Purpose: Students will examine a variety of Aboriginal art works. They will make connections between the various forms, styles and traditions and describe how they reflect the diverse cultures, times and places in which they were made.

Estimated time: 60 minutes

Resources required:
- Copies of Aboriginal paintings from a site such as www.dailyartfixx.com/2012/06/21/national-aboriginal-day-indian-group-of-seven/
- White paper
- Paint, pencil crayons or markers
- Paintbrushes and water

Activity:
1. Ask the class to assemble in the gathering space of the classroom.
2. Introduce the Native Indian Artists Incorporation, which is also known as the Indian Group of Seven. Tell students they will be looking at some of their art. This group of Canadian artists came together to help Canadians understand the concept of Native art and its distinct styles.
3. Ask students: Why is art important? Create a list of the answers on the front board. Some suggestions may include the following topics: Helps us learn about customs, stories and the world; brings us joy; allows us to see things from others’ perspectives etc.
4. Why is it important to examine and appreciate Aboriginal art?
5. Using a projector, show students examples of Aboriginal art or circulate print-outs of the art. The webpage www.dailyartfixx.com/2012/06/21/national-aboriginal-day-indian-group-of-seven/ provides a carousel of eighteen paintings. Tell students that as they look at the pieces of artwork they should pay close attention to the colours, shapes, designs and style.
6. After students have viewed the art pieces, ask the following questions for each piece:
   a. What are the dominant colours and shapes used in each piece of art? Describe the art.
   b. Which paintings do you think are the most expressive? Why? Explain your answer.
   c. What do you think of when you look at the art pieces? Do you recognize anything in the art? Can you relate what you see to anything? Is anything new?
   d. What do you think the purpose of this painting is? Is there a story behind it? What is the story? What title might you give it?
   e. What is memorable about this piece of art?
7. Tell students that, like many other artists, Aboriginal artists often use art to tell stories of their personal or cultural history.
8. Divide the class into groups of 2 to 4. Distribute the copies of paintings, one piece for each group. Tell the groups to answer the following questions:
   a. What story do you think the artist is trying to tell in this painting?
   b. How do they convey the story in the painting? What techniques do they use?
9. Now that students have had the opportunity to examine the paintings closely, tell them they will now be creating their own picture that displays their own feelings and personal experiences, telling a story of their personal history.
10. Encourage students to think about what represents them; this may include their favourite animal, recreational activity, food, sport, colour, etc.
11. Once students have an idea of what they would like to depict, advise them to go back to the painting they were examining for inspiration on style and technique. Students should consider the following elements:
   a. Colour
   b. Shapes
   c. Lines
   d. Size or proportion
   e. Use of white space
12. Instruct students to gather the materials they need and to begin working on their piece.
13. When the pieces are completed and dry, hold an art show so students can circulate to see the work of their peers, as well as explain the story behind their own art. Display the pieces in the classroom or in the hallways to share with the greater school community.
Educator’s Note: The Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporation is a group of Ojibwa artists in Winnipeg that formed in the 1970s. The group broke ground by increasing the recognition of Aboriginal art in the art community. They are also known as the Indian Group of Seven, named after the Group of Seven, a famous group of Canadian artists who had a similar effect on the art world by being a foundational part of the Canadian art movement.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the lesson plan, share these resources with your students:

- Examples of Native art in Canada:
  - www.native-art-in-canada.com/indiangroupofseven.html
  - www.dailyartfixx.com/2012/06/21/national-aboriginal-day-indian-group-of-seven/