

Earth Day Artwork Inspired by Dan Friday

A HANDS-ON ART
ACTIVITY DESIGNED BY
WENDI WALL



*Student example
Image credit: Museum of Northwest Art*

Description

In this lesson students will learn about Lummi artist, Dan Friday, and use miniature art designs to express ideas about the Earth's environment. These artworks will help students make connections between positive and negative human interactions with nature. Just as our world is made up of many small parts working together, our final product will be several smaller pieces that will express an overarching theme when combined.

Materials

- Smaller size white drawing paper (ex. 4" x 4.5")
- Pencil & eraser
- Watercolors, markers or colored pencils
- Black fine point marker
- Colored construction paper, cardboard, backing board, etc.
- Glue

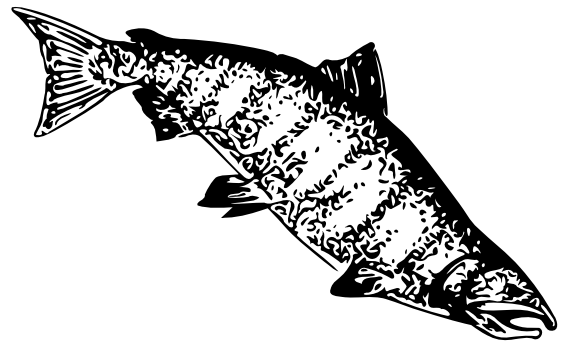
Session One: Introductions

- Read aloud and discuss several Earth Day-centered books (see list below for suggested titles). Many of the books have great illustrations that can be used with VTS (Visual Thinking Strategies).
 - VTS is an inquiry-based method of facilitating discussion. Tips and resources on VTS are included at the end of this lesson.
- During the discussion, encourage students to share background knowledge, new learning, and their understanding around important environmental themes.
- Use the information provided on the next two pages to introduce Dan Friday and the practices of Coast Salish Reefnetting and the Salish Woolly Dogs.

Suggested Titles

The following list includes books that emphasize environmental themes. Each book is additionally accompanied by a read-aloud video link.

- *The Last Polar Bear* by Jean George
 - [Read-aloud video](#)
- *Jangles* by David Shannon
 - [Read-aloud video](#)
- *Uno's Garden* by Graeme Base
 - [Read-aloud video](#)
- *Just a Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg
 - [Read-aloud video](#)
- *Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry
 - [Read-aloud video](#)



About the Artist: Dan Friday



Dan Friday

Image credit: Museum of Northwest Art

Dan Friday is a member of the Lummi Nation and glass artist based in Seattle, Washington. Friday's artworks are heavily influenced by his heritage and those in his life. He often credits his Aunt Fran (*Che top ie*) James and great grandfather Joseph Hillare (*Kwul kwut*) who infused his life with the traditions of his ancestors. His most recent artworks reference the Lummi and Coast Salish traditions of reefnetting and weaving.



Above: Cedar Star Basket, Dan Friday

Image credit: FridayGlass.com

Dan Friday speaks frequently about the 'life-saving' role art and glass blowing has had in his life. To explore more work by the artist head to his [website](#). To hear Friday speak on his experience listen to this [podcast](#).*

*Facilitators are advised to preview the podcast episode and judge whether it's appropriate for the age level of the audience.



Above: Salmon, Dan Friday

Image credit: Museum of Northwest Art

Left: Sxwo'le (Reef Net) Anchor, Dan Friday

Image credit: FridayGlass.com

Coast Salish Reefnetting

The practice of reefnetting was invented by the Lummi tribe. This method of fishing used stone anchors (*tícilen*), woven cedar bark nets (*sxwo'le*) and canoes to catch salmon. These fishing practices were sustainable and did not overfish or deplete the Salish Sea waters, creating a positive relationship.

However, in 1890 the government of Washington outlawed reefnetting, displacing tribal members, their nets and the traditional practices that had been used for hundreds of years. This allowed corporations to build canneries and use fish trap methods that were harmful to the waters and fish populations. This negative relationship continued until fish traps were banned and reefnets were once again allowed. Today, reefnetting only exists off Lummi Island, where tribal members practice traditional methods of fishing once again.

Salish Woolly Dogs (*Skexe*)

Woven baskets, blankets and clothing are attributed to many tribes in North America, using woven plant fibers, animal hides and hand-spun wool or cotton. However, unique to the Pacific Northwest was the use of wool taken from the *Skexe*, or Salish Woolly dogs.

The Salish Woolly dog was a small, white, long-haired dog. The dogs were often kept in herds on small islands near villages, and their wool was sheared once a year. Salish women with weaving skill were the primary owners of the Woolly Dogs, and a woman's wealth was measured by how many dogs she owned. The dogs were highly valued and were part of a positive relationship between the Coast Salish peoples and animals.

Unfortunately, increased European settlers and displaced tribal members had a negative effect, and the dog population began to decrease. The Salish Woolly Dog are thought to be extinct by 1940, but are remembered as an integral piece of the Coast Salish weaving history.

Session Two: Art-Making Activity

This project may be completed in two methods, either A) with an individual student creating several designs that work together under one personal overarching theme, or B) each student creates a miniature artwork that fits within a class-wide theme, which is then combined with other students' work to create a collective final product. Prior to art-making, decide if students will be completing the activity individually (option A) or as a class (option B). If you are pursuing option B, begin with a discussion to help the group decide upon the class-wide theme.

- Provide students with their small drawing paper and mark-making utensils.
 - Here, it may be helpful to provide students with scratch paper if they would like to sketch their ideas before beginning their final piece.
- If completing activity under option A, have students write or verbalize their personal overarching environmental theme. Students will then begin creating their multiple miniature artworks.
 - If completing activity as option B, remind students of the class environmental theme as they begin to create their individual artwork to combine with others.
- For both A and B: remind students of the stories they have read and discussed, as well as what they have learned about artist Dan Friday. How might they show a positive and negative impact within their drawing? What animals or natural features do they want to show? Do they want to add words or a written statement to their artwork?

Session Three: Closer

Students will assemble their miniature artworks. This can be done on personal backing boards (or cardboard, larger pieces of construction paper, etc.) or on a wall or whiteboard if assembling a class-wide artwork.

- Lead students in a gallery walk, giving them the chance to view other students' artwork or the class final product. Remind students of the observational skills they practiced during previous VTS.
 - Option to integrate a final VTS session of the students' collective work.
- For closing discussion, have students write or verbalize the environmental and Earth Day themes that were discussed and explored over the duration of the lesson.
 - Where can students identify unity? Were they successful in fitting their miniature artworks underneath an overarching theme?



Vocabulary

- ✓ Line
- ✓ Shape
- ✓ Color
- ✓ Emphasis
- ✓ Unity
- ✓ Interaction
- ✓ Positive impact
- ✓ Negative impact

Learning and State Standards

Fulfills **Washington State Arts Learning Standards:**

- **Kindergarten: VA:Cr1.1.K** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- **First Grade: VA:Re8.1.1** Interpret art by categorizing subject matter and identifying the characteristics of form
- **Second Grade: VA:Re7.1.2** Perceive and describe aesthetic characteristics of one's natural world and constructed environments
- **Third Grade: VA:Cr2.3.3** Individually or collaboratively construct representations, diagrams, or maps of places that are a part of everyday life
- **Fourth Grade: VA:Cr1.2.4** Collaboratively set goals and create artwork that is meaningful and has purpose to the makers
- **Fifth Grade: VA:Cr2.3.5** Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance
- **Sixth Grade: VA:Cr2.1.6** Demonstrate openness in trying new ideas, materials, methods, and approaches in making works of art and design
- **Seventh Grade: VA:Cr2.3.7** Apply visual organizational strategies to design and produce a work of art, design, or media that clearly communicates information and ideas
- **Eighth Grade: VA:Cr2.1.8** Demonstrate willingness to experiment, innovate, and take risks to pursue ideas, forms, and meanings that emerge in the process of art-making or designing

Visual Thinking Strategies

MoNA's Education programs utilize Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), which is a research-based teaching method that promotes aesthetic development including critical thinking and communication skills. Here in the MoNA, we use VTS to engage students and general visitors with art encouraging them to observe closely, think critically and discuss respectfully; however, VTS can be effectively used across curricula. This approach teaches its participants how to take the time to observe closely, describe what they see in detail and provide evidence for their observations. Students learn that their reflections and thoughts are valued and appreciated in this inclusive teaching method.

In order to facilitate a VTS discussion, you first encourage viewers to take a quiet moment to observe the work you are going to explore. Then you ask the following questions and paraphrase the responses without adding any of your own judgements. You can insert additional vocabulary and point to specific parts of the artwork.

What's going on in this picture?
What do you see that makes you say that...?
What more can you find?

Visual Thinking Strategy Links

If you are interested in learning more about VTS, [here is their website](#). If you already know and love VTS, but want help finding great images to VTS in your classroom, here is a [fantastic gallery](#). You can also visit this website for additional resources: <https://www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators>



Sxwo'le (Reef Net) Anchor, Dan Friday
Image credit: FridayGlass.com



Silver Grass Basket, Dan Friday
Image credit: Museum of Northwest Art



Salmon, Dan Friday
Image credit: FridayGlass.com



Cedar Star Basket, Dan Friday
Image credit: FridayGlass.com