

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

A Pandemic Life-line: Canada's Only Kindergarten to Grade 12 Open-Access Art Education Program

The Art Canada Institute's ready-to-use, online educational program—available free of charge and in English and French—provides an invaluable resource for teachers



A selection of the Independent Student Learning Activities that are now available in French and English on the ACI website.

MAY 5, 2021, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – The emergency pivot to remote online learning instigated by the COVID-19 pandemic has left teachers, parents, and students across Canada without a structured environment for art education. Passionate about making sure that students do not fall behind, the Art Canada Institute (ACI) has devised a solution to this problem with its ACI Independent Student Learning Activities. This dynamic program of ready-to-use, Grades 1 to 12, Canadian art-themed, cross-curricular educational content is available in both French and English, and can be used by students on their own both at home and at school.

“Millions of students across Canada are now learning online. We are living through a tectonic shift in elementary and secondary school education that is bringing unprecedented challenges for teachers, who are tasked with designing innovative solutions for safe, in-person teaching as well as coming up with curriculum design and delivery for remote online learning,” says Sara Angel, Founder and Executive Director of the Art Canada Institute.

ACI's Independent Student Learning Activities offer lessons on wide-ranging topics such as:

- **Canadian identity**, through a creative project on national symbols inspired by the artist Greg Curnoe;
- the **Second World War**, by looking at historic posters and artworks by the artist Molly Lamb Bobak;
- the **characteristics of plants**, starting with paintings by artist Homer Watson;
- and **decolonization**, based on the work of Saulteaux artist Robert Houle.

How ACI Independent Student Learning Activities Work

Activities are designed for students to work on them at home, with support from their teacher online.

Activities are accompanied by short engaging videos about the artist, featuring examples of their artworks.

Student-friendly "Get to know the Artist" pages provide at a glance important facts about the artist's life and career.

Impressionism was an art movement that originated in France in the 1860s. It is famous for artists who were interested in painting light and atmosphere.

The Impressionists liked details of light like these

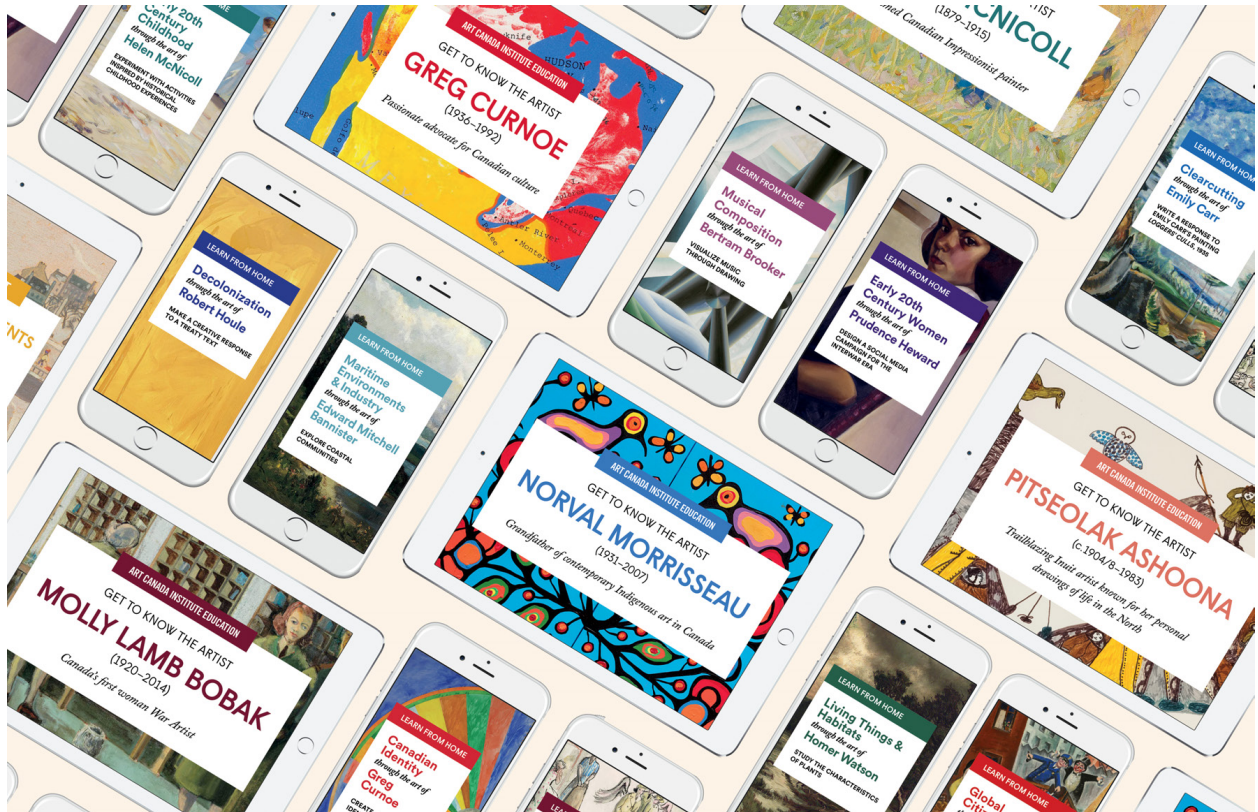
ACI's Independent Student Learning Activities are written in student-friendly language with age-appropriate content and visually compelling designs. Short 3-minute videos and "Get to Know the Artist" fact pages introduce students to the artist.

The Independent Student Learning Activities grew out of ACI's series of multidisciplinary Teacher Resource Guides, an offering that began in 2019 to fill a void: there was no program available in both of the country's official languages to educate teachers and students about Canadian art history or introduce them to the diverse and broad range of Canadian artists and their work. "This country's art is a powerful tool that can be used to inspire discussions about the most pressing issues of our time including racism, social justice, climate change, and resilience in the face of crisis," says Angel.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made trustworthy and accessible online learning resources for students and teachers more vital than ever before. In recognition of this, the Art Canada Institute converted its popular Teacher Resource Guides, meant for in-class learning, into a series of expert-authored, multidisciplinary online learning activities that students can use on their own outside the classroom.

The program is ready for students and teachers to use, with features including:

- Material created and designed in collaboration with educational advisers;
- Activities with easy-to-follow instructions, using only materials that can be readily found at home;
- Age-appropriate language and bright graphics;
- Three-minute videos on every artist, and a graphic “Get to Know the Artist” page that brings each personality to life.



The digital world is now ever-present in our schools and at home, and the educational sector has been forced to catch up quickly. The Art Canada Institute provides content that ensures teachers and students are supported. At a time when numerous art museums cannot accommodate school trips or educational programming, the ACI has new content on extraordinary works by Canadian artists that teachers can share with their students.



This spring, ACI has also initiated a new program to celebrate students' artworks. Open to students from kindergarten through grade 12, the Canadian Art Inspiration Contest invites submissions of artworks inspired by Canadian art history and major Canadian artworks. Winning artworks will be showcased in an online exhibition in the autumn. "It's been a challenging year in so many ways," Angel notes, "As we look toward the summer, we wanted to give students a venue to share their creations with a national audience." A contemporary conversation about Canadian art will be led by the next generation of Canadians – and there are extraordinary discussions to be had.

To view the **ACI Independent Student Learning Activities**, please visit:

<https://www.aci-iac.ca/education/independent-student-learning-activities/>

For more information about the **Canadian Art Inspiration Contest**, please visit:

<https://www.aci-iac.ca/education/art-contest/>

Download images here: <http://bit.ly/aci-education>

For interview requests with Sara Angel or to be connected to educators working with ACI resources, please contact:

Stephanie Burdzy, Senior Operations Executive (sburdzy@aci-iac.ca)

About the Art Canada Institute

The ACI was established in 2013 as an educational not-for-profit organization based at the University of Toronto with its flagship program, the Canadian Online Art Book Project, a growing library of originally created, expert-authored, open-source digital books on Canadian artists. All ACI books are available free of charge and published simultaneously in English and French. This rich resource, featuring more than forty-five books by Canada's leading art historians, scholars, and visual culture experts, is now a critical touchstone for Canadian art professionals across the country and internationally.

Responding to widespread demand for similar educational resources that are specifically targeted towards K-12 learning, ACI launched the Canadian Schools Art Education Program to give teachers a comparable library of resources on Canadian artists. Today, this rich and ever-expanding program ensures that cross-curricular bridges can be built between Canadian art and any provincial curriculum, from history and social studies to mathematics and geography. With our teacher resource guides, educators have all the materials they need for designing accessible, art-enriched learning, no matter what their subject area is.

