

# STUDY GUIDE

DISCIPLINE:  
**VISUAL ARTS**

ARTIST:  
**LOUIS MERCIER**

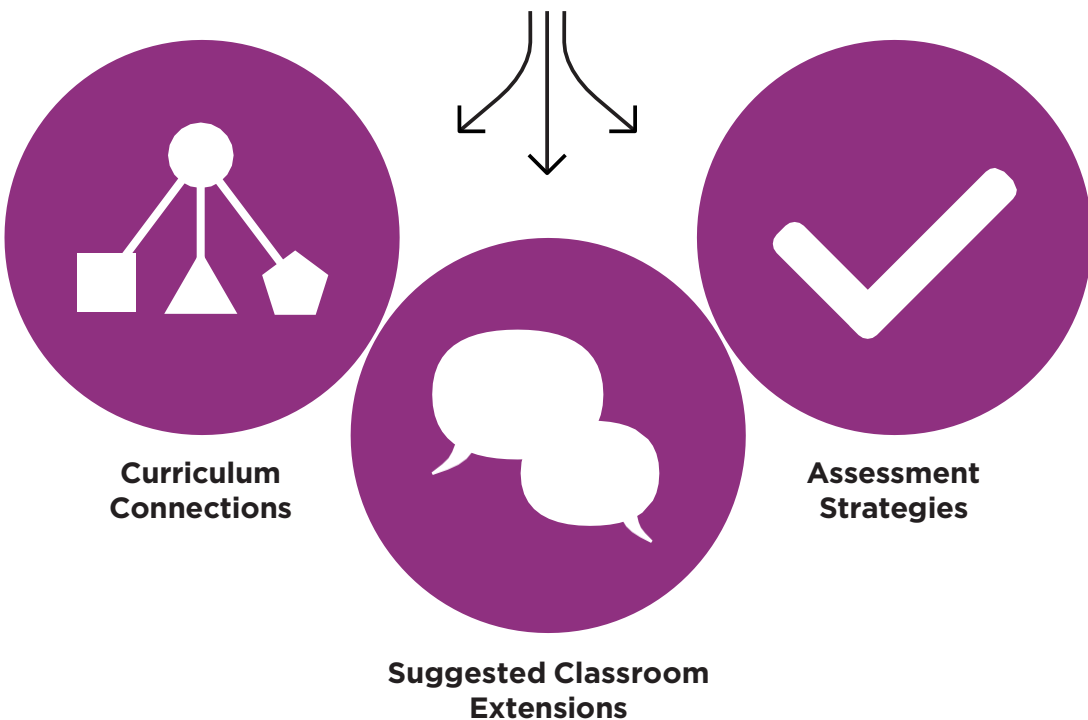


**The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist's visit.**

It includes curricular connections, assessment strategies, and suggested classroom extensions. All materials are intended for use at the teacher's discretion and may be adapted as necessary to suit the specific needs of the students.

## THIS STUDY GUIDE

**Discipline / Artist Example:**



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# STUDY GUIDE: VISUAL ARTS

## LEATHERWORK

### Program Overview

**Artist Name:** Louis Mercier

**Artist Bio:** Louis Mercier, known as L'habitant Voyageur, is a passionate ambassador of traditional French Canadian music from Maniwaki, Quebec. Since 1984, he has performed over 3000 times across Canada, sharing his family's folkloric traditions including square dance, percussion, and toe-tapping rhythms. A high school math teacher by profession, Louis is driven to connect audiences with the past, present, and future of French Canadian culture through music and storytelling.

**Program Description:** Students learn to work with sustainable recycled leather as they create bracelets, necklaces or pouches based on age-old techniques.

**Artistic Discipline:** Music, Visual Arts

**Recommended Grade Levels:** K - 12

**Session Logistics:** In person or online

**Vocab bank/glossary:** [Click here](#)



# LEATHERWORK

## Curriculum Connections

### Learning Themes:

- Strand A – Creating and Presenting
  - Experimenting with birch bark, quills, and watap in craft activities.
  - Create pieces inspired by Indigenous designs and stories.
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing
  - Observe and analyze patterns, symmetry, and technique.
  - Discuss the effectiveness of different tools and materials.
- Strand C: Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts
  - Understand how traditional techniques evolved over time.
  - Explore traditional materials and their cultural significance.

# LEATHERWORK

## Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)

Here are optional discussion prompts to extend the artist session in the classroom. These are recommended and are not mandatory. Please use what is best for your classroom. You can also find suggested activities in the additional resources package.

K

### Pre

- What things do you use that are made of leather or other materials?
- What do you think “recycled” means?
- Why do you think people make things with their hands?

### During

- How does the leather feel?
- What tools are we using to make this?
- Can you describe what you’re making?

### Post

- How did it feel to make something yourself?
- What do you like most about your bracelet/necklace/pouch?
- Would you like to make more things with your hands?

**GRADES**

**1-3**

**Pre**

- Have you ever made something by hand? What was it?
- What do you think artisans do?
- Why do you think people reuse materials?

**During**

- What steps do you notice in making your leather item?
- How does making something by hand feel different from buying it?
- What part is the trickiest? What part is the most fun?

**Post**

- What did you learn about old-fashioned ways of making things?
- How do you think people used these items long ago?
- What does your creation say about you or your interests?

**GRADES**

**4-6**

**Pre**

- Why do you think learning traditional crafts is important?
- What does “sustainable” mean in the context of materials?
- How do cultures express themselves through handmade objects?

**During**

- What techniques are being used that seem old or traditional?
- How does this process help you appreciate how things are made?
- What are the benefits of working with recycled materials?

**Post**

- What did this experience teach you about sustainability or heritage?
- How could you use this knowledge in your own life?
- How do you think this activity connects to French-Canadian history?

### Pre

- What role do traditional crafts play in preserving cultural identity?
- How can sustainable art-making support the environment?
- How do handmade objects carry meaning?

### During

- What details in the crafting process require patience and precision?
- In what ways is this process different from modern manufacturing?
- What stories might be embedded in the use of recycled leather?

### Post

- What value do handmade objects have in today's society?
- Could you see yourself sharing or teaching this skill in the future?



**GRADES**

**9-12**

**Pre**

- In a digital age, why might traditional hands-on skills still matter?
- How do cultural traditions evolve while preserving their core values?
- What are the ethical and ecological reasons for using recycled materials?

**During**

- How is craftsmanship different from mass production in terms of cultural value?
- What does the process of crafting teach us about sustainability, patience, and history?

**Post**

- How could this activity inform your understanding of French-Canadian cultural heritage?
- How might this influence your views on consumerism and waste?

# VISUAL ARTS OVERVIEW

Visual Arts empower students to explore their identity, culture, and societal issues through creative expression. It supports cognitive, emotional, social, and creative growth while building empathy, communication, and critical thinking skills. These abilities not only enhance academic performance but also contribute to students' confidence, emotional intelligence, and overall well-being.

**The creative and critical analysis process** guides students in imagining, planning, interpreting, and reflecting on artistic work, complementing artist-led sessions. These frameworks empower students to become thoughtful creators, reflective learners, and active participants in building a more just and connected world.

Visual arts connect seamlessly with other subjects across the curriculum. They enhance communication in the language arts, explore culture and history in social studies, and reveal patterns and concepts in math and science. These interdisciplinary links help students see knowledge as interconnected and relevant to real-world applications.



# APPENDIX

## Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **Leather** – Material made from animal hides, used for crafting.
- **Hide** – The skin of an animal before it is processed into leather.
- **Tanning** – The process of treating animal hides to make durable leather.
- **Tooling** – Decorating leather by carving or stamping designs into it.
- **Stamping** – Pressing a design into leather using a tool or stamp.
- **Punching** – Making holes in leather with a sharp tool.
- **Lacing** – Threading leather strips through holes to join pieces together.
- **Stitching** – Sewing leather pieces together using thread or sinew.
- **Beveling** – Creating depth or a raised edge in a leather design.
- **Burnishing** – Smoothing and polishing the edges of leather.
- **Dyeing** – Coloring leather using special dyes.
- **Pattern** – A guide or template used to cut or design leather pieces.
- **Craftsmanship** – Skill and quality in making leather items.
- **Cultural tradition** – Practices passed down through generations, such as French-Canadian or folk leathercraft.
- **Artifact** – A handmade object, often with cultural or historical significance.

# Student Health and Well-Being

## How did today's activity make you feel (body and mind)?

- Choose a color to describe that feeling. Use one word to describe how your energy changed after the activity.

## Mini-Activity: Feelings Freeze Frame (Tableau)

- Ask students to create a freeze-frame (tableau) that shows how they're feeling right after the activity.
- Then, they can:
  - Share it with a partner or small group
  - Draw their freeze-frame in a journal
  - Write or talk about what made them feel that way

## Additional Resources

- Assessment Guide
- Cultural Protocol/Sensitivity Guide
- Evaluation Document
- Resource Database for Further Learning