

Program Name: Art and Culture of the Plains and Prairie Indians

Artist: Sharyn Brooks Katzman

## Special Requirements:

Screen and extension cord; slide projector recommended but not required

## Special Points of Interest:

When Indians were moved onto reservations, the U.S. government saw traditional dancing as incendiary and banned all public performances. The ban was eventually lifted in 1933.

## Other programs by this artist:

- [Greek and Roman Mythology](#)
- [We Wear our Hearts and Minds on our Sleeves](#)

## Workshop Description

This presentation introduces art production and the culture of the Prairie and Plains Indians. The presentation focuses on groups that lived in the Kansas City area.

The workshop begins with a discussion of the Plains Indians' cultural diversity, such as differences among their family members, neighborhoods, towns, and states.

The students will further examine how and why Native peoples decorated everyday objects, their dwellings, clothing, and themselves. These adornments served as symbolic signals that identified social place, membership, spiritual beliefs, and numerous other ideologies. This iconography was

also used to show respect to the historical relationship the Plains people had to the bison and the land.

The students will be given an opportunity to appreciate the wide variety and innovative uses of natural materials used by these semi-nomadic cultures. Participants will be given the opportunity to dispel inaccurate expectations and stereotypes of Plains and Prairie cultures and appreciate the contribution these native peoples gave to contemporary art, spirituality, and modern culture.

## Educational Objectives & Standards

Students will:

- Be introduced to the art production of the indigenous people of the Plains and Prairie
- Understand how and why they decorated everyday object, dwellings, and clothing

National Behavior Standards:

- Know how a culture's art and artifacts reflects its values

History Standards

- Know what individuals and groups have played major roles in historical events





## Artist Bio: Sharyn Brooks Katzman

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A lecture or demonstration with Sharyn Brooks Katzman is dynamic and engaging. Sharyn holds degrees in history and art history, has written art criticism, works for museums and schools, and has a global view from living and working in various European and Asian countries. With experience in curating exhibitions and developing programs, she is attuned to a wide variety of audiences.

Formerly a printmaker, Sharyn creates jewelry and wearable art and loves to teach at all levels. While grounded in academics and tied to curricula, her experience in local theater infuses her presentations with verve and fun. She is particularly knowledgeable in the fields of women's studies, African and African-American art, and Native American art and culture. Her

## List of Resources:

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### Books:

[Daily Life in a Plains Indian Village 1868](#)

by Michael Terry (Author),  
Clarion Books, August, 1999  
ISBN: 0395974992

[Life in a Plains Camp \(Native Nations of North America\)](#)

by Bobbie Kalman  
Crabtree Pub; Illustrated  
edition,  
April 2001  
ISBN: 0778704610

[Buffalo Hunt](#)

by Russell Freedman  
Holiday House, October 1988  
ISBN: 0823407020

## Vocabulary

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**indigenous:** originating in and typical of a region or country

**nishnabe'negIn** (Potawatomi:) are you Indian?

**pe'besiyuk** (Potawatomi:) beads

**Plains Indian:** a member of any of the Native American peoples that in the past lived on the Great Plains of North America

**Totem pole:** among some Native North American peoples, a tall wooden pole carved with totems that symbolize family and historical relationships

**travois:** a sled made of two poles connected by a frame and pulled by an animal

**Wíblaha** (Kanza:) Thank you

**Witómbe ta minkhé** (Kanza:) I'll be seeing you

## Post-Workshop Activities

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1. Discuss how the art shown and discussed illustrated the inter-relationships of Indian art and culture.
2. Ask students if their initial perspectives on the Plains and Prairie Indians have changed. If so, discuss the ways that it has changed.
3. Have students research a well-known Native American Plains Indian and make a drawing of that specific person or an event that took place during that time period. Next, have them write a short paragraph about the picture they have drawn.
4. Ask students to bring in materials from home (paper, cloth, shoeboxes, etc.) to construct a model of the Native American lodges and teepees that were shown on the slides in the presentation.



Contact KCYA for more information about this and other programs

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