

# Spirit in Glass

PLATEAU NATIVE BEADWORK

## Educational Guide

Grades 9-12 & Higher Education



### Subject Area:

#### English Language Arts

- Writing, Speaking, & Listening
- Literacy in History/Social Studies
- National Art Education Association Standards

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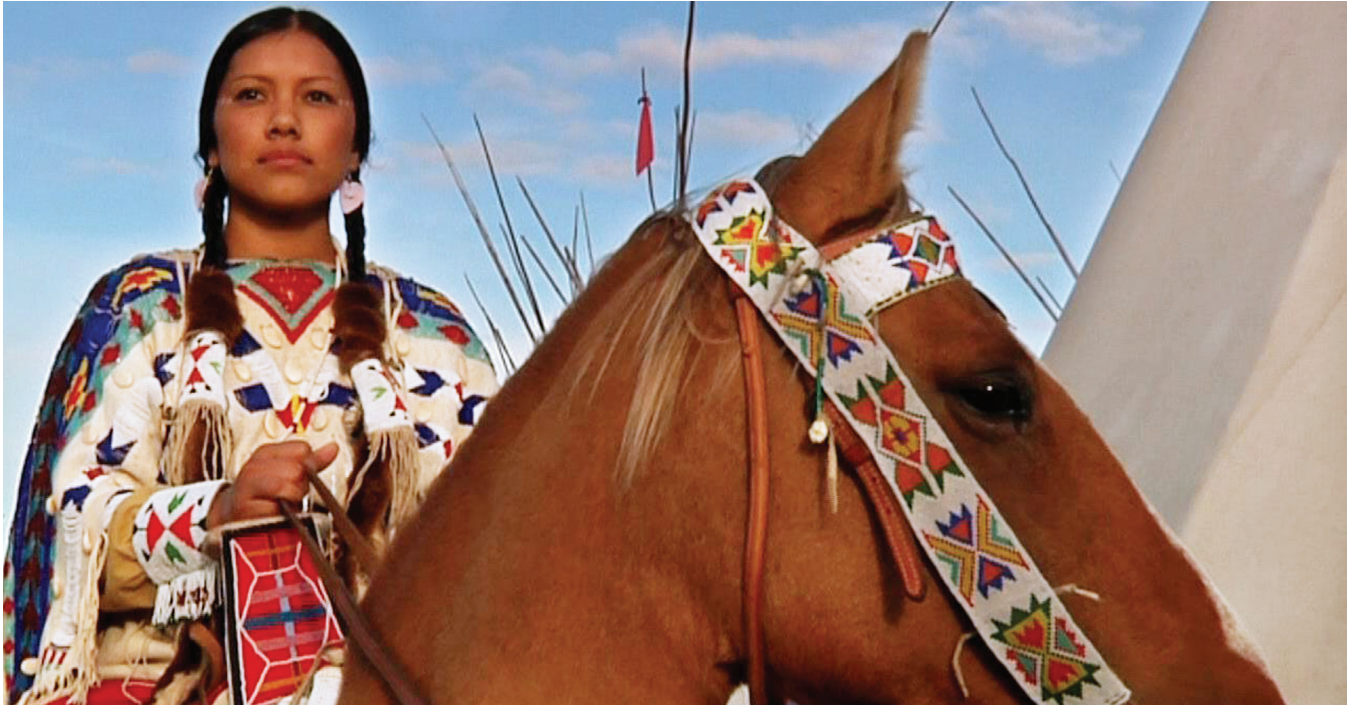
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## SPIRIT IN GLASS: PLATEAU NATIVE BEADWORK EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

*Out of the upheaval, pictorial  
beadwork arose, a new way to keep the spirit alive.*



### PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:

A celebration of Native American Plateau art and culture, this program emphasizes the origin and remarkable survival of the art form and culture as experienced by Native Plateau bead artists.

**LENGTH:** appr. 30 min.

### GRADE APPROPRIATENESS:

9-12 & Higher Education

### SUBJECT/ TOPIC CURRICULA:

English Language Arts

- Writing, Speaking, & Listening
- Literacy in History/Social Studies
- National Art Education Association Standards

### ESTIMATED TIME REQUIRED:

1-2 class periods

Carina Vasquez (Cayuse/Walla Walla/Umatilla) on horseback. She's wearing a dress her Grandmother made for the Pendleton Round-Up. Photo Credit: Penny Phillips

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### Background/Instructor Notes



Beaded bags. Photo Credit: Penny Phillips.

Throughout human existence, we have adorned ourselves with symbolic and decorative items that convey a broad range of meanings. In the Old World, colorful, sparkling beads were applied to articles of clothing, ceremonial dress, ritual masks, and everyday objects – often times assigning rank, spiritual significance, or protection to the wearer.

Many people think American Indians made glass beads, but they did not. Glass beads were produced in Venice and Czechoslovakia, and as explorers and traders made their way to new places, were used for trade all over the world. In America, the French were the first to introduce glass beads to tribal communities.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Native people of the Columbia River Plateau region (Northwestern U.S.) decorated their clothing and other items with animal teeth, bone, paints, porcupine quills, seeds, shell beads, and stones. Acquiring glass beads through trade, Native people merely incorporated them into techniques and expressions they had been doing for centuries.

One of the most omnipresent beaded objects from the Columbia Plateau region is the beaded flat bags. Developed after 1850, it is rectangular in shape and based on the cornhusk bags which are flat-twined root storage bags. These bags were made and carried by women essentially as purses or as decorative clothing accessories.

However, what is critical to understand is that the beaded designs, the “stories in glass,” on these bags were actually a history book, an artistic reflection of life on the Plateau, a visual insight into how Native people endured assimilation and loss of land, a tribute to life, culture, and family.

In American Indian cultures, art is not separate from daily life. Traditionally, the things people used in their everyday life – clothing, tools, and containers – were often decorated to enhance their beauty and spirituality. American Indians do beadwork not because they are singled out as artists, but because it is part of the celebration of life.

American Indians have found ways to continue tradition and to honor life in spite of the hardships they have endured throughout history. The resiliency comes to life in the works exhibited in *Spirit in Glass*, and the determination of artists to continue this important art form is passionately articulated.

**NOTE:** The art work, stories, and traditions in the film are unique to the Plateau region of the U.S. Each region – Woodlands, Southeast, Plains, Southwest – has its own beadwork tradition, and as a result, its own distinctive expression of art.

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### Key Concepts



Plateau Beaded Wedding Veil.  
Photo Credit: Roy Grafe

- Plateau beadwork tradition is a vital part of the culture. It paints a picture of everyday life that keeps culture strong.
- Being relegated to reservation life did not stop the creative process for American Indians.
- Beadwork connects us with our past.
- Beadwork records history and major events in our lives, both for families and communities.
- Native communities are taking proactive steps to preserve traditions and traditional arts.
- Beadwork is a discipline that teaches patience, encourages creativity, and celebrates life.

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### Content Review

1. Upon what was the economy based in pre-contact times for people of the Plateau region? (salmon fishing)
2. What did Natives use for beads before there were glass beads? (bones, teeth, shells, stones, clay)
3. Where did the glass beads come from? (They were traded to the Natives from Europeans.)
4. What do you think American Indians used for needles and thread prior to European contact? (bone, animal sinew)
5. With reference to the film, what does Plateau mean? (In studying American Indians, sections of the U.S. are divided up into regions. Plateau refers to people who lived between the Rocky Mountains and the Cascades in the Columbia and Snake River drainage.)
6. What are the four tribal communities represented in the film? (Umatilla, Warm Springs, Nez Perce, Yakama are mentioned in the film, however there are three tribal groups at Warm Springs, three at Umatilla, and fourteen at Yakama.)
7. What does Pendleton Round-Up mean? (It is the name of one of the oldest and most important annual rodeos. Held in Pendleton, Oregon, Native people parade and showcase family heirlooms, visit and reconnect with family and friends, and celebrate life accomplishments.)
8. What are the major rivers in the Plateau region? (Snake River, Columbia River, Salmon River, Deschutes River, Yakima River, Clearwater River, etc.)
9. According to Plateau tribal traditions, the rivers represent \_\_\_\_\_ (the veins) and the water in the rivers represents \_\_\_\_\_ (life-giving blood)
10. According to Nakia Williamson, how is knowledge of life passed along? (through artistic expression and connection to land and family)
11. What is a cornhusk bag? (Traditional art form – baskets woven for storage, they are the inspiration for the beaded bags Plateau artists are known for.)
12. How did Maynard White Owl Lavadour learn his art? (by watching his grandmothers work and listening to their recollections of the past)
13. Why do you suppose Maynard and daughter are committed to making things for the family? (to preserve their histories)
14. Ervanna Little Eagle's beadwork reflects on a family about what? (gathering huckleberries and wild strawberries)
15. What is the significance of depicting swallows? (They fly up river when it is time for the salmon to return.)

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16. What is a rodeo? (An event where cowboy athletes compete in events such as saddle bronc riding, barrel racing, team roping, and bull riding.)
17. What reservation are Delcie and Rose Scott from, and how did they learn beadwork? (They are from Warm Springs and they learned from their mother and grandmother.)
18. What type of stories do Delcie and Rose Scott like to depict in their work? (stories of rodeo)
19. What is a pow wow? (An intertribal gathering that celebrates family history, the present, and the future.)
20. What inspired Brigitte Scott to do beadwork?? (She dances in pow wows, as do her daughters.)
21. According to Brigitte’s grandmother, their community followed the seasons. What was the best time to do beadwork? (during the winter when nature was sleeping)
22. Grandma Aurelia talks about size 16 beads. What does that mean? (Beads come in various sizes. The smaller the size number, the larger the bead. Size 16 beads are thus small, and work that uses them is very intricate.)
23. What are cradleboards? (objects used to carry babies in) Do all tribes have cradleboards? (yes) Do they all look alike? (no) Why or why not? (Cradleboards are made using the natural resources from the area a particular tribe comes from.)
24. What makes objects in museums different from those used by families? (Objects in museums are not touched or handled consistently by human beings, whereas the objects families use are touched by life.)
25. What tribe are Vivian Harrison and her sister Marian from? (Yakama) How many tribal cultures comprise the Yakama Nation? (fourteen)
26. What did Marian and Vivian’s father do for a living? (salmon fisherman) What was his nickname and why was it significant? (Blue Crane, because in nature, the Blue Crane always gets a salmon and never returns home without food.)
27. What design is Marian’s favorite to create? (eagle)
28. What are eagle feathers used for?(prayer, ceremonies, smudging, taking prayers of the people to the Creator, part of dance regalia)
29. Why are veterans and flag imagery important to Native people? (Native people serve in the armed forces at a high rate because America is our home and we will do anything to defend our mother, our home.)
30. Near the end of the film, the narrator expresses that “our laws are not in books” – where are they? (In the land – it is the place where Native people go to reconnect, gather strength, and find inner peace.)
31. Name a few of the images depicted in the photo essay at the end of the film. (swallows, blue jays, eagles, deer, horses, salmon, bear, elk, strawberries, huckleberries, roses)

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### Discussion Questions

1. In the film, the Pendleton Round-Up is depicted. People travel long distances to gather, visit, parade, and share stories. What type of events does your family or community have that bring people together?
2. The artists who are interviewed in the film talk a lot about family collaboration and passing down knowledge through art. What types of knowledge does your family pass down, and how is it done? (i.e., do members of your family hunt, do they can food, do they quilt, do they work on old cars?)
3. The people say the great rivers of the Plateau region are like the veins of our Mother Earth, and the water is the life-giving blood that flows, keeping everything alive and healthy.

In the film, Rose Scott talks about using her beadwork to heal her heart that is mourning the loss of their father. How do you suppose this is accomplished? (In her father's memory, she made a piece and gave it away. Through this act of giving, you humble yourself and the Creator grants you healing blessings). Have students engage in a discussion about ways people heal from loss or how their own families deal with loss.



Nakia Williamson (Nez Perce).  
Photo Credit: Penny Phillips.

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### Learning/Media Activities

1. Using books and the Internet, create a map of the Plateau region. Place the rivers, mountain ranges, and federally recognized Indian reservations in their respective locations. Have students list demographic information for each of the four reservations referenced in the film.
2. In 1804-1806, the Lewis and Clark Expedition was the first to cross the U.S. to explore and map the west. The explorers offered glass beads to tribal people along their course. This was the first time many of the tribes in the Plateau region were exposed to glass beads and marked the beginning of a new era of artistic expression. Not true. Lewis and Clark found that most Plateau people had beads that had come upriver from coastal traders. Have students research the Lewis and Clark Expedition and prepare a PowerPoint, Prezi, or other multimedia project that illustrates the course and denotes specific places, people, and events.
3. Have students research the Pendleton Round-Up. Have each prepare a short paper about the history of the event and the significance of it to the community today, both Native and non-Native. Encourage students to find some significant “fun facts” that are associated with the Pendleton Round-Up (i.e., who was Jackson Sundown, Bonnie McCarroll, George Fletcher, Hoot Gibson, Yakima Canutt).
4. Look up Maynard White Owl Lavadour on the Internet. He is an accomplished beadwork artist who is regarded as leading the field. Have students write a short biography about him, his life, and his work.
5. Does your family have a craft or tradition that has been handed down from generation to generation (i.e. serving in the military or quilting)? Write a paper that describes this tradition.



Suzette White Owl Lavadour (Cayuse/Nez Perce/Palouse/Diné).  
Photo Credit: Penny Phillips



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6. Have a short discussion with students about family heirlooms. Have each student write a short paper describing their own family heirlooms and how they are used, when they are used, and the history of that particular object. Students should conduct one-on-one personal interviews with family members to obtain this information.
7. **Art Activity:** Using the Internet as a reference tool, have students look-up tutorials on the lane stitch.
  - Obtain canvas pieces from a local fabric store and cut them into 12 inch x 12 inch squares.
  - Purchase several colors of size 11 glass seed beads from a local bead store (10 hanks should be enough to supply simple projects for 20 students – perhaps students could work in teams).
  - Purchase corresponding needles and thread. Size 11 needles and size 0 thread would be satisfactory.
  - Have students draw a design on their canvas piece that represents some aspect of their life.
  - After the design is drafted, bead the design using the lane stitch technique (tutorials are available on YouTube).



Pictorial Beaded Vest.  
Photo Credit: Roy Grafe

**Note:** This activity is to get the students familiar with working the strong, needles, and beads. There will be varying levels of proficiency, but the main point to be stressed is experiencing the feeling of creating a piece of art using glass beads.

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COMMON CORE	English Language Arts Standards: Writing, Speaking, Listening, & Literacy in History/Social Studies Grades 9-12
<b>Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.3</b> Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.</li> <li>• <b>CCSS.ELA.W.9-12.3d</b> Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.</li> <li>• <b>CCSS.ELA.W.9-12.5</b> Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</li> <li>• <b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.5</b> Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</li> <li>• <b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.6</b> Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibility and dynamically.</li> <li>• <b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.7</b> Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem, narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate, synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</li> </ul>
<b>Speaking &amp; Listening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1</b> Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</li> <li>• <b>CCSS.ELA.Literacy.SL.9-12.1d</b> Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspective, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.</li> <li>• <b>CCSS.ELA.Literacy.SL.9-12.5</b> Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.</li> </ul>

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<b>COMMON CORE</b>	<b>English Language Arts Standards: Literacy in History/Social Studies, Grades 9-12</b>
<b>Literacy in History/ Social Studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source, provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.</li> <li>• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.</li> <li>• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-12.10 By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social sciences texts in the grades 9-12 text complexity band independently and proficiently.</li> </ul>
<b>Literacy in History/ Social Studies - Writing: Text Types &amp; Purposes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-12.2b Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotation or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.</li> </ul>
<b>Literacy in History/ Social Studies - Production &amp; Distribution of Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</li> <li>• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</li> <li>• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-12.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing projects, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information and dynamically.</li> </ul>
<b>Literacy in History/ Social Studies - Research to Build &amp; Present Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem, narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate, synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.</li> <li>• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.</li> </ul>

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CONTENT STANDARD	The National Visual Arts Standards: National Art Education Association, Grades 9-12
<p><b>Understanding &amp; Applying Media, Techniques, &amp; Processes</b></p> <p><b>Achievement Standard, Proficient</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks.</li> <li>Conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrates an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques and processes they use.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Using Knowledge of Structures &amp; Functions</b></p> <p><b>Achievement Standard, Advanced</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate the ability to compare two or more perspectives about the use of organizational principles and functions in artwork and to defend personal evaluations of these perspectives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Choosing &amp; Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, &amp; Ideas</b></p> <p><b>Achievement Standard, Proficient</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Choosing &amp; Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, &amp; Ideas</b></p> <p><b>Achievement Standard, Advanced</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the origins of specific images and ideas and explain why they are of value in their artwork and in the work of others.</li> <li>Evaluate and defend the validity of sources for content and the manner in which subject matter, symbols, and images are used in the students' works and in significant works by others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History &amp; Cultures</b></p> <p><b>Achievement Standard, Proficient</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art.</li> <li>Describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places.</li> <li>Analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making.</li> </ul>

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CONTENT STANDARD	The National Visual Arts Standards: National Art Education Association, Grades 9-12
<p><b>Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History &amp; Cultures</b></p> <p><b>Achievement Standard, Advanced</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze and interpret artworks for relationships among form, context, purposes, and critical models, showing understanding of the work of critics, historians, aestheticians and artists.</li> <li>Analyze common characteristics of visual arts evident across time and among cultural/ethnic groups to formulate analyses, evaluations, and interpretations of meaning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflecting Upon Assessing the Characteristics &amp; Merits of Their Works &amp; the Works of Others</b></p> <p><b>Achievement Standard, Proficient</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works.</li> <li>Describe meanings of artworks by analyzing how specific works are created and how they relate to historical and cultural contexts.</li> <li>Reflect analytically on various interpretations as a means for understanding and evaluating works of visual art.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making Connections Between Visual Arts &amp; Other Disciplines</b></p> <p><b>Achievement Standard, Proficient</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare characteristics of visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues, or themes in the humanities or sciences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making Connections Between Visual Arts &amp; Other Disciplines</b></p> <p><b>Achievement Standard, Advanced</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synthesize the creative and analytical principles and techniques of the visual arts and selected other art disciplines, the humanities, or sciences.</li> </ul>

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REFERENCES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Museum at Warm Springs.</b> Warm Springs Tribe, Oregon <a href="http://museumatwarmsprings.org">http://museumatwarmsprings.org</a></li> <li>• <b>The Museum at Tamástlikt Cultural Institute.</b> Museum that celebrates the traditions of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes on the Umatilla Reservation, Oregon. <a href="http://tamastlikt.org">http://tamastlikt.org</a></li> <li>• <b>Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation</b> <a href="http://ctuir.org">http://ctuir.org</a></li> <li>• Harless, Susan E. <i>Native Arts of the Columbia Plateau: Selections from the Doris Swayze Bounds Collection.</i> Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998.</li> <li>• Josephy, Alvin M. and Josephy, Jeffe. <i>Lewis &amp; Clark through Indian Eyes.</i> New York: Random House, 2006.</li> <li>• Tamástlikt Cultural Institute. <i>WiyaxayxtWiyaakaaawn: As Days Go By, Our History, Our Land, Our People-the-Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla.</i> Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 2006.</li> </ul>

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### About the Educational Guide Author



**Wendy J. Weston** was born and reared in the Four Corners area of the Navajo Nation in the community of T'iisNazbas. She is born to the Bilagaanaa People and born for the Kinlichinii People. Her interest in the arts started as a child as she explored several traditional Navajo art forms and participated in ceremonies.

Weston has devoted her career to advocating for Native artists and having the Native voice represented in arts education and public programs. A strong supporter of Native artistic expression, be it in traditional form or a progressive cutting-edge genre, her advocacy work has helped to increase the awareness of and respect for Native arts throughout the world. Wendy has worked with artists from tribal communities throughout North, Central and South America, Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific Islands.

Weston spent several years as a roster artist with the Arizona Commission on the Arts, where she conducted residencies in schools and communities throughout Arizona. She also worked as program coordinator for Atlatl, Inc., a national service organization for American Indian arts, where she coordinated national conferences serving the field of Native art and developed and presented workshops in marketing the arts in tribal communities throughout the U.S. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, and has completed graduate coursework in Museum Studies and Cultural Anthropology.

For more that two decades, Weston worked in various positions at the world renowned Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. Currently, she is the principal in her own consulting firm, Turquoise Rainbow Resources, a Native-owned consulting agency that assists in exhibit development, arts education, advocacy, and cultural projects throughout the world.