

## TEACHER GUIDE

# Preston Singletary

## Raven and the Box of Daylight

ON VIEW AT THE  
Wichita Art Museum

February 1 through  
August 30, 2020



Preston Singletary, *Xeiti Káa (Thunderbird Man)*, 2018. Blown, hot-sculpted, and sand-carved glass, 26 x 15 ½ x 15 ½ inches. Collection of the artist

**G L A S S**



**S T O R Y T E L L I N G**

**I M M E R S I V E**



**T L I N G I T**



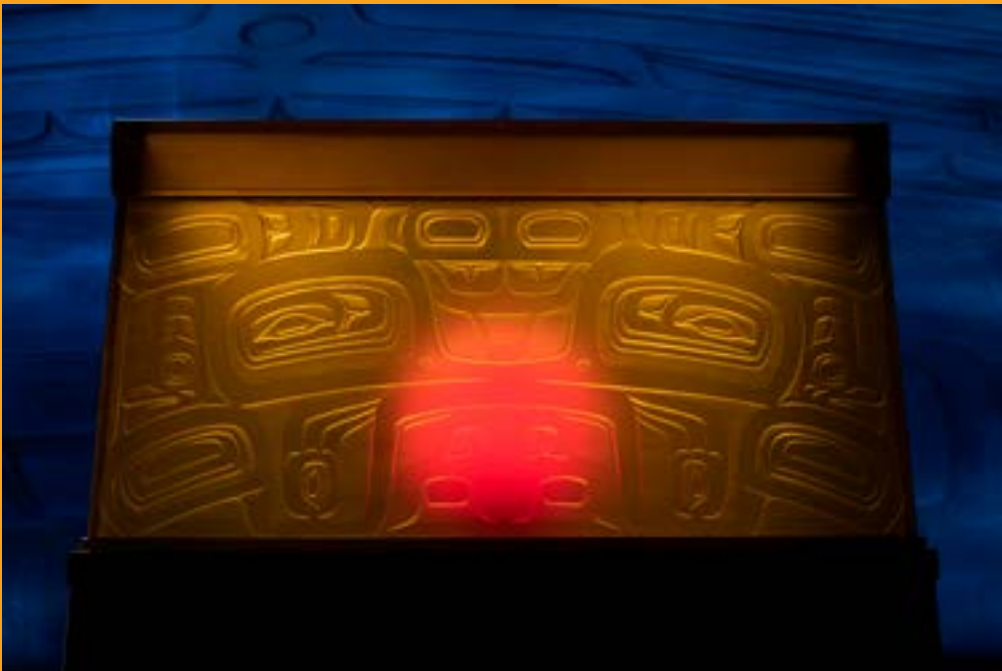
ABOVE AND BELOW (DETAILS): Preston Singletary, *Nass Héeni (Nass River)*, 2018. Kiln-formed glass, dimensions variable.  
Collection of the artist

WAM is an educational institution, and students and teachers are very important. We want every student and teacher to have an enriching, dynamic museum visit. The museum acts as an extended classroom to help meet state standards as well as build critical thinking and visual literacy.





Preston Singletary, *Kákw* (*Baskets*), 2016. Blown and sand-carved glass, dimensions variable. Collection of the artist



Preston Singletary, *Keiwa.aa Lákt* (*Box with Daylight*), 2018. Kiln-formed and sand-carved glass, neon lighting, steel base, 55 x 36 3/4 x 16 inches. Courtesy of the artist

# WICHITA ART MUSEUM

Dear Educator,

We look forward to welcoming you and your students. This supplemental packet of information and activities are to support your classroom learning in preparation for your visit. Included are pre-visit and post-visit activities. We strongly encourage you to spend time engaging in classroom discussion and lessons that will support and strengthen students' experiences of touring the exhibition *Preston Singletary: Raven and the Box of Daylight*.

The activities were adapted from the curriculum, *Tell Me a Story*, from the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington. The pre-visit information will guide your students' understanding and learning of Native American Tlingit culture in the Pacific Northwest region of North America. The pre-visit activities are a great way to prepare your students before your visit. Spend some time with the *Essential Understandings* which are the take-aways to the exhibition (page 16). The post-visit activities included in this guide are a span of subject areas of the visual arts, natural sciences, creative writing, and social studies. The activities are meant to be flexible and adaptable for the grade level of your students and your individual curriculum.

We hope this teacher guide is a helpful resource for you and your students.

Sincerely,

Wichita Art Museum Education Department

1400 West Museum Boulevard  
Wichita, Kansas 67203  
wichitaartmuseum.org  
316-268-4921

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### **Preparing for your Museum Visit**

WAM encourages teachers to bring students to the art museum as a learning resource and extension of the classroom.

WAM offers FREE tours for K—College, both guided and self-guided.

### **How to Schedule A Tour at WAM**

Request the tour by filling out the [online form](#) at [wichitaartmuseum.org/learn](http://wichitaartmuseum.org/learn). Please complete at least three weeks in advance of your desired date.

### **Before Your Tour**

Prepare students and chaperones with guidelines on the museum experience. You will need one chaperone per every 10 students; chaperones are admitted free.

Organize student groups: 10 students and one chaperone per group. Each student and adult will need a nametag.

A docent tour guide will lead each group through the museum and select exhibitions, including *Preston Singletary: Raven and the Box of Daylight*.

### **Bus Reimbursement:**

**Transportation is FREE to WAM for schools in the greater Wichita area**

Is the cost of the bus for the school field trip a problem? No longer! WAM provides free bus reimbursement to all Wichita-area schools in reasonable driving distance. The link to the [busing form](#) can be found at [wichitaartmuseum.org/learn](http://wichitaartmuseum.org/learn). For additional information on applying for bus reimbursement, email [education@wichitaartmuseum.org](mailto:education@wichitaartmuseum.org).



**I see my work as an extension of tradition and a declaration that Native cultures are alive and developing new technologies and new ways of communicating the ancient codes and symbols of this land.**

**—Preston Singletary**

## **Exhibition Overview**

On a stop between the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the Wichita Art Museum presents *Preston Singletary: Raven and the Box of Daylight*. The unique exhibition combines extraordinary glass art within an immersive, multi-sensory environment. Art combines with storytelling and theatrical encounter.

The art of internationally regarded Preston Singletary (Tlingit American, born 1963) fuses time-honored glassblowing traditions with Pacific Northwest Native art. Specifically, Singletary honors his ancestral Tlingit culture, a tribe that spans the Pacific Northwest northern coast. His art features transformation, animal spirits, basketry designs, and Tlingit formlines.

In Tlingit culture, objects that incorporate elements from the natural world tell foundational stories as well as histories of individual Native families. Singletary mines this rich past into a seamless fusion of contemporary art, glass, and evolving Tlingit tradition. *Raven and the Box of Daylight* features those qualities of Singletary's exceptional artmaking that have earned him a sterling international reputation.



### EXHIBITION OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

Countless generations of Native American children have heard the story of Raven, a trickster figure whose journey transforms darkness into light. Tlingit oral history includes rich narratives, a trait shared throughout Northwest Coast communities. Raven helped shape the world and released the stars, moon, and sun. In the exhibition, this story unfolds as visitors progress through one scene and staged environment more beautiful and arresting than the last.

Tlingit culture spans a vast territory, and dozens of Raven stories are told throughout the Pacific Northwest, each featuring subtle distinctions. Raven and the Box of Daylight is the Tlingit story of Raven and his transformation of the world-bringing light to people via the stars, moon, and sun. This story holds great significance for the Tlingit people. The exhibition features a dynamic combination of artwork, story-telling, and encounter.

Artwork in this exhibition has been informed by the research of Walter Porter (Tlingit American, 1944–2013), a mythologist and historian. Porter’s research provides a unique perspective about Tlingit cultural stories. He was well-known for his comparative work of the Raven story to mythologies from other cultures, and his research draws connections to universal themes and perspectives. Singletary worked with guest curator Dr. Miranda Belarde-Lewis (Tlingit-Zuni American) to shape the compelling, accurate narrative for the exhibition. He also collaborated with multi-media artist Juniper Shuey of the artistic partnership zoe | juniper for the imaginative installation.

Oral histories and narratives are an essential part of the survival of Tlingit culture. Recordings of Tlingit elders introduce visitors to the art of storytelling. These oral performances tell the story of Raven and include original music and sound effects to further enhance the visitor experience. *Preston Singletary: Raven and the Box of Daylight*, takes visitors on an experiential journey with Raven, and the transformation of darkness into light. This exhibition is active, surprising, and dramatic, engaging the viewer through sight and sound.

### Artist Biography

Preston Singletary is part of a renaissance of Native artists seeking to revitalize traditional forms of art in contemporary understanding of their heritage. Through his mother's family, Singletary inherited a rich cultural and spiritual legacy and a connection to the rugged landscape of southeastern Alaska; the land which is home to the Tlingit tribal groups. Singletary grew up in Seattle. As a teenager during the 1980s, he was introduced to glass by a good friend, Dante Marioni, whose father, Paul Marioni, was an established artist working with glass. Singletary went on to develop his skills through study at Pilchuck Glass School and Kosta Boda in Sweden. He has worked with other glass masters such as Dale Chihuly, Benjamin Moore, Lino Tagliapietra, and Pino Signoretto. His experimentations with glass led him to master sand-carving techniques to translate the complex system of formline designs, used by his Tlingit ancestors and other tribal groups, to glasswork. For many Native artists, art is a vehicle to explore imagination, reveal the spirit world, and to keep cultural traditions alive.



PRESTON SINGLETARY

### ARTIST STATEMENT

**When I began working with glass in 1982, I had no idea that I would be so connected to the material in the way I am now. It was only when I began to experiment with using designs from my Tlingit cultural heritage that my work began to take on a new purpose and direction. Over time, my skill with the material of glass and traditional formline design has strengthened and evolved, allowing me to explore more fully my own relationship to both my culture and my chosen medium. Through teaching and collaborating in glass with other Native American, Maori, Hawaiian, and Australian Aboriginal artists, I have come to see that glass brings another dimension to Indigenous art. The artist perspective of Indigenous people reflects a unique and vital visual language that has connections to the ancient codes and symbols of the land, and this interaction has informed and inspired my own work.**

**Story Introduction**

**“The importance of mythology is that it’s universal. Every culture has the same information disguised in story.”**

**—Walter Porter**

The story of Raven releasing or “stealing” the daylight is one of the most iconic stories of the Tlingit people of Southeast Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. The Tlingit name for Raven is *Yéil*. Many people know the basic story, yet there are variations unique to specific villages and individual storytellers. In fact, there are dozens of Raven stories told throughout the Pacific Northwest. The Tlingit have many *Raven and the Box of Daylight* stories.

Each of these stories emphasizes different aspects of the same story. Every telling is a unique treasure—for their families, their communities, and for all Tlingit people. The story you will encounter in the exhibition, *Preston Singletary: Raven and the Box of Daylight*, is a blend of their voices, woven together for this exhibition. The specific details in the story help to shape Singletary’s glass art and artistic vision. The exhibition adapts the ancient story to bring all of us into the present, so we can imagine what Raven went through to bring the light to the world.

The story of *Yéil ka Keiwa.aa* (*Raven and the Box of Daylight*) unfolds through four areas: Along the Nass River, Transformation, Clan House, and World Drenched in Daylight. The underlying messages of *Raven and the Box of Daylight* are not only about light entering the world, but also the values of family over possessions, forgiveness, and accountability for one’s actions.

### **Pre-Visit Classroom Activity**

**Introduce students to the Native American Tlingit (pronounced kling-git) culture:**

- ▶ Tlingit culture developed in the southeast coast of Alaska and in the 300 mile chain of islands off of the southeast coast of Alaska (see maps pages 14 to 15).
- ▶ Geographical features of the land: temperate rainforests receiving heavy rainfall, rich in timber, and coastal inlets with an abundant supply of fish and marine life.
- ▶ Northwest coastal indigenous cultures included neighboring tribes such as Eyak (ee-yak), Haida (hahy-duh), and Tsimshian (chim-shee-uhm). In Washington and Oregon, tribes include, Lummi (lum-ee) and Chinook (shi-nook).

**Introduce students to a glossary of terms related to the exhibition and Tlingit culture:**

**Bentwood Boxes:** Boxes that are made from thin sheets of wood that are bent to form the box's corners. Sides and lids are constructed from just one piece of wood, so that there are no corner seams. These boxes are constructed to be watertight storage containers and are considered to be clan property.

**Clan:** A group of extended families with a common ancestor. Each clan has its own crest and forms a social network that functions as a distinct political unit within Tlingit society.

**Clan House:** The place where a clan lives together. Sometimes up to five families live in one clan house. A traditional clan house is made of thick cedar walls and painted with designs representing the clan group. An important feature is a smoke hole in the roof where the smoke can escape.

**Crests:** Creatural representation of a family's heritage. They are creatures with whom a family ancestor has interacted with in the legendary past. The right of ownership of a crest was typically purchased by the ancestor, often in exchange for their life. Ownership of crests forms a valuable part of a family's wealth and often includes imagery, stories, songs, dances, and names.

(continued)

## GLOSSARY (CONTINUED)

**Hemlock Needle:** The foliage of a type of coniferous tree. A hemlock is a type of evergreen tree, with fine, soft needles, adapted to thrive in cool temperatures with heavy snowfall and ice.

**Formline:** The primary design element in Northwest Coast art, where the art simplifies or stylizes subject matter. Formline designs use a system of shapes including ovoids, u-forms, split u-forms and s-forms. Artists use these basic shapes combined with more realistic images of hands and eyes to construct abstracted representations of crest beings.

**Moiety:** Descent groups of the Tlingit people. There are two moieties, the Raven and the Eagle. A Tlingit story about the great flood tells how all the animals separated into two distinct groups, which humans later followed. Traditionally, a married couple would be from each moiety (one from Raven and one from Eagle). Children determine their moiety from their mother.

**Nass River:** A river that runs through the northern area of British Columbia, Canada. It flows from the Coastal Mountains into Nass Bay into the Pacific Ocean. The river's name comes from the Tlingit word meaning "food deposit" referring to its large supply of fish.

**Potlatch:** An important ceremony traditionally performed by many native tribal groups along the Northwest Coast. During the ceremony, clans celebrate and pass on to their descendants their crest names and the right to display the accompanying artworks, images, songs, and dances. Guest clans are invited as witnesses and receive gifts and lavish amounts of food. The hospitality shown to the guests through the presentation of songs, dances, food, and gifts are payments for their memory; it is a guest's job to tell others about the potlatch and the generosity of the hosts.

**Regalia:** Ceremonial clothing worn to identify ones' culture. Clan regalia are property owned and shared by everyone in the clan.

**Sand carved glass:** A process by carving into glass with a sandblaster. It creates an eye-popping, etched design into the glass.

**Yéil:** The Tlingit word for Raven in the story *Raven and the Box of Daylight*.

**MAP OF NORTHWEST COAST  
NATIVE CULTURES  
OF NORTH AMERICA**



**MAP OF NORTHWEST COAST  
NATIVE CULTURES  
OF NORTH AMERICA**



### Essential Understandings

21st-century curriculum should include learning experiences that provide for the study of American Indian cultures and cultural diversity. Culture is a result of human socialization. People acquire knowledge and values by interacting with other people through common language, place and community. In North America, there is a vast cultural diversity among more than 500 tribal groups. There is no single American Indian culture or language.

For students visiting the exhibition, *Preston Singletary: Raven and the Box of Daylight*, these four essential understandings below will serve as key points for tour discussions:

1. American Indian identity is shaped by the family, peers, social norms and institutions inside a community. Origin stories have their own unique and cultural importance. For the Tlingit indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest, *Raven and the Box of Daylight* is their own story.
2. For thousands of years, Indigenous people have studied, managed, honored and thrived in their homelands. These foundations continue to influence American Indian relationships and interactions with the land today; they recognize that human beings are part of the environment. In the story of Raven, key natural resources play a part in the story.
3. Well established conventions and practices nurtured and promoted the development of American Indian culture. Elders in each generation teach the next generation their values, traditions and beliefs through their own language, storytelling, arts, music, ceremonies and customs. These components serve to uphold timeless traditions, values, and beliefs for the Tlingit culture: language, song, formline art, and storytelling.
4. Native people continue to fight to maintain the integrity and viability of Indigenous societies in a modern, changing world; yet American Indian cultures have always been dynamic and changing. American Indian history is one of cultural persistence, creative adaptation, renewal, and resilience. For Preston Singletary's glass art, a non-traditional medium for Native people, he becomes the innovator of the traditional artistry of his cultural heritage of the Tlingit.



## Post-Visit Classroom Activity

### CREATE YOUR OWN RAVEN ART SCULPTURE

Subject Areas: Visual Arts, Natural Science, Social Studies

#### OBJECTIVES

Learn about raven behaviors and connections they have to the natural world and other cultures.

#### FACTS ABOUT THE RAVEN

- Large birds with iridescent black feathers
- Found throughout Canada, Western U.S., Mexico, and Central America
- Size: 25 inches tall, weighing an average of 2.5 pounds.
- Often seen in pairs
- Big curvy beaks with a middle tail feather longer than the other feathers
- High soaring birds, catching the wind beneath their wings
- Both predators and scavengers



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

### **How are crows and ravens different?**

Ravens are much larger birds. Crows gather in large groups. A crow's tail feathers are even unlike a raven's tail feathers. Crows tend to do more flapping and their calls are distinctively different.

### **How have ravens contributed to the endangerment of some species? How can overpopulation of the raven species be avoided?**

While many animal populations are shrinking as people take over their natural habitat, raven populations are growing. Ravens are both predators and scavengers. As humans use more land, they create more waste such as garbage and road kill for ravens to feast on. Humans encroach upon the natural world making it harder for animals to hide, eat and thrive. This makes it much easier for the intelligent raven to find vulnerable prey and contribute to some species becoming endangered. Minimalizing garbage waste and driving the speed limit to avoid road kill can help keep the ecosystem in balance.

### **Raven as the cultural hero of Tlingit legends**

Raven, as told in the story of *Raven and the Box of Daylight*, helped shape the world and transformed people's lives. As much as he is revered as a benevolent figure, he is also known as a trickster, with supernatural powers. He is a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional being, often full of surprises. In many of the stories about Raven, his curiosity and mischievous behavior create some sort of trouble. We see that very clearly in the exhibition. Although he does a great service to mankind, he gets caught in the smoke-hole and is covered in soot. He then loses his supernatural ability, marked by his white, translucent body, and is turned into the black bird we know today.

## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students will make a raven out of cardboard or heavy paper, such as cardstock. Their artworks can be displayed and or combined with the writing activity.

## MATERIALS

Cardboard or heavy paper, such as 60 lb. or 80 lb. cardstock for bird's body  
Colored paper  
Markers, crayons, colored pencils or paint  
Scissors  
Clear school glue  
Embellishments such as eyes, feathers, string, beads, sequins, scrap paper, etc.

## PROCEDURE

1. Have students think about what Raven looks like. What did Raven look like in the exhibition? Think about form, color, and size.
2. Sketch out the main features onto the cardboard or cardstock. The form could include: head, body, wings, tail and or legs. Details can be added later.
3. Cut out your Raven shape or tear it out if they are using cardstock and prefer a rough edged look.
4. Encourage your students to try out some paper sculpting techniques, such as folding, pleating, looping, twisting, curling, crumpling, cut on the folds (like a snowflake) or fringe. It will give the artwork more volume and dimension. Students may want to think about their work as three-dimensional.
5. Glue the pieces of the raven together with the clear glue.
6. Students may now add detailing using embellishments. This can also be achieved with color using any media. Remind students that art can be either realistic or not.
7. Have students display or share their finished work with their peers.

### **POST-Visit Classroom Activity**

#### **WRITE A STORY**

**Subject Areas: English Language Arts, Social Sciences**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students explore the art of storytelling in written and oral form. Students will recognize the universality of human experiences and why literature and art successfully endure time and extend across cultures. Students gain an understanding of plot elements and archetypal characters by creating their own story.

#### **INTRODUCE ORAL TRADITIONS FROM THE NORTHWEST COAST NATIVE CULTURES**

*Preston Singletary: Raven and the Box of Daylight* is based on a very old Tlingit story. Raven tales span across the northwest coast and within each distinct culture, there are differing versions. As these stories and histories are an oral tradition, there are many variations, with small changes and emphasis from storyteller to storyteller. For Singletary's work, he focused on the major points from five different versions of the stories, told by four storytellers. The basis for Singletary's work comes from a blending of these versions.

#### **READ THE VERSION THAT INSPIRED THE ARTWORK**

***Raven and the Box of Daylight*, as edited by Miranda Belarde-Lewis**

Before here was here, the world was in darkness. Raven decided that he would try and do something about it. As he followed the Nass River up to its source, he encountered the Fishermen of the night.

Raven approached the canoe; the Fishermen of the night greet him with their paddles standing straight up in welcome. The Fishermen tell Raven of the wealthy man, his beautiful daughter and the light held in beautifully carved boxes along with other clan treasures in his house.

The Fishermen tell Raven the Daughter drinks from the stream each morning. Raven devises a plan to transform himself to a tiny speck of dirt and will float down the river into the young lady's ladle. He will then be able to gain access to the Clan house.

Raven turns himself into a piece of dirt in the water. He floats into the young woman's ladle as she dips it into the water for a drink. Her servants test the purity of the water by dipping a feather plume into the water. Raven in dirt form is discovered and discarded.

### *Raven and the Box of Daylight* CONTINUED

Raven notices the color of the ladle is similar to the color of hemlock boughs. He transforms himself into a hemlock needle in his second attempt to float into the Daughter's ladle, so she can ingest Raven.

Raven is ingested by the Daughter and she becomes pregnant with Raven.

The family lives in a different time, the immaculate conception is puzzling, but accepted. When it is time for the young woman to give birth, the servants line a shallow pit with fine furs in preparation for the high-ranking baby to be born. The young woman struggles and cannot give birth. A wise woman is summoned, and she notices the fine furs. She knows it is the finery that is making the birth difficult; she orders them removed. The furs are replaced with a more humble lining of moss and Old Man's Beard from off the trees. Raven grows into a precocious and precious little boy. The clan house is home to the powerful man, his daughter and his many pieces of treasures.

Raven is the beloved grandson of the wealthy man. His Grandfather spoils him, giving him all he asks for and cries for that which he is denied. Even though he is given everything he desires, he tires of being a human and decides it is time to leave.

Three carved boxes contain the wealthy man's most prized possessions: the stars, the moon and the daylight. Raven asks for the boxes and is denied. He cries and cries for the box of stars and eventually his Grandfather gives him the box of stars which he immediately opens. The stars slip through the smoke hole and return to the sky.

Raven's Grandfather is furious with him. He scolds him, and Raven becomes inconsolable. His crying breaks his Grandfather's heart and he forgives his Grandson for what he has done but Raven will not be comforted. He moves towards the box containing the moon. His Grandfather hesitates but he gives Raven the box with the moon. Raven's mother did not think Raven should have the box and she argues with her Father. As they argue, Raven opens the box. The Moon silently slips through the smoke hole and returns to the sky.

Raven has escaped with the daylight under his wing. He returns to the fisherman in the Nass River and tells them he has the daylight and asks if they would like to see it. They do not believe he has it until Raven takes the daylight and smashes it on the ground. The light fills the earth and the people in the dark are able to see the world around them for the first time. Those wearing animal regalia run

## TEACHER GUIDE

### *Raven and the Box of Daylight* CONTINUED

into woods and become the animal people. The same happens for those wearing bird regalia, and those wearing water animal regalia. Those who remain become humans.

Raven has transformed back into bird form. The wealthy man is devastated his treasures have been stolen and released into the sky. He is so angry at Raven he holds onto his feet as Raven tries to escape out of the smoke hole of the clan house. Raven is covered in the soot and smoke of the fire. He is transformed from the white spiritual being into the black bird we know today.

### EXPLORE OTHER VARIATIONS OF RAVEN AND THE BOX OF DAYLIGHT

*How Raven Stole the Sun*, Maria Williams (Tlingit)

*Raven Brings the Light*, Roy Henry Vickers (First Nations, Canada) and Robert Lucky Budd

*Raven and the Box of Daylight*, Pauline Duncan (Tlingit)  
*Origins of Rivers and Streams: A Raven Story*,  
Pauline Duncan (Tlingit)

*Raven: A Trickster Tale From the Pacific Northwest*,  
Gerald McDermott

*A Man Called Raven*, Richard Van Camp (Dogrib Nation)

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What attributes does Raven possess in the stories?  
What lessons can we learn from these stories?

### ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

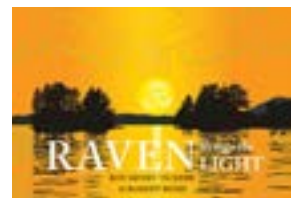
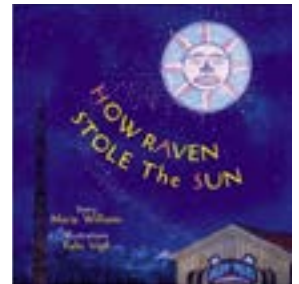
After reading or listening to stories about Raven and discussing the elements of the story, students will develop a narrative arc for their story with Raven as a character.

### MATERIALS

A variety of versions of the Raven story-print, digital, or audio-visual

Paper and pencils (word processor if available)

**Preston Singletary**  
**Raven and the Box of Daylight**



## PROCEDURE

1. Reflect on your visit to the exhibition. What did you learn from the story that was told at the Wichita Art Museum?
2. Listen to, read, or watch other versions. Consider these discussion questions:
  - a. **How is Raven the same or different in the various versions of the stories?**
  - b. **Raven is often called a “trickster.” How does Raven fit this description?**
  - c. **How do different characters view Raven? Where do we find appearances of other archetypal characters?**
  - d. **Does Raven ultimately get what he wanted? What good or harm is done by his trick?**
3. Identify the parts of a story (using one of the stories as a model)
  - a. **Characters:** students make a list of the characters in the story
  - b. **Setting:** discuss where and when the story took place
  - c. **Beginning:** identify what takes place at the story’s beginning (setting and the overall tone, introduction of main character)
  - d. **Middle:** identify major happenings or conflicts in the middle of story. Note how characters may change or grow.
  - e. **End:** ask the students how conflicts are resolved.
4. Have students create the parts of their own story, creating a rough draft that includes their story elements.
5. Encourage the students to work together on editing each other’s stories.
6. Once the final drafts are written, have students share them in an oral narrative form with the class.

OPTIONAL: Pair the story and the raven work of art together for display.

### **POST-Visit Classroom Activity**

#### **PAINT WITH NATURAL RESOURCES**

#### **Subject Areas: Visual Arts, Natural Science**

##### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will learn about traditional ways to make paint. Students will participate in a lab making sample paints and analyzing the results on sample cards, experimenting with techniques to create desired results. Students can use their learned technique to make art with the naturally sourced paints.

##### **INTRODUCE EARLY PAINT MAKING BY ARTISTS FROM THE TLINGIT CULTURE**

All paints are some combination of pigment (color), and a binder (the material that bonds together). Before modern times, paints were made by Tlingit artists from natural materials, such as saliva and salmon eggs (binders) combined with a pigment. The pigments for early Tlingit paint came from many different sources. White was made from ground up clam shells or bones. Red came from red clay, the inner bark of a hemlock tree and berries. Copper ore produced greens and blues. Charcoal, magnetite, and graphite produced blacks. The paints were made to decorate bentwood boxes, cedar houses, masks, clothing, and carved decorations. Some brushes were made with porcupine hairs, others with hairs from your own head, adding the hairs to a split stick. By 1920, most artists had switched to commercially available paints.

##### **ACTIVITY OVERVIEW**

Students will explore creating paint from natural resources.

##### **MATERIALS**

Salmon eggs (available in fishing departments), a dozen eggs for each paint sample  
Other materials to create pigments: berries (raspberries, blackberries, blueberries) , red clay powder, white clay powder, vine charcoal (artist drawing sticks)

Pestle and mortar or a bowl and spoon

Disposable bowls

Plastic spoons

Toothpicks or push pin

Paint brushes

Measuring spoons

Index cards

Cardstock paper for artwork

Optional: Fixative spray



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**Preston  
Singletary**  
Raven  
and the  
Box of  
Daylight

### PROCEDURE

1. Place about a dozen salmon eggs in a disposable bowl and prick them with a toothpick or push pin. Press down on them with a plastic spoon to release the oils. Discard the eggs.
2. To the pestle and mortar, add a measured amount of pigment. Be sure to note what you are using and how much. Add the salmon oil and grind up the mixture.
3. Using a wet paintbrush, paint color onto the labeled index cards.
4. Repeat steps with different pigments and pigment amounts.
5. Let paint dry and share your results. After class collaboration, decide what colors and in what amounts you'd like to use to paint a picture.
6. Make your paint and paint a work of art onto the cardstock paper.
7. Display your work.



*Transformation Mask*, Tlingit (Alaska), 1820–1830. Wood, paint, metal coins, native-tanned skin, 8 x 7½ x 2 inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Ralph T. Coe

## TEACHER GUIDE

**Preston  
Singletary**  
Raven  
and the  
Box of  
Daylight

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### Books

**The Tlingit Indians** by **George Thornton Emmons**

As a Navy Officer stationed in Alaska during the 1880–90s, Emmons collected artifacts and compiled extensive notes of the Tlingit Indians. The book is an extensive anthropological record of Tlingit culture and history.

**Tlingit Tales, Potlatch & Totem Poles** by **Lorie Harris**

A collection of oral stories from a Tlingit tribesman, whose audience was often children.

**Heros and Heroines: Tlingit & Haida Legend** by **Mary Giraud**

A collection of traditional stories from two Pacific Northwest Native cultures.

**Raven Tales: Stories of the Raven based on the folklore of the Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Inuit & Athapascan of Alaska** by **Dennis Walker**

Thirty tales about Raven, a character that appears in each of these cultures, that serve to enlighten the reader as to who Raven is, from each of these cultures' viewpoint.

**Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast** by **Hillary Stewart**

An in-depth look at the Native designs used in the Northwest Native cultures from an artist's point of view.

**The War Canoe** by **Jaime Bryson**

Mickey, a young Tlingit who is a troublemaker in his small Alaska town, discovers his proud heritage with the help of several interested adults and builds a traditional war canoe to honor his discovery. (960L)

**The Eagle's Shadow** by **Nora Martin**

In 1946, while her emotionally distant father is in occupied Japan, a twelve-year-old girl spends a year with her mother's relatives in a Tlingit village in Alaska and begins to love and respect her heritage. (720L)

**The Bentwood Box: An Activity Book** by **Nan McNutt**

An art activity book about making bentwood boxes and includes a teaching guide for adults. Ages 9–12.

**Children of the Midnight Sun: Young Native Voices of Alaska** by **Tricia Brown and Roy Coral**

This book is about eight American Indian children growing up in Alaska and one of the featured is Tlingit. Ages 9–12.

**... If you lived with the Indians of the Northwest Coast** by **Anne Kamma (elementary reader)**

A book from a series exploring what life would be like if you lived with various American Indians. Question and answer format. Ages 8–11.

**Nations of the Northwest Coast** by **Amanda Bishop**

The northwest coast of the Pacific Ocean has been home to many Native nations for thousands of years. The waters, mountains, and forests of this isolated region provided food and shelter for groups such as the Tlingit, the Haida, and the Kwakiutl. Ages 9–10.

**Meet Lydia, a Native Girl from Southeast Alaska** by **Miranda Belarde-Lewis**

This book from the Smithsonian highlights what it is like to be a Native kid today. You learn about an American Indian culture through the eyes of a child. Ages 8 and up.

**The Last American Rainforest: Tongass** by **Shelley R Gill**

A story about a Tlingit girl who is searching for a special tree. Includes natural history information on ancient forest life as well as a cultural introduction to the Northwest Coast people. Ages 6 and up.

**The Wave of the Sea-Wolf** by **David Wisniewski**

Intricate cut-paper illustrations incorporating Pacific Northwest motifs accompany this original story of the Tlingit princess Kchokeen, who is rescued from drowning by a guardian spirit that later enables her to summon a great wave and save her people from hostile strangers. Picture book, adult directed.

**Raven: A Trickster Tale from the Pacific Northwest** by **Gerald McDermott**

From a series exploring the “trickster” themes of different cultures. A nicely illustrated picture book telling the story of *Raven and the Box of Daylight*. Picture book, adult directed.

### Websites

<https://www.firstpeople.us/>

First People of America and Canada

<http://www.native-languages.org/>

Native Languages of the Americas

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360>

Smithsonian National Museum of American Indian

<http://www.prestonsingletary.com/>

Preston Singletary website

### You Tube Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5EQgUDpAEQ&list=PLE9BCF555C4A5C2BD>

“Kwakwaka’wakw Sea Monster Mask” (3:53), a brief interview regarding an important artwork in the collection Listening to our Ancestors: The Art of Native Life along the North Pacific Coast, from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trqUyZZc9cQ>

“Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian drumming” (4:05), an amateur spectator recording of a performance with a brief introduction from an elder regarding meaning and purpose

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIibbUVVJ74>

“Lineage: Tlingit Artists Across generations” (57:47), a professional documentary including interviews of elders passing on weaving, dancing, canoe carving, singing and more to younger generations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aT4w4Dc08gM>

“Box of Daylight: Creation Story” (8:39), an interpretive reenactment TV program reposted by Ramon Murillo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Yoz-VbepZU>

“Glass Artist Preston Singletary, Nature episode” (11:57), NATURE episode PBS premiere: Friday, April 21, 2017

Many other audio-visual versions of *Raven and the Box of Daylight*, produced by various digital artists, are available on YouTube.