

# BURNABY ART GALLERY

## B.A.G in a Box : Cultural Portraits

## Teachers Information

### In a Nutshell

The **focus** of the box is on exploring culture and identity through portraits. Culture is approached as ethnic groups but also as social, religious or other groups that share values and practices. (Examples: the culture of elementary students, the culture of Indo Canadians, the culture of soccer players.) Students try drawing or painting portraits that express emotion, identity and culture (of self and others) through realistic, symbolic or abstract styles.

### Pick-Up and Return

**Box:** Box has one wheeled case and a portfolio. Fits easily in trunk or back seat of a car.

**Pick-Up:** During gallery hours, any day after 12:00 noon on first Saturday.

**Return:** During gallery hours, no later than 4:30 p.m. on Thursday return date.

★ See confirmation or booking information sheet for specific details.

### Box Contents

#### Artists

- Original images by local artists Lyle Wilson and Amir Ali Alibhai.
- Reproduction images from the City of Burnaby Permanent Collection by Maxwell Bates, Rita Briansky, Donna Ellison, Jaques Hnizdovsky, Ernest Lumsden, Gordon Smith, and Pierre-Leon Tetrault.

#### Activities

- Five activity ideas are included. We suggest choosing one activity and the introductory lesson, as best suits your class. You may have more time or wish to photocopy an activity to complete after the box is returned.
- Activities are broken down into lessons. Lesson plans are detailed and clear so that teachers who are unfamiliar with concepts or processes should be able to easily understand each step. Most activities are flexible enough to suit grades K-7, although end results and time spent may vary. Some steps may be left out and age related variations are suggested in some cases. See page two for details.

#### Background Information

- Artist biographies and information on working methods or inspirations. Reproduction artists brief biographies.
- Vocabulary, information on drawing realistic portraits and a brief history of portraiture.

#### Resource Materials

- Facial proportions chart, 'face' pictures, and cultural pattern samples.
- Chalk pastels, graphite sticks.
- Worksheets for photocopying, pin tools, mirrors, project examples, vocabulary cards, template for display labels.



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### Activity Ideas, Key Concepts & Classroom Materials

#### Activity One: Introduction and Contour Line Drawings

Students begin looking at the artwork to gain an understanding of what a portrait is. They have an introduction to the concepts of culture and identity through discussion and a circle game. They portray emotions by sketching a partner using contour lines, and practicing their observation skills.

##### Key Concepts

- Drawing techniques (*contour lines, observation*)
- Expressing emotions
- Culture and identity

##### Classroom Materials:

- Plain paper

#### Activity Two: Portraits and Proportions

This activity is included to help students develop some skills for drawing realistic portraits. Simple rules of thumb for proportions help students feel more satisfied with their drawings. This activity is not necessary for later portrait activities, but can provide some useful skills.

##### Key Concepts

- Facial proportions and measurement
- Drawing techniques (*shading, observation*)
- Value

##### Classroom Materials:

- Basic drawing paper, pencils, erasers
- Tempera Paint (optional)

#### Activity Three: Symbolic Self Portraits

Based on several of the artists' use of symbols to portray personal identity and culture, this activity uses oil pastels with a tempera paint coating. Students use pin tools to create a scratch drawing. An old favourite with a new twist.

##### Key Concepts

- Symbols
- Pattern
- Drawing techniques (*cross hatching, observation*)
- Expression of culture (*personal identity*)

##### Classroom Materials:

- Thick paper (Bristol or cardstock)
- Oil pastels
- Black tempera paint and brushes

#### Activity Four: Painted People

Using Amir Ali Alibhai's painting and working style as a starting point, students create a portrait (self or family member) incorporating symbols, colours and patterns that reflect their culture (s) and identity.

##### Key Concepts

- Symbols
- Expression of culture (*using colour, symbols, patterns*)
- Composition
- Painting techniques (*layering*)

##### Classroom Materials:

- Thick paper (Bristol, construction or cardstock)
- Acrylic paint or Tempera paint with glue
- Brushes

#### Activity Five: Cultural Stories

Using Lyle Wilson's print as a starting point, students use stylized shapes and faces to portray a myth or story their family has often told to them. Glue Lines and chalk pastel blends help students focus on abstracted shapes and composition.

##### Key Concepts

- Symbols
- Narrative
- Expression of culture (*symbols, shapes, patterns*)
- Composition
- Shape

##### Classroom Materials:

- Dark coloured paper (construction, Bristol or other thick paper)
- Glue in containers with nozzles (for squeezing lines)
- Pencils, erasers
- Tissue or paper towels

Questions? Please call the Education Programmer at 604.205.7322 or email [galler@burnaby.ca](mailto:galler@burnaby.ca)

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### Artists and Artworks

General information about two artists is below. Detailed information about the artists and their work is included in the box. Original artworks are from the City of Burnaby Art Education Collection and reproductions included are from the City of Burnaby Permanent Art Collection.



Amir Ali Alibhai  
*Self Portrait (in BC)*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
50cm x 50cm  
2006

#### Amir Ali Alibhai

Amir Ali Alibhai is a painter and multi media installation artist. He is also an independent curator and writer, and has been an arts programmer at the Roundhouse Community Centre in Vancouver since 1997. Alibhai's paintings incorporate symbols from his Muslim, Ismaili identity, and he explores the borders between cultures, disciplines and aesthetic traditions. He has recently been inspired by the Indian rangoli tradition (women's ritual art created on walls and the ground) and has been creating rangoli with participation by visiting members of the general public. Alibhai has completed his MA, focusing on cross cultural collaboration, and is a board member of the Canada Council for the Arts.



Lyle Wilson  
*Shaman's World*  
Serigraph  
57cm x 38cm  
1980

#### Lyle Wilson

Lyle Wilson is a Haisla artist from Kitimaat Village, near Kitimat BC. Wilson's first artistic influence was his uncle, Sam Robinson, a full time carver. Wilson began his career in the arts at UBC where he studied art education, and continued at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design where he pursued his own artistic talents. "Weegit and the Tricksters" was created during his time at UBC. Wilson's artistic style is based in graphics and printmaking, but also includes extensive three dimensional works. He has been an artist in residence at the Museum of Anthropology.

### Installing the Artworks at School

The artworks can be set on a secure ledge, such as a chalk ledge or large music stand. Choose a safe spot for the pieces, out of the way of **traffic**, and preferably in an area students can **sit in front** of the work.

Please ensure students do not touch the artwork. Artworks are all framed in plexiglass and can be scratched. Please also ensure artworks are stored in a secure location such as an office or locked room when not being used. Thank you!