



# The Story Box

Franz Boas, George Hunt and  
the Making of Anthropology

February 14–July 7, 2019

YEARS  
25

Bard  
Graduate  
Center  
Gallery

Detail of "George's Whale" design,  
Corrine Hunt, 2018.

# Welcome to Bard Graduate Center Gallery!

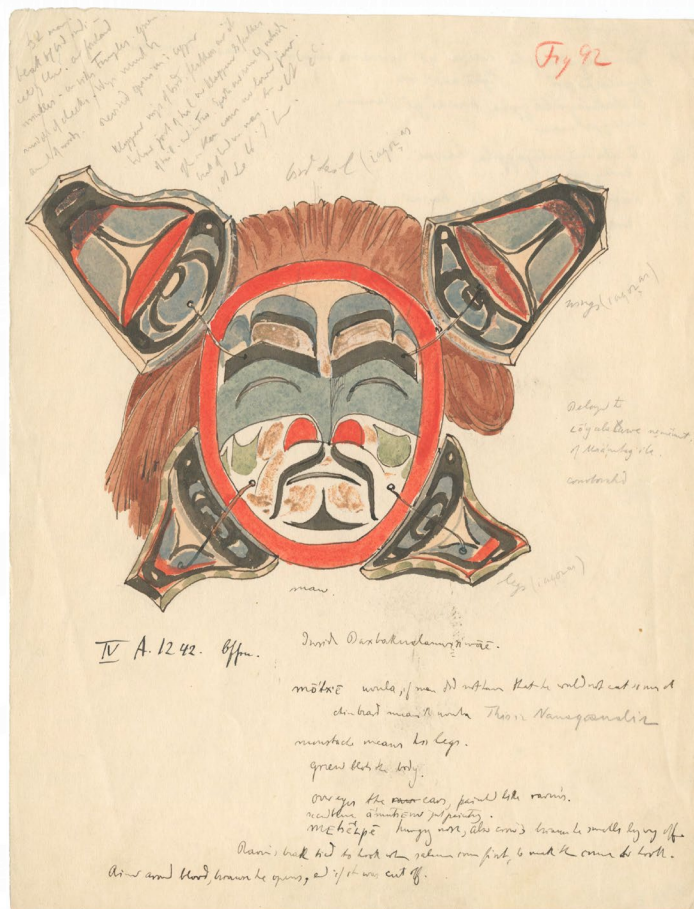
Dear Teachers,

We invite you and your students to explore the rich culture of the Kwakwaka'wakw (pronounced: KWOK-wok-ya-wokw) people of British Columbia and see up-close ceremonial objects and archival videos of potlatch ceremonies in *The Story Box: Franz Boas, George Hunt and the Making of Anthropology*, on view from February 14 through July 7, 2019 at Bard Graduate Center Gallery.

The Educator Guide introduces key themes and concepts from the exhibition to help you and your students prepare for a visit to the gallery. The lessons, resources, and reflection activities provided in this document are for you to use in your classrooms.

We look forward to your visit!

Carla Repice  
Manager of Education and Engagement



Kwakwaka'wakw Transformation Mask (open) in the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin Collection, IV A 1242. Paper, ink, paint (watercolor). Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History, Z/431.



# About the Exhibition

## *The Story Box: Franz Boas, George Hunt and the Making of Anthropology*

February 14–July 7, 2019

This exhibition highlights the culmination of anthropologist Franz Boas's first decade of fieldwork among the Kwakwaka'wakw of British Columbia. His book, *The Social Organization of the Kwakiutl Indians* (1897), was one of the first portraits of a Native North American society. It was also a deep collaboration with his Indigenous research partner, George Hunt, who was credited on the title page. Commissioned by the United States National Museum, the book catalogued hundreds of ceremonial objects from multiple museums; audio recordings; eyewitness accounts of rituals; musical notations of songs; and photographs of potlatch dancers. The book had long-lasting influence on the development of anthropological practice, and on the "modern" concept of culture itself.

Although Boas recognized the importance of Indigenous cultures, the book conceals important historical conditions including Hunt's status as a full co-author and Canada's colonial assimilation policy, which made it unlawful to engage in, or to celebrate, the potlatch and its

dances from 1884 to 1951. Anyone who did so could be imprisoned. Despite the ban, potlatches continued in secret for the next 60 years, though many Kwakwaka'wakw people were arrested, and many others were forced to surrender their potlatch regalia. Starting in the 1960s, the Kwakwaka'wakw people began a conscious effort for the repatriation of their treasures and potlatch goods. Today, the majority of these treasures have returned to their rightful home and are housed at the U'mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay, British Columbia.

Boas imagined his book as a storage box for the "laws and stories" preserving them for posterity in case the culture vanished under colonial onslaught. But the people and their culture survived. After a century of resilience, the Kwakwaka'wakw are reactivating texts, museum collections, and archival records to help safeguard their future.

*The Story Box: Franz Boas, George Hunt and the Making of Anthropology*, curated by Aaron Glass, Associate Professor, Bard Graduate Center, is organized in collaboration with the U'mista Cultural Centre in British Columbia, and features designs by artist Corrine Hunt, a great-granddaughter of George Hunt.

For more information about the exhibition and events: <https://www.bgc.bard.edu/gallery/exhibitions/88/the-story-box>

Killer-whale transformation mask, Kwakwaka'wakw, collected by Johan Adrian Jacobsen, ca. 1881. Wood, paint. Courtesy of U'mista Cultural Centre and bpk Bildagentur / Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen, Berlin / Art Resource, NY.



# Pre-Visit Lesson Plan

Before a visit to Bard Graduate Center Gallery, we suggest covering some of the activities mapped out in this Educator Guide with students in your classrooms.

*This lesson plan has been adapted from the U'mista Cultural Centre Education Department by Carla Repice. Additional lesson plans can be found [here](#).*

## Objectives

- Analyze the impact of Canadian governance on Aboriginal people's rights
- Identify effects of early contact between Aboriginal societies and European explorers and settlers
- Understand the purpose of the potlatch and the meaning of U'mista



■ Mask, unknown Nuxalk maker. Wood. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History, 16/1102.

## Grades 4–12

Students will learn about the Kwakwaka'wakw (pronounced: KWOK-wok-ya-wokw) potlatch and potlatch ban.

## Visual Inquiry Activity

Watch films in class and ask students key questions.

1. [People of the Potlatch](#)
2. [Potlatch](#)
3. [Potlatch Ban](#)

## Key Questions to Ask Students:

Who are the Kwakwaka'wakw?  
What is the purpose of the potlatch?  
What was the impact of the potlatch ban on the Kwakwaka'wakw?

## Reflection

What stood out?

What are you still wondering about?

## Additional Resources

[U'mista Cultural Centre](#)

[Living Tradition: The Potlatch on the Northwest Coast](#)  
[First Voices](#)

## Children's Book

[I Am Not a Number](#) by Dr. Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer



■ Boas with the Hunt Family, Fort Rupert, BC, 1894. Photograph by Oregon C. Hastings. Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society Library, U5-1-28.



# Post-Visit Lesson Plan

After a visit to Bard Graduate Center Gallery, we suggest covering some of the activities mapped out in this Educator Guide with students in your classrooms.

*This lesson plan has been adapted from the U'mista Cultural Centre Education Department by Carla Repice and Jordane Birkett.*

## Written Reflection

After a visit to the gallery, ask students to write about their experience.

What do you know about the Kwakwaka'wakw?

What more do you want to know?

What stood out during a visit to the gallery?

What are you wondering about?

Share out.

## Grades 4–5

(Can be adapted for elementary and middle school grades)

### Totem Pole: Pole Raising Feast

Students will create two large-scale paper totem poles to raise in the classroom at their Play Feast. Students will experience the process of raising a totem pole by planning and organizing a Play Feast to end their unit of study.

View the entire lesson plan [here](#).

## Grades 4–12

(Can be adapted for Grades 1–3)

### Pass It Down

The potlatch is a time of acknowledgement. The guests at a potlatch are witnesses to the marking of important moments for the family hosting the potlatch. One of these activities is the passing down of certain rights, such as transferring rights and privileges (land, songs, dances, stories and the right to wear and/or use certain regalia or leadership objects).

### Key Questions

Do you think it is important to pass things down? Why?

What things are passed down in your life?

Are there certain possessions or traditions that are important to your family and friends?

How does this make you feel?

### Creative Making

Students write and draw one thing that has been passed down to them.

### Reflection

Students share out their writing and artwork during a classroom gallery walk.

Settee backrest, Kwakwaka'wakw, collected by George Hunt, 1898–99. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History, 16/7964.





# Book a Tour

## K-12 School Tours

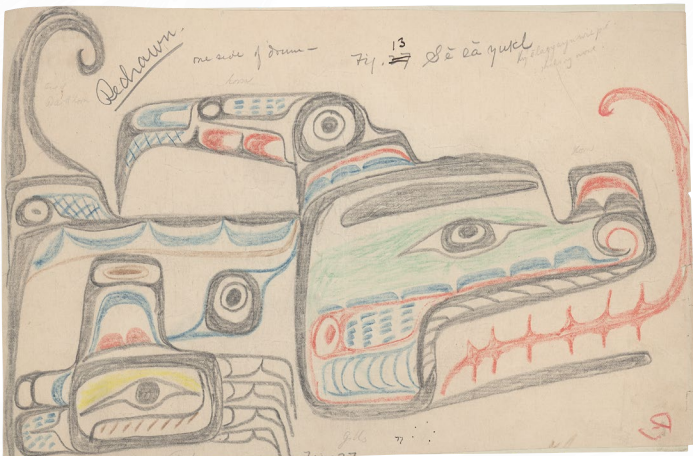
K-12 visitors see objects up close and make meaningful connections to the world around them. Our student-centered tours are led by graduate student educators who engage young people in lively discussion and hands-on activities that promote critical thinking and visual literacy skills. Tours are adaptable to your school's curriculum and build thoughtful object-based inquiry and powerful learning experiences.

## BGC A.I.R. Studio

Bard Graduate Center acknowledges that tactile learning experiences are essential for a child's development and intellectual growth. The A.I.R. Studio is a space for our K-12 visitors to: Touch objects! Meet a visiting artist and learn about materials and methods! Participate in a hands-on workshop!

## English Language Learners

We offer customized tours for English language learners that explore exhibition objects through touch and hands-on making activities. ELL students are encouraged to draw on their personal knowledge, history, and insight during the object-based tour, which builds meaningful learning experiences.



Attributed to Hitamas/Ned Harris, Kwakwaka'wakw. Drawing, ca. 1895. Colored pencil, ink, and pencil on paper. Collected by Franz Boas ca. 1895, found in United States National Museum collection prior to 1969. National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, 08533600.

## School Tour Fees

NYCDOE school groups: Free

For all other groups the 2018-19 rates are:

\$85 | for group of up to 15 participants

\$160 | 16-30 participants

\$210 | 31-45 participants

## School Tour Availability

Tuesdays through Fridays: School tours begin at 11 am

Advance reservations are required

Tour Length: 45 minutes

Haptic Learning Lab Experience: 45 minutes

## School Tour Booking

Email: [tours@bgc.bard.edu](mailto:tours@bgc.bard.edu)



Lion-type Mask, Kwakwaka'wakw, 1820-70. Painted (?), carved wood. ©Trustees of the British Museum, Am +.436.





## About Bard Graduate Center

Bard Graduate Center is devoted to the study of decorative arts, design history, and material culture through research, advanced degrees, exhibitions, publications, and events.

At Bard Graduate Center, we study the human past through its material traces. We study objects—from those created for obvious aesthetic value to the ordinary things that are part of everyday life. Learning is what Bard Graduate Center is all about. Our accomplished [faculty](#) inspire students to strive for excellence, knowing that this will prepare them for the intellectual and professional rigors of careers in academia, in museums, and in the private sector. This high standard is equally the hallmark of the Gallery's acclaimed [exhibitions](#) and related [public programs](#).

Founded by Dr. Susan Weber in 1993, Bard Graduate Center is an academic unit of Bard College, through which it is [accredited](#) and a member of the [Association of Research Institutes in Art History](#) (ARIAH).

### Bard Graduate Center Gallery

18 West 86th Street  
New York, NY 10024

### How to Get Here

**B** **C** to 81st St. **1** to 86th St. **M86** bus

### Gallery Hours

Tuesday, Friday–Sunday: 11 am–5 pm  
Wednesday–Thursday: 11 am–8 pm

### Follow Us

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#BardGradCenter