



ART EXHIBIT DISPLAYS STUDENT LEARNING ON INDIGENOUS CULTURE

February 19, 2021

Kelowna, BC – The new *Dreaming Forward* exhibit in the Kelowna Art Gallery's Art Lab displays the learning of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who connected with a variety of Indigenous Nations over the past year through art.

Built with the cooperation of Indigenous elders and cultural leaders from the Westbank First Nation, ten different art lessons have already taught over 1,000 students from Kindergarten to Grade 9 traditional art techniques and cultural connections to foster a positive appreciation of the diversity of Indigenous cultures in Canada. Each lesson is a digital eBook that includes videos, detailed instructions, and cultural links. The lessons are specific to grades to represent a full variety of nations and art forms over time.

The *Dreaming Forward* exhibit shares the goals of the lessons with the broader community. It is intended to represent student experience, a future of a public better educated on Indigenous visual culture, and the prospect of future Indigenous artists seeing their cultural heritage in their early education.

Dreaming Forward showcases 75 works of art from fifteen Central Okanagan Public Schools that participated so far. The exhibit will run until April 11th, 2021.

Quotes:

Kevin Kaardal, Superintendent of Schools/CEO

"Art is an idea represented in either two- or three-dimensional images; it is one of the most powerful ways to communicate learning and understanding of history and culture. We are grateful for the elders, knowledge keepers, and educators who shared their wisdom and teachings to make this exceptional display of students' creativity and learning possible."

Jim Elwood, Art Teacher at Mount Boucherie Secondary School:

"Indigenous culture was never shown as an active, vibrant entity in any of my classrooms growing up. Too often Indigenous presence was trapped in museums or euro-centric textbooks, and cultural understanding was lost through overexposure or misinterpretation. For example, dreamcatchers are everywhere, but do the people making or buying them understand from whose nation they originated or what they mean? These lessons offer a way to repatriate these understandings back to their traditions."

Ryan Trafananko, Education Coordinator at Kelowna Art Gallery:

"We are excited to exhibit *Dreaming Forward* as part of the Kelowna Art Gallery's ongoing history of collaboration with Central Okanagan Public Schools," says Ryan Trafananko, Education Coordinator at the Gallery. "It is fascinating to have this unique glimpse through the eyes of local students into Indigenous cultural teachings presented. The Kelowna Art Gallery is proud to be a partner in this project and pleased to bring its exhibition to the community."

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For comments and more information, please contact:

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