

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR GRADES 9–12

LEARN ABOUT
**FINDING
YOUR VOICE**
through the art of
CARL BEAM

ART CANADA INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN

GERRY, GERR *ih*, **EL-
BRIDGE** (1744-1814), was
Vice-President of the United
States from 1813 to 1814.
He was born at Marble
head, Mass., and was gra-
duated from Harvard Col-
lege. Gerry was a signer of
the Declaration of Inde-
pendence, a delegate to the
United States Constitutional
Convention, and a member
of the United States House
of Representatives from
Massachusetts for four years.
In 1797, he was sent to
France to establish diplo-
matic relations with that
country. Gerry served as
governor of Massachusetts
from 1810 to 1812. See
also **GERRYMANDER**; **XYZ**

Chl. Hist. Soc.

Elbridge Gerry, Governor
of Massachusetts. His name be-
came a part of the English lan-
guage in the political term
"gerrymander."

from 1810 to 1812. See

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CONFIDENTIAL

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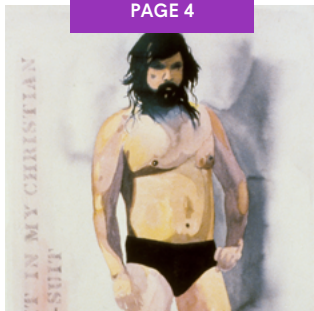
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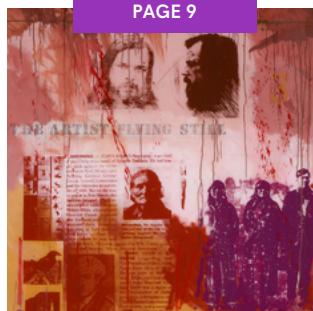
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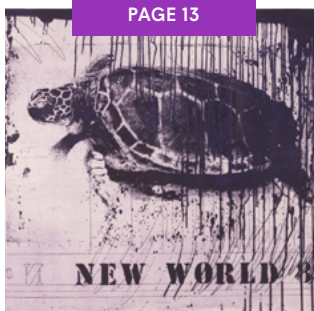
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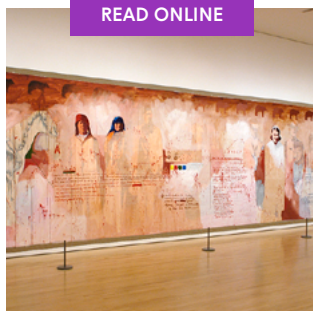
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**ADDITIONAL
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READ ONLINE



**CARL BEAM: LIFE &
WORK BY ANONG
MIGWANS BEAM**

DOWNLOAD



**CARL BEAM
IMAGE FILE**

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

This teacher resource guide has been written to complement the Art Canada Institute online art book [Carl Beam: Life & Work](#) by Anong Migwans Beam. The artworks within this guide and images required for the learning activities and culminating task can be found in the [Carl Beam Image File](#) provided.

Through his work in painting, printmaking, ceramics, and performance art, Carl Beam (1943–2005) challenged assumptions about First Nations creativity and the style and content of contemporary Indigenous art. As Beam's daughter Anong Migwans Beam writes, "He challenged his viewers to grapple with the ideas he treated in his work, to wrestle with his [...] visual language, and to question what they saw and thought." This resource encourages students to take inspiration from this trailblazing creative figure and to find strength in their own voices through an exploration of identity, personal artistic expression, and artistic activism.

Curriculum Connections

- Grades 9–12 Canadian History
- Grades 9–12 Indigenous Studies
- Grades 9–12 Visual Arts

Themes

- Advocacy
- Bias and racism
- Cultural traditions
- History
- Indigenous peoples
- Social-emotional learning

Teaching Exercises

The exercises in this guide explore the theme of "Finding Your Voice," as represented in artworks by Carl Beam.

- Learning Activity #1: Celebrating Artistic Difference ([page 4](#))
- Learning Activity #2: Creating a Personal Identity Collage ([page 6](#))
- Culminating Task: Becoming an Activist Artist ([page 9](#))

A Note on Using This Guide

The artist explored in this guide is a residential school survivor. Care should be taken when presenting this context, and the capacity, age, and stage of students in your classroom should be top of mind. Proper supports should be in place for Indigenous students seeking a safe space and support for this learning. While the activities in this guide can be done independently, educators are strongly encouraged to reach out to local friendship centres and Elders and, if possible, to invite a speaker to visit the class.

Lastly, Learning Activity #2 includes one of Carl Beam's best-known works. Teachers should be warned that there is the use of strong language reproduced in small type at the bottom of the artwork, which has been maintained in the image included in this guide. For teachers who are uncomfortable showing the image itself in class, it can be replaced with another self-portrait by Carl Beam from the image file provided with this resource.

If in doubt, please consult your school administration or policies for guidance.



Fig 1. Carl Beam, *The Whale of Our Being (Still Waiting for Godot)*, c.2003. Beam's works often feature a combination of visual references, from historical to pop culture images.

WHO WAS CARL BEAM?



Fig 2. Carl Beam with his hominy corn harvest, n.d., photographer unknown.

Carl Beam was born on May 24, 1943, in the M’Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island, known to the [Anishinaabe](#) as Spirit Island. Manitoulin marks the heart of Turtle Island (North America) and is a sacred place for the Ojibwe and many other First Nations. As a child, Beam learned about his ancestral history and how to interact with the natural environment from his mother, Barbara Migwans, and others in his community. In his art, Beam would continue to honour the teachings he absorbed during his early life.

Beam’s youth was marred by the abuse he suffered as a student at Garnier High School. Located in Spanish, Ontario, Garnier was an all-boys boarding school operated by the Jesuits. It was known for its appalling conditions and the abhorrent neglect of its students. Beam was sent to Garnier at the age of ten, and it was there that he experienced firsthand the assimilative cultural and physical violence of Canada’s residential school system.

In an act of rebellion, Beam left Garnier in Grade 10 and completed his diploma through correspondence courses. In the 1960s, he began to paint in his spare time. He received formal art training in the early 1970s, first in a drafting program at the Kootenay School of the Arts in Nelson, British Columbia, and then at the University of Victoria, where he earned his bachelor of fine arts degree in 1974.

Early in his career, Beam established himself as a unique voice in contemporary Indigenous art, producing works in a wide range of media—such as painting, printmaking, ceramics, and video—that incorporated the varied methods of contemporary [Pop art](#) artists, such as the “combines” of Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008). In his art, Beam would intermingle found objects with painting, collage, prose, and poetry to produce dynamic and thought-provoking images.

Beam gained critical recognition throughout the 1980s and 1990s when he was included in several exhibitions of contemporary Indigenous art and his work *The North American Iceberg*, 1985, was acquired by the National Gallery of Canada. But even though he was being celebrated as a profound artistic voice, he still grappled with tokenization and the expectations placed upon him by collectors and curators. Beam continued to use his art to address structural barriers, to shine a light on both the past and the present, and to advocate for equal ground.

Although Beam passed away in 2005, his art has helped pave the way for new generations of Indigenous creators to participate fully in the Canadian art world.



Fig 3. Robert Rauschenberg, *Collection*, 1954–55. Beam was influenced by American Pop artists like Rauschenberg, famous for his “combine” paintings.



Fig 4. Carl Beam, *Self-Portrait as John Wayne, Probably* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990. Many of Beam’s works were autobiographical, as in this etching featuring an image of him as a child.

NATIONAL & WORLD EVENTS



Fig 5. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, n.d. The current building that houses the country's national collection was built in 1988 by Safdie Architects.



Fig 6. Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, M'Chigeeng First Nation, n.d. Along with its museum and gallery spaces, the foundation is home to the first Anishinaabe-language radio station.



Fig 7. Gordon Reserve Indian Residential School, Punnychy, n.d. Students from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta attended this institution.

<p>The Indian Act is enacted.</p> <p>The National Gallery of Canada is established.</p> <p>Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, makes residential school attendance compulsory for children between the ages of seven and fifteen.</p> <p>The Second World War takes place.</p> <p>The Ojibwe Cultural Foundation is established to preserve and revitalize the culture, traditions, language, and arts of the Anishinaabe people of Manitoulin Island.</p> <p>The Thunder Bay Art Gallery (formerly known as the Thunder Bay National Exhibition Centre) opens as Northern Ontario's largest art gallery specializing in the work of contemporary Indigenous artists.</p> <p>The last residential school in Canada, Saskatchewan's Gordon's Indian Residential School, closes.</p> <p>June is declared National Indigenous History Month.</p>	<p>1876</p> <p>1880</p> <p>1920</p> <p>1939</p> <p>-45</p> <p>1943</p> <p>1953</p> <p>1974</p> <p>1976</p> <p>1981</p> <p>1986</p> <p>1992</p> <p>1996</p> <p>2000</p> <p>2005</p> <p>2009</p>	<p>Carl Beam is born in the M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island.</p> <p>Beam is sent to Garnier High School in Spanish, Ontario.</p> <p>Beam receives his bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of Victoria and enrolls in a master's program at the University of Alberta.</p> <p>Beam and his family move to the American Southwest, where he learns the traditional pottery techniques of the Ancestral Pueblo peoples.</p> <p>The National Gallery of Canada acquires Beam's <i>The North American Iceberg</i>, 1985, for its contemporary collection.</p> <p>Beam and his family build a 3,000-square-foot adobe brick house on Manitoulin Island as a model for Indigenous-led sustainable housing.</p> <p>The Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, Ontario, presents <i>The Whale of Our Being</i>, Beam's final Canadian exhibition during his lifetime.</p> <p>Beam receives the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts. Later this year, on July 30, Beam dies from complications of Type 2 diabetes.</p>
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CARL BEAM'S LIFE



Fig 8. Carl Beam, his mother, Barbara Migwans, and his baby sister, Marjorie, on Manitoulin Island, 1946.



Fig 9. Carl Beam working on clay and slips on the hood of a blue station wagon, 1981. In the American Southwest, Beam created pottery and ceramic works.



Fig 10. Carl and Anong Migwans in the garden of the Adobe House in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island, 1994.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #1

CELEBRATING ARTISTIC DIFFERENCE

In the late 1970s, when Carl Beam was dedicating himself full time to life as an artist, a group of Ojibwe creators known as the [Woodland School](#) were making art that was beginning to gain prominence. Its artists, including the renowned [Norval Morrisseau](#) (1931–2007), were forging a style all their own—but it was radically different from what Beam was beginning to develop in his own practice. In this activity, students engage in a compare-and-contrast exercise using the works of Carl Beam and Norval Morrisseau. Learners will gain a better understanding of how two Ojibwe artists shared and defined their own unique voices, stories, cultures, beliefs, and teachings through art.

Big Idea

Contemporary Indigenous art

Learning Goals

1. I can use my critical thinking and creative skills to analyze a piece of artwork and make specific observations.
2. I can use proper terminology when discussing the art I see.
3. I can use artwork to build understanding and inspire questions about the world around me.
4. I can compare two different artists and point to the stylistic differences and similarities in their works.
5. I can use art to understand the historical and contemporary experiences of two Ojibwe creators.

Materials

- [Carl Beam Image File](#)
- [Carl Beam: Life & Work](#)
- “Who Was Carl Beam?” [biographic information sheet](#)
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Printed copies of images from Carl Beam Image File

Process

1. Introduce students to Carl Beam and Norval Morrisseau using the “Who Was Carl Beam?” biographic information sheet and the [Norval Morrisseau Teacher Resource Guide](#).
2. Explain that Beam did not paint in the [Woodland style](#), as developed by his Ojibwe contemporary Norval Morrisseau, but he was an advocate for celebrating Indigenous contemporary artists regardless of their personal styles and techniques. Describe how he combined found objects, prose, collage, and painting and was also influenced by Pop art, semiotics, and the integration of text.



Fig 11. Carl Beam, *Contain that Force*, 1978. Starting in the late 1970s, Beam began to combine painting, poetry, photographic images, and found objects in his work.

Learning Activity #1 continued

3. Ask students to read the section [A Fight for Equal Treatment](#) in *Carl Beam: Life & Work*. Explore the stereotypes, misconceptions, and microaggressions that Beam faced throughout his career in art using the following guiding questions:

- What obstacles did Beam face throughout his career?
- What did Beam do to advocate for his own personal style of artmaking, and how did he communicate his viewpoints through his art?
- What inspires you about Beam's attitude and approach to the creative process?



Fig 12. Norval Morrisseau, *Artist and Shaman between Two Worlds*, 1980. Morrisseau was a founding member of the Woodland School, a group of Ojibwe artists forging a new style of painting in the 1970s.

4. Project Norval Morrisseau, *Artist and Shaman between Two Worlds*, 1980, and Carl Beam, *Contain that Force*, 1978. Ask students to compare and contrast the subjects and styles of these works. Discuss the works using the following guiding questions:

- What subjects do you see each artist representing?
- What materials/media does each artist use?
- How do these artists share important historical/cultural information through their art?
- What cultural or social statements do you think the artists are making through these works?
- What specific stylistic differences do you see in these works?
- How do the artists use the elements of art (line, colour, space, texture, etc.) in their works? What is similar and what is different in their works?

5. Read the section titled [A New Approach to Indigenous Art](#) in *Carl Beam: Life & Work*. As a class, engage in a discussion to further reflect on the differences seen between Beam and Morrisseau. What new learning has emerged?

6. Repeat step 4 using Norval Morrisseau, *Ojibway Shaman Figure*, 1975, and Carl Beam, *The Elders*, 1978.



Fig 13. Norval Morrisseau, *Ojibway Shaman Figure*, 1975. Morrisseau was known for the use of bold, interconnected lines and vibrant colours.



Fig 14. Carl Beam, *The Elders*, 1978. In this work commissioned by the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, Beam worked from reference photographs.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #2

CREATING A PERSONAL IDENTITY COLLAGE

In his practice, Carl Beam brought together numerous visual references from his own life, as well as popular culture, history, and art history, creating layers of meaning through his innovative—and in many cases, deeply personal—works. In this activity, students take inspiration from Beam’s creations and use them as a starting point for an analysis of how personal identity may be expressed visually using images, text, and collage—one of Beam’s favoured media. The activity culminates in the creation of works that examine students’ own identities through collage and expand into a larger exploration of personal and cultural identities.

Big Idea

Communicating personal identity

Learning Goals

1. I can use my critical thinking and creative skills to analyze a piece of artwork.
2. I can use the elements and principles of design to communicate a message.
3. I can explain my artistic choices and the symbolism used in my work.
4. I can talk about my work and the work of my peers using proper visual arts terminology.
5. I think carefully before I speak or act. I ask questions in a respectful and thoughtful manner.
6. I understand that the Anishinaabe have distinct cultural traditions and contemporary practices, histories, teachings, and language.

Materials

- [Carl Beam Image File](#)
- [Carl Beam: Life & Work](#)
- “Who Was Carl Beam?” [biographic information sheet](#)
- Cameras and printers
- Glue and tape
- Magazines and newspapers
- Pens, markers, paint, and watercolours
- Photographs
- Sketchbooks

Process

1. Introduce students to Carl Beam using the “Who Was Carl Beam?” biographic information sheet. As they are reading, display the following images on the whiteboard or projector:

- Page from Carl Beam’s Paris sketchbook, 1985
- Carl Beam, *Self-Portrait as John Wayne, Probably* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990
- Carl Beam, *Autobiographical Errata*, 1997
- Carl Beam, *Burying the Ruler*, 1992

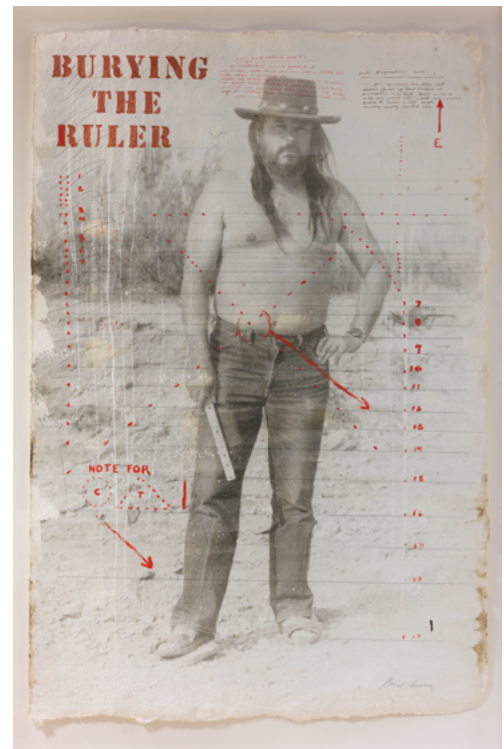


Fig 15. Carl Beam, *Burying the Ruler*, 1992. This work features a photograph of the artist and is part of a larger project he created to question colonial domination.

Learning Activity #2 continued

2. Next, focus in on Beam's work *Self-Portrait in My Christian Dior Bathing Suit*, 1980. Ask students to share their notes in small groups and discuss the work together. Guiding questions might include the following:

- What stands out to you as you look at this self-portrait?
- How does Beam use text, images, and other creative expression in this work to communicate meaning?
- Why do you think Beam chose to picture himself in a Christian Dior bathing suit?
- What message is the artist trying to communicate to the viewer?

3. Have students read the following passages from the "Key Works" section of *Carl Beam: Life & Work*. As a class, engage in a discussion to further reflect on Beam's self-portrait. What new learning has emerged?

In this iconic self-portrait, Carl Beam depicts himself, clad only in a black bathing suit, in a confrontational manner—upending the viewer's expectations for how an Indigenous man should comport himself. With a hand on his hip and his hair hanging loose and long, he gazes from beyond the picture plane, his eyes ablaze with an eagle-like intensity. The title makes a clear reference to the fact that his bathing suit was purchased from an elegant high-fashion brand. But instead of positioning himself as an idealized pin-up, Beam presents himself as a creative subject in control of his own image.

With this defiant image, Beam confronts issues of self-representation. He undermines, as curator Richard William Hill has argued, not only the suppositions of the art audience of the early 1980s, "which would have expected Anishinaabe artists to be working in the so-called Woodland School style," but also widely held assumptions that Indigenous men did not own designer clothing. Beam addresses both beliefs head-on while simultaneously pointing out how absurd they were: "There he [was,] standing in his Christian Dior bathing suit. Native people at that time weren't really allowed to have Christian Dior bathing suits.... [T]hat's one of the funny things. We weren't considered to exist in modern times, especially in our prosperous modern time where we might want to have a Christian Dior bathing suit." By depicting himself in this manner, Beam combats—in a very tongue-in-cheek way—the centuries-long treatment of Indigenous subjects in art as ethnographic or anthropological artifacts, and he undermines stereotypes that originated in paintings by Paul Kane (1810–1871) and Cornelius Krieghoff (1815–1872).

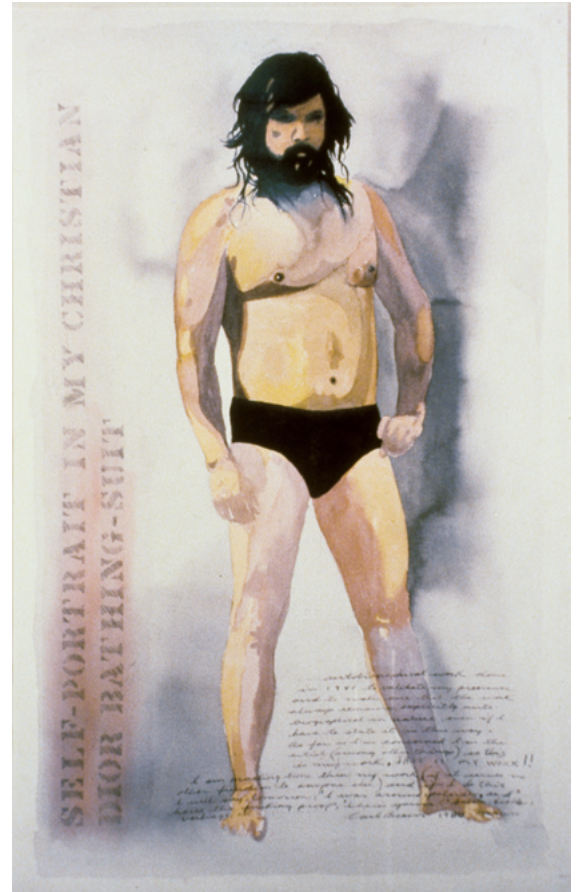


Fig 16. Carl Beam, *Self-Portrait in My Christian Dior Bathing Suit*, 1980. This is one of Beam's most iconic self-portraits.

Learning Activity #2 continued



Fig 17. Page from Carl Beam's Paris sketchbook, 1985. Beam used sketchbooks to record thoughts, archive photographs, and map out ideas for his works. This photograph pictures Beam with his wife, Ann, and daughter, Anong.



Fig 18. Carl Beam, *Self-Portrait as John Wayne, Probably* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990. Many of Beam's works were autobiographical, as in this etching featuring an image of him as a child.



Fig 19. Carl Beam, *Autobiographical Errata*, 1997. This autobiographical work features a family photograph of the artist as a child with his mother, Barbara Migwans, and his sister, Marjorie.

4. Next, have students consider the following questions in preparation for the creation of their own personal identity collages:

- How might I express my personal identity through collage?
- Do I have a particular message I wish to communicate?
- Are there any barriers or biases I wish to comment on in my work?
- What photographs, symbols, and text could best communicate my message, identity, culture, and beliefs to the viewer?
- How might the viewer interpret meaning based on my collage?
- What message am I hoping the audience will take from my completed work?

5. Have students open their sketchbooks and begin initial sketches and ideas in response to these guiding questions.

6. Introduce the project: inspired by Carl Beam's work, students will work to create and communicate their personal identity through collage. Ask students to revisit their initial responses to the guiding questions in steps 2 and 4. Provide students with time to both take photographs and collect photographs from their lives.

7. Provide time for students to create their collage works. Circulate while they are working, and provide time for peer-to-peer feedback and teacher feedback.

8. As a final step, have students write an artist statement communicating their artistic choices and the significance of their images. Students should be able to clearly articulate how they used images, symbols, and text to communicate meaning.

CULMINATING TASK

BECOMING AN ACTIVIST ARTIST

Throughout his life and career, Carl Beam was an important and dedicated activist. He fought to raise national awareness about the violence and injustice of the residential school system in Canada, and he was a fervent advocate for greater opportunity and visibility for Indigenous artists—and an expanded definition of what contemporary Indigenous art could be. In this activity, students will examine activism aimed to change societal (mis)understandings. Inspired by Carl Beam’s work, they will present visual installations intended to challenge and educate their school community.

Big Idea

Taking a stance

Learning Goals

1. I can use my critical thinking and creative skills to analyze a piece of artwork.
2. I can use the elements and principles of design to communicate a message.
3. I can explain my artistic choices and the symbolism used in my work.
4. I can talk about my work and the work of my peers using proper visual arts terminology.
5. I can communicate my viewpoint on a specific issue through the use of images, text, collage, photo transfer, papier mâché, painting, printmaking, and/or film.
6. I can research and develop an understanding of a topic of my choice.
7. I can think critically and creatively about the world around me.

Success Criteria

To be added to, reduced, or changed in collaboration with students.

1. Your written work is thoughtful, clear, and edited.
2. You demonstrate a thorough understanding of how to express a viewpoint on an issue of meaning through art.
3. You select a medium in which you would like to create your final piece.
4. Your artwork is created with care. You work slowly and submit your best piece.
5. Your artist statement and documentation of your creative process show specific decisions made with reference to identity and/or activism.

Materials

- [Carl Beam Image File](#)
- [Carl Beam: Life & Work](#)
- “Who Was Carl Beam?” [biographic information sheet](#)
- Cameras
- Clay
- Magazines and newspapers
- Paint, pencils, pencil crayons, and watercolours
- Papier mâché
- Sculpture-making supplies
- Sketchbooks



Fig 20. Carl Beam speaking about residential schools at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1985. Beam used his platform as an artist to advocate and raise awareness.

Culminating Task continued

Process

1. Project Carl Beam's *The Northern Iceberg*, 1985. Lead a discussion based on the following questions:

- What stands out to you as you look at this work?
- How does Beam use the elements of art in this work?
- Are there any symbols or text included in this work?
- How has Beam used juxtaposition (placing objects/ images next to each other in intentional ways) to make statements through his work?
- How has Beam used text in this work to communicate specific ideas?
- What message do you think Beam is hoping to communicate in this work?



Fig 21. Poster for *The European Iceberg: Creativity Today in Germany and Italy*, an exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, February 8 to April 7, 1985. Beam's *The North American Iceberg* was a response to this exhibition.

2. Ask students to read the [Key Works](#) entry for *The Northern Iceberg*, 1985, in *Carl Beam: Life & Work*. What new learning has emerged, and what is Beam advocating for through this important work?

3. Building on the investigations from the previous activities, ask students to consider which topic they think the school community could benefit from learning more about (contemporary Indigenous art, colonialism, Canadian history, individual artists, stereotypes, microaggressions). What larger contexts do they think the school should know more about (environment, politics, social justice, arts, history)?

4. Have students, working individually or in small groups, select a topic they want to share with the school community as an action of learning and activism.



Fig 22. Carl Beam, *The North American Iceberg*, 1985. This is Beam's best-known work and was a landmark acquisition for the National Gallery of Canada.

Culminating Task continued

5. Tell students that they will be creating visual installations to help the community learn about these topics within the school. These installations will be created and shared in a public space or forum to help build understanding and encourage dialogue.

6. Have students answer and document the following guiding questions:

- What topic do you want the school to know more about?
- What misconceptions do you hope to combat?
- What specific learning or message do you hope the school community gains through your work?
- How will you use your new learning about Carl Beam and his artistic style to communicate a clear message to the school community?

7. Using their answers to the above questions, have students design installations that will include both images and text to communicate their messages to the school community.

Students should sketch/wireframe their installations, indicating through annotations what images/text will be used, how the combination of images and text will convey their message, and how the placement/juxtaposition of elements will further the message.

8. Have students create their installations using available materials, written text, and images and then share these final installations with the school community. Students may view and reflect on the installations of their peers, documenting their learning from these works, or act as artists/experts by presenting their work to others.



Fig 23. Exterior view of the Carl Beam retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 2010. *The North American Iceberg* was the first work of contemporary art by a self-identifying Indigenous artist purchased for the gallery's contemporary collection.

HOW CARL BEAM MADE ART: STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Here are a few of the important artistic concepts that characterize the art of Carl Beam. For more information, see the [Style & Technique chapter](#) of *Carl Beam: Life & Work* by Anong Migwans Beam.

COLLAGE AND THE INFLUENCE OF POP ART

Early in his career, Carl Beam embraced collage as a creative strategy for examining how art conveys meaning. Beam began to use collage methods while studying the techniques of Pop artists such as Andy Warhol (1928–1987), whose repetition of pop culture images echoes Beam's reuse of the same images in different works. Often juxtaposing disparate images with poetic lines or passages of text, Beam used collage to enable open-ended readings of his works.

PRINTMAKING AND PHOTO TRANSFER

In the early 1980s, Carl Beam began experimenting with new techniques that would profoundly impact his later career. The first was printmaking. Shortly after moving to Peterborough, Ontario, in 1983, Beam purchased a large etching press and used it to produce a series of large-scale prints, including *The Columbus Suite*, 1990. The second technique he embraced at this time was photo transfer, a method he used to reproduce images on a variety of surfaces—from paper and canvas to Plexiglas and cotton T-shirts.

WORKING WITH WORDS AND IDEAS

Carl Beam's interest in semiotics (the study of signs and symbols) underlies his entire artistic career. Beam looked to semiotics to develop ways to work with text and images in his art, such as exploring the "look" of words and how they might be interpreted differently when paired with startling images. Lines of text appear throughout Beam's creations in different media, from works on paper to ceramics. Written spontaneously by Beam, the passages inscribed in these works challenge viewers to question not only what they know but how they know.

CERAMICS

Ceramics were a significant part of Carl Beam's creative practice. He was first exposed to the work of Japanese potter Ogata Kenzan (1663–1743) while studying at the University of Victoria. Later, while living in the American Southwest, Beam became fascinated with earthenware objects made by the Ancestral Pueblo peoples. He embraced both their bold design and their traditional hand-building techniques, adding signs, symbols, and spontaneous prose to his own works, such as *Raven*, 1983.



Fig 24. Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Diptych*, 1962. Warhol was an iconic figure from the American Pop art movement.



Fig 25. Carl Beam pulling proofs of *The Columbus Suite* from his Praga press, n.d. *The Columbus Suite* is one of Beam's most ambitious series of prints.



Fig 26. Carl Beam, *Raven*, 1983. Beam crafted this bowl using traditional materials and hand-built (not thrown or wheel-turned) methods.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Supplementary Materials Provided by the Art Canada Institute

- The online art book *Carl Beam: Life & Work* by Anong Migwans Beam: <https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/carl-beam/>
- [Carl Beam Image File](#) with artworks and images related to this lesson
- “Who Was Carl Beam?” biographic information sheet ([page 2](#))
- Timelines of national and world events and Carl Beam’s life ([page 3](#))
- “How Carl Beam Made Art: Style & Technique” information sheet ([page 12](#))

GLOSSARY

Here is a list of terms that appear in this resource guide and are relevant to the learning activities and culminating task. For a comprehensive list of art-related terms, visit the Art Canada Institute’s ever-growing [Glossary of Canadian Art History](#).

Anishinaabe/Anishnabe/Anishinābe

A collective term that means “the people” or “original people” and refers to a number of interconnected communities such as the Ojibway/Ojibwa/Ojibwe, Odawa, Chippewa, Saulteaux, Mississauga, Potawatomi, and others. In Canada, the Anishinaabe/Anishnabe region includes areas of Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec.

Morrisseau, Norval (Anishinaabe, 1931–2007)

A painter known for depicting Anishinaabe legends and personal, hybrid spiritual themes with vibrant colours and strong lines, Morrisseau was a crucial figure in introducing contemporary Indigenous art into the wider Canadian art scene. He founded the Woodland School and inspired a generation of younger First Nations artists. In 1978, Morrisseau was appointed to the Order of Canada, and in 2006, the National Gallery mounted a major retrospective of his work.

Pop art

A movement of the late 1950s to early 1970s in Britain and the United States, Pop art adopted imagery from commercial design, television, and cinema. Pop art’s most recognized proponents are Richard Hamilton (1922–2011), David Hockney (b.1937), Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997), and Andy Warhol (1928–1987).

Woodland School (of art)

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Norval Morrisseau pioneered this school of artistic practice. Key characteristics of Woodland School art include the fusion of traditional Ojibwe imagery and symbols with sensibilities of modernism and Pop art, as well as the fusion of X-ray-style motifs with bold colours and interconnected, curvilinear lines. Alex Janvier (1935–2024), Daphne Odjig (1919–2016), and Carl Ray (1943–1978) are other prominent artists associated with the Woodland School.

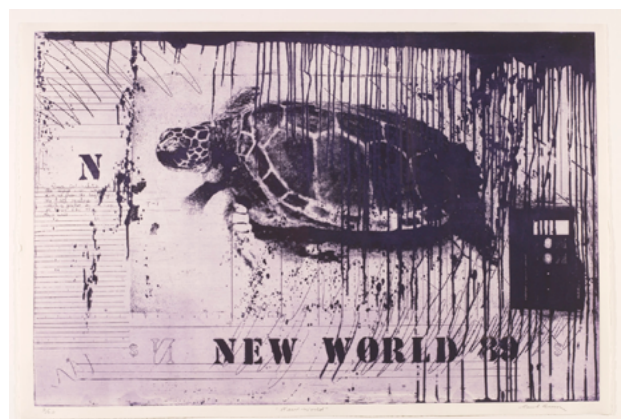


Fig 27. Carl Beam, *New World* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990. The turtle is a recurring motif in Beam’s work—a visual reference to Turtle Island, a term that comes from Indigenous creation stories.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

The following external resources can be used to augment the learning activities and materials provided by the Art Canada Institute. They are to be used at the teacher's own discretion.

1/ Norval Morriseau: Life & Work by Carmen Robertson—ACI Online Art Book:

<https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/norval-morriseau/>

2/ Learn about Land and Indigenous Worldviews through the art of Norval Morriseau—ACI Teacher Resource Guide:

<https://www.aci-iac.ca/education/teacher-resource-guides/land-indigenous-worldviews-through-the-art-of-norval-morriseau/>

3/ Carl Beam—The Canadian Encyclopedia:

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/carl-beam>

4/ “Gathering Colour” by Anong Migwans Beam:

<https://snapartists.com/snapline/gathering-colour/>

5/ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525>



Fig 28. Installation view of *Time Warp*, 1984, in the exhibition *Carl Beam* at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, from October 22, 2010 to January 16, 2011.

FIGURE LIST

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Cover Image: Carl Beam, *The North American Iceberg*, 1985, acrylic, photo-serigraph, and graphite on Plexiglas, 213.6 x 374.1 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 1986 (29515). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 1. Carl Beam, *The Whale of Our Being (Still Waiting for Godot)*, c.2003, acrylic and photo transfer on paper, 152.4 x 101.6 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Courtesy of Gallery Gevik. Photo credit: Justin Giallonardo. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 2. Carl Beam with his hominy corn harvest, n.d., photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.

Fig 3. Robert Rauschenberg, *Collection*, 1954–55, fabric, metal, oil, paper and wood on canvas, 203.2 x 243.8 x 8.9 cm. Collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson, Acquired 1972. Photo credit: Ben Blackwell. © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 4. Carl Beam, *Self-Portrait as John Wayne, Probably (from The Columbus Suite)*, 1990, etching on Arches paper, 109.2 x 83.8 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Purchased with funds donated by AGO Members, 1991 (91/51.6). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Photo credit: AGO. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 5. Photograph of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON, n.d. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Safdie Architects.

Fig 6. Photograph of Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, M'Chigeeng First Nation, n.d. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Ojibwe Cultural Foundation.

Fig 7. Photograph of Gordon Reserve Indian Residential School, Punnichy, Saskatchewan, n.d. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of CTV News Regina.

Fig 8. Carl Beam, his mother, Barbara Migwans, and his baby sister, Marjorie, on Manitoulin Island, 1946. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.

Fig 9. Carl Beam working on clay and slips on the hood of a blue station wagon, 1981. Photograph by Ann Beam. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 10. Carl and Anong Migwans Beam in the garden of the Adobe House in M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island, 1994. Photographer unknown. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 11. Carl Beam, *Contain that Force*, 1978, acrylic, collage materials on canvas, 120.5 x 163 cm. Collection of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 12. Norval Morrisseau, *Artist and Shaman between Two Worlds*, 1980, acrylic on canvas, 175 x 282 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 2006 (41869). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Norval Morrisseau.

Fig 13. Norval Morrisseau, *Ojibway Shaman Figure*, 1975, acrylic on cardboard, 101.5 x 81.2 cm. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Freda and Irwin Browns (2006.23). Courtesy of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Photo credit: MMFA, Brian Merrett. © Estate of Norval Morrisseau.

Fig 14. Carl Beam, *The Elders*, 1978, mixed media, 120 x 160 cm. Collection of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 15. Carl Beam, *Burying the Ruler*, 1992, paper, graphite, paint, 184 x 128 x 6.5 cm. Collection of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Purchased from Ann Beam, 2011 (26/8828). Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. Photo credit: NMAI Photo Services. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 16. Carl Beam, *Self-Portrait in My Christian Dior Bathing Suit*, 1980, watercolour on paper, 106 x 65.5 cm. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam and the Carl Beam Archives. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 17. Page from Carl Beam's Paris sketchbook, 1985. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 18. Carl Beam, *Self-Portrait as John Wayne, Probably (from The Columbus Suite)*, 1990, etching on Arches paper, 109.2 x 83.8 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Purchased with funds donated by AGO Members, 1991 (91/51.6). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Photo credit: AGO. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 19. Carl Beam, *Autobiographical Errata*, 1997, photo emulsion, watercolour, and ink on paper, 104.1 x 74.9 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 2010 (43087). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 20. Carl Beam speaking about residential schools at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1985. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 21. Poster for *The European Iceberg: Creativity Today in Germany and Italy* exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, February 8 to April 7, 1985. Design by Massimo Vignelli. Courtesy of Vignelli Center for Design Studies, Rochester Institute of Technology and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Photo credit: AGO.

Fig 22. Carl Beam, *The North American Iceberg*, 1985, acrylic, photo-serigraph, and graphite on Plexiglas, 213.6 x 374.1 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 1986 (29515). Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: NGC. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 23. Exterior view of the Carl Beam retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 2010. Photographer unknown. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam.

Fig 24. Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Diptych*, 1962, silkscreen ink and acrylic paint on two canvases, 205.4 x 144.8 cm (each). Collection of Tate Modern, London, Purchased 1980 (T03093). Courtesy of Tate Modern. © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

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Fig 25. Carl Beam pulling proofs of *The Columbus Suite* from his Praga press, n.d. Photograph by Ann Beam. Private collection. Courtesy of Anong Migwans Beam. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 26. Carl Beam, *Raven*, 1983, natural mineral pigment on unglazed earthenware, 13.4 x 34.8 cm. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (III-G-1497). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 27. Carl Beam, *New World* (from *The Columbus Suite*), 1990, etching on Arches paper, 83.8 x 109.2 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Purchased with funds donated by AGO Members, 1991 (91/51.1). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Photo credit: AGO. © Estate of Carl and Ann Beam / CARCC Ottawa 2024.

Fig 28. Installation view of *Time Warp*, 1984, in *Carl Beam* at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, from October 22, 2010 to January 16, 2011. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Ottawa.