



September 28, 2025 – April 5, 2026

Student Story Quest: Nibi (Water) Connects Us

Contemporary Anishinaabe Art: A Continuation

Welcome! This quest is your journey into the world of nibi (water) through the eyes of Anishinaabe artists. Nibi has always been important to the first people of this land, the Anishinaabe. As you look at each artwork, think about how the artists help us feel connected to water — through colors, shapes, stories, and ideas. Let's dive in!

Instructions:

1. **Find the art:** Locate each artwork in the exhibit listed below. Look closely at the details.
2. **Complete the Quest:** Once you find the artwork, read the artist statement and answer the questions. Read in Anishinaabemowin or find the English translation below.
3. **Enjoy the art!** Take your time to appreciate the details and stories within each artwork.

Tip: Learn Anishinaabemowin (Language of the Anishinaabe people). Look for the QR codes throughout the exhibition for help with pronunciation!



Ronald Paquin (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa), *Wiigwaas jiimaan*, 2018. Private Collection



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QUEST 1: Find **Ronald Paquin's** birchbark canoe, called **Wiigwaas jiimaan** (Birchbark canoe)

Anishinaabe people invented the jiimaan (canoe) to travel across rivers and the Great Lakes. This jiimaan is made from wiigwaas (birchbark), cedar, and spruce roots — natural materials that the Anishinaabe people have used for generations.

- Draw or describe your own jiimaan (canoe) below.
- Where would your jiimaan take you?
- What could you carry in your jiimaan to help protect the water and land in your community?



Moira Villiard (Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa),
The Waters of Tomorrow, 2019. Courtesy of the artist

QUEST 2: Find the artwork titled *The Waters of Tomorrow* by Moira Villiard

Read the artist statement and answer the questions below.

- Why do you think the artist chose to focus on water?
- How does this artwork show that water connects us all?
- Draw or describe one way your family uses or depends on water. What would happen if that water wasn't clean or available? How would you feel? What would you do?
- Write one sentence about what you can do today to protect water that will help people in the future.

QUEST 3: With a partner, find the artwork by Jodi Webster called *Faculty of Sight II*

Look closely at this artwork. Up, down, side to side. What do you notice? This artwork asks us to look closely and to think deeply. Read the artist's words and answer the questions:

- Who really sees what's happening to the land and water?
- Who pretends not to see?
- Why does it matter if we choose to look?

Ask your partner:

- What do you see in this artwork?
- Have you ever noticed something in nature that needed help?
- What would you do to help?

Then, together, complete this sentence:

We can help the Earth by _____



Jodi Webster (Ho-Chunk Nation; Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation),
Faculty of Sight II, 2019. Courtesy of the artist



Jacob Keshick (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians), *Open Water*, 2025. Courtesy of the artist

QUEST 4: Find **Jacob Keshick's** quill box titled ***Open Water***

The sturgeon is an ancient fish that represents ancestors and water health. Read the artist's statement and answer the questions below:

- Why do you think the artist chose the title *Open Water*?
- What are two things the sturgeon reminds us to do?

- 1.
- 2.



Wanesia Misquadace (Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa), *Water Protector Vessel*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist

QUEST 5: Find the ***Water Protector Vessel*** made by **Wanesia Misquadace**

This artwork honors the people who stand for the protection of nibi (water). The vessel is made from birchbark, sterling silver, copper, and stones. With a partner, discuss the questions below.

- What do you think this vessel could hold?
- What do you think it means to “protect the water for future generations”?
- How does this vessel connect to the idea of protecting the Great Lakes?
- Who in your life protects the land or water?

QUEST 6: Find the artwork titled *Healing Hands* by artist **Patrick Collins**

In the 1930s, Patrick's grandmother bravely escaped to Canada because of the horrible treatment of Indigenous women. Read the artist statement and answer the questions below.

- What's the first thing you notice in this painting?
- How might water bring comfort or healing during a difficult time?
- Why do you think the Megis shell was so important to Patrick's grandmother?
- If you could carry one object for guidance and protection, what would it be? Why?
- Draw or describe an object you would take with you on a journey — something that connects you to your family, culture, or the land and water around you.



Patrick Collins (Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe), *Healing Hands*, 2024. Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis

Circle Reflections: Gather as a whole group and form a circle. Go around the circle and each share:

1. Which artwork about water was your favorite, and why?
2. What are some ways water connects us all?
3. How can we be water protectors in our own lives and communities?

Miigwetch (thank you) for joining us!

We hope that your visit to *Contemporary Anishinaabe Art: A Continuation* left you inspired and enriched with new knowledge. To learn more about this exhibit and explore upcoming events, visit <https://dia.org/events>. We look forward to welcoming you again soon!

Credits: In collaboration with DIA Education Programs staff, this resource was created by Amanda Weinert, Anishinaabe Educator, (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa citizen & Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa descendant), and Kriya Gaillard, Michigan Department of Education's Indigenous Education Initiative.