

GVSU ArtPrize 2021 Virtual Tour & Activity
ArtPrize Dates: September 16 – October 3, 2021



Jason Quigno with maquette of *Infinity Cube*
At Asinaabe Studios, 2021



José Marcelino Valdez, Gerson Valdez-Cordón
Mayan Stelae Of King K'ak' Tiliw Chan Topaat
Carved Cement
2019
[2019.45.1](#)

Introduction

Welcome to ArtPrize 2021 at GVSU! We're excited to host two large sculptures at two different locations on our Pew campus in downtown Grand Rapids. Today you'll get a close look at both works of art, and we'll take a deep dive into one of them; learning about and exploring the creative process of local artist Jason Quigno.

Suggested Order of Activities

Note: This lesson requires at least 45-60 minutes to complete. If short on time, you can choose from the following items a la cart.

1. (4 mins) - Video tour #1, a close look at Jason Quigno's sculpture, no commentary. Teachers can ask students to look and think about what they see, then students can respond in conversation or in writing; questions could be... "What do you see? (suggest vocabulary terms like, shapes, forms, colors, patterns, textures, etc. – see vocabulary sheet for more) What do you think this sculpture is made of? Does this sculpture remind you of anything? What questions do you have about this artwork?"
2. (4 mins) – Video tour #2. Same video but with guided commentary.
3. (4 mins) - Video interview with artist Jason Quigno.
4. (5 mins) - Deliver soap carving activity info and instructions.
5. (15-20 mins) - Students do soap carving activity.
6. (10-15 mins) While students are carving (or afterward if time allows), introduce conversation about Indigenous art in west Michigan and view additional artwork.

Objectives

- Students will view and analyze a work of art by local Anishinaabe artist Jason Quigno.
- Students will create a sculpture using the subtractive sculpting process.
- Students will discuss and analyze a work of art in its social and cultural contexts.

Description

For ArtPrize 2021 local artist Jason Quigno created a large granite sculpture called *Infinity Cube*. It's located outside the L.V. Eberhard Center on GVSU's Pew Campus in downtown Grand Rapids. *Infinity Cube* weighs more than 7,000 pounds but appears to sit lightly on a concrete base, balanced on one corner. It has large holes carved into each of its six sides, each side was also hand carved with a graduated series of spirals around the center hole that imply a never-ending funnel. Jason Quigno is a member of the Anishinaabe community in West Michigan and he draws upon the history and culture of his tribe in his work. You'll learn more about his creative process in his video interview. In this lesson, students will view this work of art, learn about the artist's creative process, carve their own sculpture, and discuss Native American culture and art.

Materials

- 6-sided sketch worksheet (included)
- Pencil
- Ivory bar soap (Ivory soap is softest. Other bar soaps may not be soft enough for younger students to carve)
- Carving tools
- Craft paper, newspaper, or paper towel to cover tables as a drop-cloth

Delivery (Carving Activity)

- Today we're going to create a sculpture using a subtractive carving process.
- **Subtractive** sculpting involves the removal of material from a block – through cutting, chiseling, chipping, or scraping away.
- When artists carve stone, wood, or plaster they usually use a subtractive sculptural process.
- Subtractive sculpture is the oldest form of sculpture.
- Artists use **positive** and **negative space** to create shapes and forms in a subtractive sculpture.
- Space is the area above, below, between, within and around the main objects in a piece of art. Space is present in both 2D & 3D works of art.
- Positive Space = the shapes or forms (main objects) in an artwork.
- Negative Space = the space that surrounds the main objects. It is the empty or non-interesting space between and around the main objects. (Option; look at the first video again and ask students to identify the positive and negative space in Jason's sculpture.)

Step-by-Step Instructions

- On the 6-sided worksheet, sketch at least two sides of your sculpture. Example; top and front, top and side, etc.
- Trace your sketch onto one or two sides of your bar soap.
- Use the carving tools to remove sections of the bar soap.
- If time allows, have students identify the positive and negative space of their sculptures.

Carving Tips

- Abstract designs are easier for younger students
- Try a few different tools, if available
- Go slow and carve away small pieces
- Attempting to carve big chunks may cause the soap to crack or break in half
- If the soap is hard, try holding it in your hands to warm it up

Delivery (Indigenous Art in West Michigan)

- Before European settlers arrived in Michigan (over 350 years ago) there were many Indigenous tribes living here and their ancestors still live here today. Three of these groups formed an alliance called the Three Fires Confederacy, also known as the Anishinaabe in their native language (Anishinaabemowin).
- In the mid-1600s, it's estimated that around 100,000 Indigenous people lived in West Michigan.
- Anishinaabeg (plural of Anishinaabe), translates to "People Whence Lowered" or "the Good Humans."
- The Anishinaabe people include several tribes that share similar languages and customs, including the Ojibwa, Potawatomi, Odawa, Salteaux, and Chippewa.
- Each tribe is different, but they all share three beliefs: 1) Spirits were more powerful than men; 2) Nature—the land, animals and plants—belonged to everyone and 3) No one had the right to run another person's life.
- Prior to colonialization, everyone living in a Native village worked. Women and girls did most of the chores. They tanned (softened) animal skins, wove fishnets, chopped wood, grew crops and cooked. Men and boys hunted and fished. They made bows and arrows, traps, wooden tools and canoes.
- From the mid-1600s onward Native Americans' way of life was disrupted or erased by European settlers and colonialization. Today many Indigenous people work hard to preserve and pass on their traditions through gathering together, sharing stories, food, and art.
- *A few traditional Anishinaabe art forms include birch bark weaving and regalia (traditional dress worn at powwows).
- * Anishinaabe artists today create with all sorts of materials and processes including drawing, painting, beading, weaving, and sculpture.

*Use images provided for each art form example and discussion questions below.

Discussion Questions

- What do you see?
- What's going on here?
- What makes you think that?
- What does it mean to be Indigenous?
- What is a tradition?
- What can we learn about Indigenous people today from their artwork?
- How do Indigenous people carry on their traditions today?

Tips for Teachers

- Focus on the first three discussion questions, encourage students to say what they see.
- Make connections between their observations and the delivery content; this artwork shows a connection to nature and natural resources like water, the seasons, the land, and animals.
- Many Native Americans are learning or relearning about their own culture and traditions because colonial practices have erased so much of their world.

Additional Resources

- The Three Fires article from Michigan History Magazine; <http://www.mrsoshouse.com/puzpro/birch/mitten02.pdf>
- Misconceptions about Native Americans article; <https://www.powwows.com/the-media-doesnt-show-everything-heres-some-aspects-of-native-american-communities-you-wont-see-on-tv/>
- Native Americans Today lesson plan; <https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/native-americans-today>
- More lessons for 3-5th grades from the National Indian Education Association; <https://www.niea.org/grades-3-5-student-centered-learning-activities>
- Native American Heritage Lesson Plans and Student Activities from Scholastic; <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collections/teaching-content/native-american-heritage-0/>
- Interview with Jason Quigno by @TwoEaglesMarcus; <https://fb.watch/7h2-T64kp7/>