print, 19.7x 24.8 cm. Collection of Dr. Yosef Wosk.

Territory Acknowledgement

The exhibitions *the x is where our paths cross*, *On the Road: Journeys through Japanese Woodblock Prints*, and *Into the Wosk Collection: Discovery & Wonder* are exhibited on the traditional territories of the Lək'ʷəŋən peoples, today known as the Xʷsepsəm and Songhees Nations. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on this territory.

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

Your upcoming Gallery tour includes three distinct exhibitions: *the x is where our paths cross, On the Road: Journeys through Japanese Woodblock Prints,* and *Into the Wosk Collection: Discovery & Wonder*. Each exhibition highlights our connections to place and community across time.

the x is where our paths cross features the ongoing collaboration and friendship of Peter Morin and Leah Decter. Their art includes video, photographs, performance, and drawing as a method of listening to Tahltan stories. This collaboration takes place in galleries, in community, in collaboration, and on the land.

On the Road: Journeys through Japanese Woodblock Prints invites viewers to explore the landscapes and scenes captured in Japanese woodblock prints. These works celebrate the spirit of travel, both physical and imaginative, along famed routes and hidden paths.

Into the Wosk Collection: Discovery & Wonder presents selections from the collection of Yosef Wosk, an art collector. Many of the artworks in this exhibition are photographs; the portraits in this exhibition bring us into the lives of the people depicted through the perspective of the artists taking photographs.

Together, these three exhibitions offer students the opportunity to see how artists across centuries and cultures use their media not only to represent the world but to transform how we perceive it.

Dear Teacher

In this guide, you will find a selection of learning activities that will provide your class with a preview of the exhibitions. The activities require few materials and can be adapted to fit grade level and student needs. We recommend completing some or all the activities prior to visiting the Gallery, as each learning activity is designed to provide students with background knowledge about the exhibition, the featured artists, and their artworks. By completing these activities, students will enter the Gallery feeling more confident and excited to explore the exhibitions further with our Gallery educators. Underlined words in this guide are defined in the glossary sections.

Curriculum Connections

This guide was created with a focus on the BC Arts Education curriculum for Grades 2–12. Through the activities connected to *the x is where our paths cross, On the Road: Journeys through Japanese Woodblock Prints,* and *Into the Wosk Collection: Discovery & Wonder*, students will develop the core competencies of exploring, creating, communicating, and reflecting. Each exhibition encourages students to think critically about art as both process and expression while building technical skills and an appreciation for diverse artistic practices.

Specific curriculum connections include:

- **Exploring and creating** collaborative artistic works
- **Observing works of art** in the form of contemporary video work, Japanese woodblock prints, and portrait photography
- **Developing unique identity and voice through creative expression**
- **Describing and responding to works of art**
- **Considering diverse cultures, communities, times, and places** through global and historical perspectives in art

GRADES 2–12 | GET TO KNOW PETER MORIN AND LEAH DECTER

Listen and Draw Landscapes

Objective 1

Introduce students to Peter Morin, Leah Decter, and their collaborative works

Objective 2

Look closely at video works featured in *the x is where our paths cross*

Objective 3

Create drawings from a process of sharing and listening

Glossary

- **COLLABORATIVE ART** Artwork created by two or more people working together.
- **COLONIALISM/COLONIZATION** A process that "occurs when a new group of people migrates into a territory and then takes over and begins to control the Indigenous group. The settlers impose their own cultural values, religions, and laws, seizing land and controlling access to resources and trade. As a result, the Indigenous people become dependent on the settlers." In Canada, "the colonizers thought they were superior to all those of non-European descent, and some did not consider Indigenous Peoples to be 'people' at all."[1]
- **DECOLONIZATION** When a group of people or a country takes back its freedom and control after another country or group has taken over. It means returning power, land, and choices back to the people who lived there first.
- **SITE-SPECIFIC ART** Artworks that are made specifically for the places they are seen and experienced. There is a relationship between the artwork and the particular site that cannot be separated.
- **MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST** An artist who uses many mediums. For example, instead of only painting, a multidisciplinary artist may use paint, sculpture, photography, drawing, and more.

[1] Kory Wilson, "Colonization," *Pulling Together: Foundations Guide* (Vancouver BC: BCcampus, 2018), https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfoundations/chapter/colonization.

- **PERFORMANCE ART** Artworks that are created through actions performed by the artist or other participants, which may be live or recorded, spontaneous or scripted.
- **SETTLER** A person who moves from their home country to live permanently in a new land. Under colonialism, they often move onto land where Indigenous people already live, taking the land and pushing the original communities out.

Get to Know Peter Morin and Leah Decter

Peter Morin is an artist from the Tahltan Nation with French Canadian heritage. He follows in the footsteps of his ancestors: Tahltan artists and storytellers. Much of Morin's artwork focuses on understanding Land and Knowing.

Leah Decter is a Jewish Canadian artist who lives and works in Treaty 1, also known as southern Manitoba. Her artwork focuses on the idea of decolonization, which means working to undo the effects of colonialism—the process where settlers take control over land and its people.

Both Peter Morin and Leah Decter are multidisciplinary artists who engage with viewers in unique ways through a wide variety of artistic forms, such as performance art, video art, drawing, and collaboration. Together they created a project called *the x is where our paths cross*. This collaborative artwork includes performance, videos, photographs, drawings, a site-specific drawing, and sharing and listening to stories.

In the video, Morin reads stories from his Tahltan culture that Scottish settler James A. Teit gathered and wrote down over 100 years ago. These stories were told to Teit by Morin's ancestors, but Teit altered them when he wrote them down. As Morin reads them aloud, he points out how they have changed, reclaiming his ancestors' stories. While he shares these stories, Decter listens and sketches from photographs of the Tahltan land that Morin and his family provided. By doing this, Decter, as a settler, engages in a form of listening that highlights the importance of accountability in understanding the effects of colonization.

When Morin finishes sharing a story, Decter stops drawing. She is drawing as a form of listening. As Morin explains, the drawings of the land are unfinished, showing that it is OK not to know everything about the land and that our understandings can be different, especially when it comes to places with a lot of history. Decter's drawings are not about capturing every detail, but about listening and making room for things we don't fully understand.

Discuss

While creating *the x is where our paths cross*, Peter Morin and Leah Decter also talked about the importance of rivers in their personal histories. The Stikine and Tahltan rivers appear in many of the photographs Decter uses to create her drawings while listening. These rivers have been traditional meeting places for the Tahltan people for thousands of years. While Decter was listening to Morin's stories and drawing from the photographs, she could see the Red River in Winnipeg from her window. This reminded her of her grandfather's stories about crossing a river to find safety when he was young.

Together, Morin and Decter invite us to consider the connections between land, stories, and our own experiences. They encourage us to think about how our perspectives shape our view of the world.

We can all connect to water in our own way: we all have our own relationship to water. You may have personal stories from a beach, a river, a pool, the rain, and more. All your stories have a history behind them. People throughout history have cared for the rivers, oceans, and beaches. Artists use their artmaking to think through ideas, reflect, research, and connect with others. The artwork you are about to make involves reflecting, remembering, storytelling, listening, and drawing.

Materials

- **Paper**
- **Pencil**

Process

- Watch the video *the x is where our paths cross*, starting at 7:55
  https://performancematters-thejournal.com/index.php/pm/article/view/513
- How are the artists working together? What is Peter Morin's role? What is Leah Decter's role? As you listen, who do you think Scottish settler James A. Teit wrote down these stories for? What do you see and hear that makes you say that?
- While the artists were creating *the x is where our paths cross*, they also talked about how they are connected to rivers. What connection do you have (personal story, family history) to a river? Or is there another body of water that you feel connected to? For example, to an ocean, lake, pond, pool, sprinkler, puddle, or creek? What is your connection to the body of water you chose?
- As a class, close your eyes and remember a body of water you have experienced. Imagine you are standing right at the edge of the water. Are you standing on rocks, sand, or something else? Is the water fast or slow? Rough or calm? What weather or season is it? How do you feel imagining this place?

- Stories keep us connected to the places that are important to us. Take a minute to sit and think about why this place is important to you. What is the story of you and the place you thought of? How are you connected to it? Write down your story or a few notes to help you remember it.
- Next, get a pencil and paper and move into groups of three. Fold your paper in half.
- Decide who will take a turn talking first, second, and third, and set a timer for five minutes.
- The first person will tell the group their story about a body of water. The other two group members will draw while they listen. Draw on one half of the paper for each story.
- If the storyteller finishes before the five minutes are up, they can answer questions from the group. (How do you feel about the place in your story?)
- Draw anything you imagine or think of while listening to the story. You don't have to draw exactly what happens in the story and you don't have to finish your drawing.
- Take turns storytelling and drawing. After 15 minutes, everyone in the group will have told their story and have two drawings.
- Take a moment to look at your group's drawings and talk about what everyone notices.
- Share your stories with the class while your group holds up the drawings they made while listening.
- If there is time, write a story summary of the two drawings you heard while creating your drawing.

Reflection

Discuss the following:

- Did drawing change the way you listen? How did your listening change?
- Were you surprised by the drawings based on your story? Why or why not?
- How did it feel to share your story?
- What was more challenging, telling a story or drawing? Why?
- When you were listening, did the story you heard change the way you think about the place in the story? Why or why not?

GRADES 2–12 | GET TO KNOW UTAGAWA HIROSHIGE

Journey Landscape Watercolours

Objective 1

Introduce students to Utagawa Hiroshige and woodblock prints

Objective 2

Look closely at Utagawa Hiroshige's *Yoshiwara, Fuji on the Left* (1833–1834) to discover qualities of Japanese woodblock prints

Objective 3

Create a small series of watercolour paintings inspired by student's personal journeys

Glossary

- **EDO PERIOD** The years from 1603 until 1868, when the Tokugawa family ruled Japan. This era is named after the city of Edo, now called Tokyo. It is sometimes referred to as the early modern period because it was at this time that many characteristics of modern Japanese society were formed.
- **COLOUR GRADIENTS** When two or more colours are blended together to create a smooth transition from one colour to another.
- **LANDSCAPE** Artwork when the primary focus is natural scenery, such as mountains, forests, cliffs, trees, rivers, valleys, etc. Traditionally, landscapes have been paintings or drawings depicting natural scenes and are often concerned with light, space, and setting.
- **NEGATIVE SPACE** The blank parts of a painting/artwork that lack detail.
- **PRINT** A work of art, made of ink on paper, that can be produced repeatedly.
- **UKIYO-E** A genre of Japanese woodblock prints originating in the Edo period. Ukiyo-e art, which translates to English as "pictures from the floating world," captures depictions of urban culture, theatre, beauty, and nature.
- **WOODCUT** A print made by carving an image into a block of wood, then inking it and pressing it onto paper.

Get to know Utagawa Hiroshige

Utagawa Hiroshige was a famous Japanese ukiyo-e artist who loved creating prints of landscapes as he travelled. Born in Edo, Japan, he was 14 years old when he began studying ukiyo-e with Toyohiro of the Utagawa school. Ukiyo-e artworks take the form of paintings and woodblock prints. An artist paints a scene and then it is carved into wooden blocks: one for each colour of ink in the print. These blocks are inked and pressed onto paper to create a print of the image.

At the time Hiroshige lived, during the Edo period, many people were interested in travel, exploration, and how landscapes changed through the seasons. Paintings and prints of well-known landscapes such as Mount Fuji were very popular. In 1832, Utagawa Hiroshige travelled along the Tokaido road. From this journey, he created a famous series of prints called *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido*. The prints show the different stations along the road where travellers could rest and get food.

Hiroshige's prints show us beautiful journeys from the artist's perspective. Hiroshige decided which scenes were interesting and impactful. We don't see every moment from the journey—instead we see the moments the artist chose to focus on. Hiroshige produced images of the 53 stations and each is unique.

Today, we are going to look at print number 15 from the *Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido* series. When travelling west on Tokaido road, Mount Fuji is visible on the right side throughout most of the journey. The print *Yoshiwara, Fuji on the Left*, is a view on the way to Yoshiwara where the road has a sharp curve, allowing travellers to see Mount Fuji on the left.

Materials

- **Blank Rectangle Handout (page 12) printed on watercolour paper or heavy cardstock**
- **Watercolour paints**
- **Paint brush and water container**
- **Paper towels**
- **Optional: black fineliner pen**



Ando Hiroshige, *Yoshiwara, Fuji on the Left*, 1833–1834, 25.7 × 37.8 cm. Fred & Isable Pollard Collection, AGGV1965.037.001

Process

- As a class, look closely at *Yoshiwara, Fuji on the Left* (1833–1834) by the artist Utagawa Hiroshige. What do you see? What do you notice first? Why do you think you noticed that?
- How does Hiroshige use line in this work? Where do you see lines?
- Look at Mount Fuji, the sky, and the water. How is Hiroshige using colour gradients and negative space in his art?
- Artists like Hiroshige would choose different scenes from their travels to paint. Why do you think the artist thought this scene was important to use? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Now it is your turn to make art from a small journey. As a class, walk around your school or take a short nature walk.
- As you walk, observe the world around you. What interests you? What will you remember when you are back in the classroom?

- Return to class and pick three scenes from your journey to draw. Your drawing will be from your memory. Try painting what stands out to you as important, not all the details.
- Ukiyo-e artists would print images horizontally and vertically; choose which way you want to draw your three scenes.
- Use a pencil to lightly sketch a scene in each box from the handout on page 12. Keep your drawing simple. Try to capture the most important thing from your memory.
- Use watercolour to colour your journey. Create gradients by painting a line of colour then wetting your brush and adding water to dilute the line.
- You can use pale or bright colours. Leave some areas of the paper blank to create negative space like Hiroshige.
- Once your paint is dry you can go over your pencil lines again with a fineliner pen. Add in details, like grass, using lines.
- When you are done, display your art in class.

Reflection

Discuss the following:

- What elements of Utagawa Hiroshige's work did you consider?
- How are the class paintings different or similar to each other?
- What was the most challenging part of this project and why?
- How did you decide which parts of your journey to include or not?
- Did your feelings about your journey change as you painted it? Why or why not?
- Look around at all the different paintings created by the class. Do you connect to other people's journeys? How? Did someone paint a scene you recognized right away?







GRADES 2–12 | GET TO KNOW ANNE BRIGMAN

Classroom Portraits

Objective 1

Introduce photographer Anne Brigman

Objective 2

Look closely at Anne Brigman, *Untitled (A stylized portrait, possibly depicting Brigman herself with friends)*, c.1910

Objective 3

Create a collaborative class portrait

Glossary

- **COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHER** Creates photographs specifically to promote, advertise, or sell a product, service, brand, or idea.
- **COMPOSITION** How an artist arranges the different parts of an artwork.
- **IDENTITY** How we see ourselves. It includes our beliefs, personality, and how we express ourselves.
- **LIGHTING** How light is used in an artwork.
- **PHOTO-SECESSION MOVEMENT** A group of American photographers who believed that photography was a fine art.
- **PICTORIALIST PHOTOGRAPHY** A style of photography that emphasizes beauty and the artistic expression of a photograph rather than solely documenting the subject matter. It is marked by soft focus, manipulated printing techniques, and a focus on atmosphere and mood rather than sharpness and clarity.

Get to Know Anne Brigman

Anne Brigman was an American photographer born in Hawaii in 1869. She moved to California when she turned 16. She took her first photographs at the age of 32, just 10 years after the handheld Kodak camera was introduced. Early on, the camera

was promoted to women, encouraging them to document their families, homes, and gardens. Brigman was among the first wave of amateur women photographers to pick up a camera, engaging her family and friends as her models. Not long after she took up photography, a jury selected five of her images for exhibition in the San Francisco Photographic Salon. Soon afterward, she joined the ranks of fine-art photographers seeking to break away from the world of amateur photography.

She defied the traditional feminine roles of her time by exploring the physically challenging landscapes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains with her camera. At that time, the Sierra Nevada was still largely considered to be a place for men. Few women—and even fewer women artists—ventured to the higher elevations of 8,000 feet where Brigman liked to create photographs. A member of the Photo-Secession movement, she was a pictorialist photographer who believed that photographs, like paintings and drawings, should be considered fine art. Her photographs often featured female figures in natural settings, including rocks, trees, and water, creating a blend of reality and fantasy. More than any other element of nature, Brigman was drawn to trees because she found beauty in what she saw as their struggle to survive. She compared their endurance to the human struggle.

Anne Brigman's unique approach involved the use of extensive darkroom techniques. She often used paint and pencils to alter her images. These unique finishing touches give the feeling of surreal charcoal drawings in some of her photographs. Exhibited widely, including features in the magazine *Camera Work*, Brigman garnered numerous awards for her art. She also worked as a freelance commercial photographer until 1930, when she retired due to her worsening eyesight. She, however, continued to pursue her passion, focusing on abstract images of beach sand in Southern California. Anne Brigman's artistic vision and subject matter have established her as a significant figure in the history of photography.

What is Portrait Photography?

Portrait photography is when an artist takes a photograph to represent the identity of a person or group. The artist wants you to look at the image and understand the person in the portrait. Your school photographs tell the viewer what you looked like each year of school; together they show you getting older over time. Portrait photography can be of a person's face, their whole body, or a part of them. An artist might use composition, lighting, and posing to help communicate who the person in their photograph is. Portrait photography can capture moments of everyday life or be carefully staged by the artist.



Anne Brigman, *Untitled (A stylized portrait, possibly depicting Brigman herself with friends)*, c.1910, gelatin silver print, 19.7x 24.8 cm. Collection of Dr. Yosef Wosk.

Materials

- **Camera or phone camera**
- **Photocopy of class photograph for each student (optional)**
- **Pencils, pastels, paint (optional)**

Process

- As a class, spend a minute looking at Anne Brigman's *Untitled (A stylized portrait, possible depicting Brigman herself with friends)*, c.1910. What is happening in this photograph? What do you see that makes you say that? What more do you notice?
- What do the poses and expressions tell us about the people in the image? What do you see that makes you say that?

- Even though there is no evidence of where this image was taken, do you think it was taken outside or inside? What time of year do you think this was taken? Is it fall, winter, spring, or summer? What do you see that makes you say that?
- What aspects of the photograph give us clues as to when it was created? Do you think it was created recently or a long time ago? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Clothing, pose, and expression can tell us about the people in a photograph and also share with us what the artist thought was important to include in the image.
- Today you are going to work together to make a portrait of your class. Brainstorm a list of attributes that you would like to include. Have your teacher write your ideas on the board. Some questions to consider are:
  - What things in the room are important to you?
  - What type of clothing will be worn?
  - What poses and relationships will be depicted?
  - What setting and lighting will you choose?
  - What angle or point of view best reflects your collective vision?
  - What additional props will you add?
- Look at the brainstorming list you have put together and as a class decide what elements you will use for your photographic image.
- Together, set up your composition. Pay close attention to poses and expressions. When everyone is satisfied, have your teacher take a class portrait.
- Print the image and display it in the classroom.
- **If you have more time:** Anne Brigman manipulated her photographic images using pencils and paint; have your teacher create copies of the classroom portrait for each of you to manipulate with art supplies you have available in the classroom.
- Once complete, share your manipulated images with the class.

Reflection

Discuss the following:

- What did you find surprising or challenging about creating a classroom portrait photograph?
- If you manipulated the classroom portrait, what similarities and differences did you notice in the artworks?
- What elements of Anne Brigman's photograph did you consider in your class portrait?
- Did you find it challenging to work collaboratively with the class on the portrait? Why or why not?
- If you were to do this project again, what would you do the same or differently?

Further Learning and Resources

Books

- Decter, L, Morin, P. *"x: where paths cross." Performance Matters*, Vol. 10 No 2. Performing (in) Place: Space, Relation, Action. (2024)
- L'Hirondelle Hill, Gabrielle, and Sophie McCall, eds. *The Land We Are: Artists & Writers Unsettle the Politics of Reconciliation*. Winnipeg: ARP Books, 2015.
- Decter, L, Taunton, C. "Critical White Settler Projects: Activating Decolonial Co-resistance in the Cultural Sector" in *Enacting Settler Responsibilities Towards Decolonisation*, Eds. Bell, Avril, Billie Lythberg, Chris Woods and Rose Yukich, Routledge Press. (2024)
- Decter, L, Goto, A, Morin, P. "beyond nationhood: a collaborative text" in *Desire Change: Contemporary Feminist Art in Canada*. Ed. Davis, Heather. McGill-Queen's University Press/Mentoring Artists for Women's Art. (2017)

Websites

- 10 things to know about japanese woodblock prints
- Learn about Ukiyo-e
- All about Anne Brigman

Video

- 2026 Emily Award Recipient: Peter Morin