

# WHAT TO DO...

## IN THE CLASSROOM BEFORE YOUR VISIT.

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This information and activity guide will help you to prepare for your tour. We recommend that you preview the exhibitions to best prepare your students. Program Guides choose artworks from all the exhibitions that are best suited to the theme you select. These suggested pre-visit activities will help your students to understand the intent of the artists and curators. They can also be used for follow-up. Our exhibitions are rated OM: Open Minds Required. We help participants to think critically about the often-confusing world around them, and deliberately challenge preconceived ideas about art. As a contemporary art gallery, the Mendel offers a context for art production that is difficult to replicate in a school environment, therefore providing learners with a unique experience.

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## ABOUT THE ARTISTS AND EXHIBITIONS

### **James Henderson: Wicite Owapi Wicasa: the man who paints the old men**

**September 25, 2009 to January 10, 2010**

This is a major exhibition of the portraits, landscape paintings, and commercial work of Scottish-born artist James Henderson (1871–1951). Henderson was Saskatchewan's first professional artist to make a living solely through his artwork. He exhibited in the 1920s and 30s alongside the Group of Seven, and was one of the first famous artists living in Saskatchewan. The exhibition presents his work from the Qu'Appelle Valley where he lived, and also from Scotland, British Columbia, Ontario, and Alberta. The exhibition includes oral histories of Cree, Blackfoot, and Dakota peoples based on Henderson's portraits of Indigenous peoples. Photographic source material for Henderson's subjects reveals his working methods. Current video footage of the locations for his landscapes in the Qu'Appelle Valley is juxtaposed with the paintings of the same locations. Documents including family photos, samples of Henderson's commissioned illuminated manuscripts, correspondence, and published articles about his career round out the larger picture of Henderson's life and passions. A number of

interactive features including podcasts, audio tours, and rich web content help audiences to gain in-depth access to the oral histories, interviews, and comments on individual artworks on view in the gallery space. The exhibition is co-curated by Mendel Chief Curator Dan Ring and Dr. Neal McLeod, Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies at Trent University.

Age appropriately, school groups will investigate:

- the significance of James Henderson in Saskatchewan history
- how artists choose their subject matter
- landscape and portraiture as art forms
- the influence of land use on human identity
- the role that artists play in reflecting individual and community identities
- the interaction between Indigenous peoples and settlers in the early to mid-20th century

All educators will automatically be mailed an activity guide for the Henderson exhibition. In addition, this guide and extensive information can be found online at [www.mendel.ca/henderson](http://www.mendel.ca/henderson).

## **WHAT TO DO... IN THE CLASSROOM BEFORE YOU VISIT**

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### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS AND EXHIBITIONS**

#### **Mary Longman: New Work**

**September 25, 2009 to January 10, 2010**

Saskatoon-based artist Mary Longman (Aski-Piyesiwiskwew) is known nationally for her poetic, large scale sculptures based on Aboriginal historical and contemporary issues. In this exhibition, Longman works with lenticular images for the first time, a technique that enables her to contrast images of colonial ideology with the Aboriginal perspective in one image. The exhibition uses cutting edge technology to explore and critique historical narratives and images. It features images from popular culture and archival records of Saskatchewan that Longman reworks digitally. These large images flip from one image to the next depending on where the viewer stands. Of Saulteaux descent, Mary Longman was born in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, and is a member of the Gordon First Nation. She teaches Aboriginal art history at the University of Saskatchewan. This is Longman's first solo exhibition at the Mendel Art Gallery.

**Visit her website at <http://www.maryloman.com>**

School groups will investigate:

- how Longman's art is a reflection of her life
- lenticular technology
- stereotypes
- the intersection of the past with the present

An image of Longman's sculpture along with activity suggestions can be found at the province's exciting visual art education web site:  
**<http://www.artsask.ca/en/collections/themes/homelands/mary-longman>**

# SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT/POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

## A fun activity, with variations for each tour theme...

While this activity connects to the art practices of James Henderson and Mary Longman, it more strongly relates to Longman's contemporary approach to content and materials. For a complete educators' guide for the James Henderson exhibition visit [www.mendel.ca/henderson](http://www.mendel.ca/henderson).

### Past Meets Present

The purpose of this activity is for students to insert themselves into history. Ask students to select a photograph of any historical event or person. Then ask them to put themselves into this image using any materials, possibly by photocopying the image and then drawing on it. They may also alter any other aspect of the original image to change its meaning. Their intent might be to bring humour to the scene, challenge an old idea, or alter the events of the past. Mary Longman uses a similar approach by merging old and new photographic images, thereby changing the message to reflect her concerns about the role of Aboriginal people in history. Students can discuss how they have changed the original intent of the photograph. How does it feel to be part of the past? What effect does this new image have on how we think about past events, lifestyles, and values?

### VARIATIONS FOR TOUR THEMES:

**Shape Tours:** Any shape concepts you are teaching in class will suffice to prepare the students for their visit. When on tour we will review names of shapes, organic shapes, and overlapping shapes, then use the idea that shapes represent things in the real world to explore some of the content of the exhibitions.

**Colour Tours:** Consider the symbolic use of colour in altering the photographs.

### Art Core Tours:

Encourage students to thoughtfully represent the "core" of their idea. Do the lines, shapes, colours, textures, and composition in their artworks all support an interesting overall message? Is there a clear message in the altered photograph?



### Viewing and Representing Tours:

Ask students to exchange their altered photograph with a peer and write a description of what they think the message is and why.