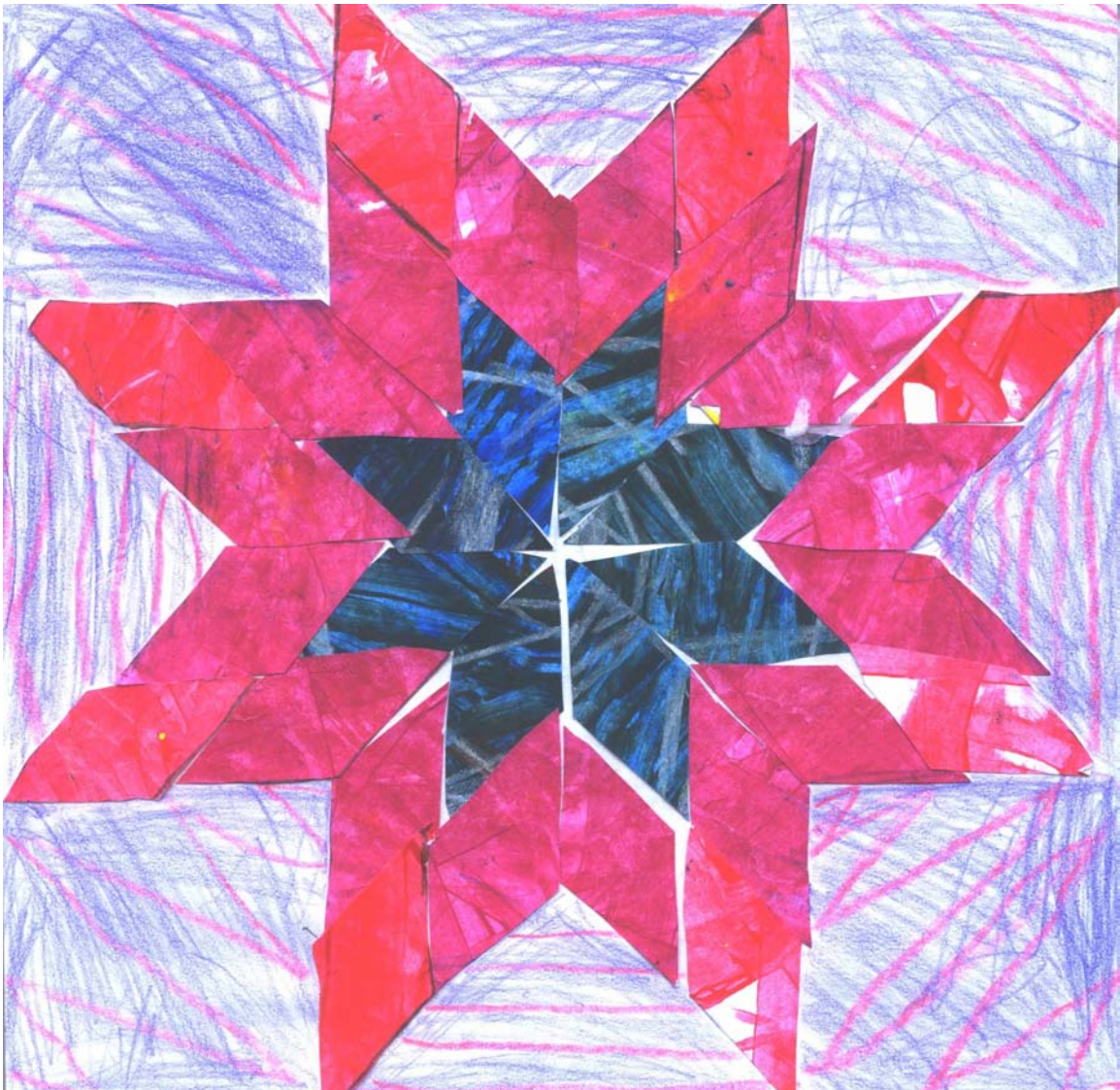


Wally Dion – Star Blanket

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Jonah Maze - Grade 3

Biography of the Artist

Wally Dion lives and works as an artist in Saskatoon, SK. Dion is a member of Yellow Quill First Nation (Salteaux). In 2004, Dion graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a BFA. His work has typically consisted of large scale painted portraiture sometimes working with themes including social-realism and

First Nations class struggles in modern Canadian life, specifically in Saskatchewan. More recent work has involved the use of recycled computer circuit boards for large sculptural pieces. As an active artist, Dion has been met with positive support from both the local and national art communities. He is the recipient of numerous grants from agencies including the Canada Council for the Arts and the Saskatchewan Arts Board. In the summer of 2008, Dion held his first major solo exhibition: *Wally Dion* at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina. His work has been included in several group shows: *Flatlanders* (2008), *Honouring Tradition* (2008) and *No Word for Good Bye* (2006). His work can be found in several prominent public collections including the Saskatchewan Arts Board, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Canada Council Art Bank and the MacKenzie Art Gallery.

The Art Style of Wally Dion

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Art Lesson / Wally Dion/ Pattern, Design and Symmetry



Student Objectives

- Students will be inspired by the life and art of Wally Dion
- Students will understand symmetry and how to create it in design.
- Students will understand pattern and repetition
- Students will create a low relief art object using found materials
- Students will be able to define low relief sculpture
- Students will create a paper star blanket

Star Blanket History

The history of Star Blankets date back before European contact, with variations of the star design stretching across North and Central America. Here, in what has become Manitoba, the Aboriginal Plains People would decorate numerous objects with the eight-point star design, but none as sacred as the buffalo-hide robes worn during ceremonial events. The tradition of the Star Blanket stems from the honour, protection and ceremony these robes represented.

Inspired by the Heavens

A symbol of the Morning Star; the Star Blanket heralds a new beginning - the dawning of a new day. Among the Great Plains People it was understood that if you saw the Morning Star; the creator had given you another day of life. The Milky Way, known as the "Pathway of the Departed Souls", led the spirits of the deceased to the Southern Star. It was also believed that the Great Spirit gave stars power to watch over mortals on earth and impart to them spiritual blessings. Standing between darkness (ignorance) and light (knowledge), the Morning Star inspires not only understanding and life, but the women who create Northern Star Originals as well.

Designed by Nature

Reflecting elements of nature, the Star Blanket often tells a story through its diamonds - colourfully portraying themes of brilliant stars, sheltering trees, snowy mountains, vast plains, cool rivers and more. The traditional colours of yellow, red, black and white seen in many Star Blankets represent the four directions, races, and stages of life.

Given to Bless

For centuries, Plains People have used robes and Star Blankets to honour individuals at the time of life changing events such as births, deaths, graduations and marriages. While the Star Blanket has replaced the buffalo robe as a gift of honour; the tradition of generosity and blessing remains. To give a Star Blanket is to show utmost respect, honour; and admiration. To receive a Star Blanket indicates that the giver holds you in very high esteem for your generosity and accomplishments. It is also thought that Star Blankets result in good dreams and prosperity.

Web Links

- <http://www.epicindian.com/gallery10.html>

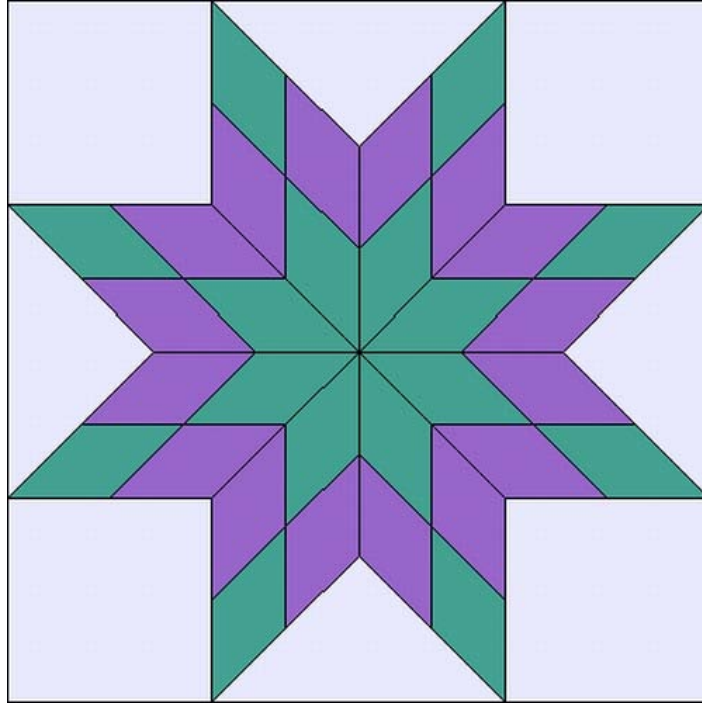
- http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/tresors-treasures/?page_id=2473&lang=en
- http://www.google.ca/imgres?imgurl=http://www.epicindian.com/images/gallery/starblanket.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.epicindian.com/gallery06-starblanket.html&usq= NlrB-uDWcjr99_ZMLmHPXEbGil=&h=499&w=500&sz=116&hl=en&start=0&zoom=1&tbnid=bdqJ6FI9LfQRuM:&tbnh=140&tbnw=140&ei=4o-GTdruFsOU0QGatM3ICA&prev=/images%3Fq%3DStar%2BBlanket%2Bwally%2Bdion%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26sa%3DN%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-GB:official%26biw%3D1228%26bih%3D713%26tbs%3Disch:1&um=1&itbs=1&iact=rc&dur=395&oei=4o-GTdruFsOU0QGatM3ICA&page=1&ndsp=27&ved=1t:429,r:4,s:0&tx=85&ty=81
- http://www.darrellbellgallery.com/pages/display_page.php?folder=wallydion§ion=artists

Materials for project #1

- 18 x 24" stiff white paper
- Scrap paper or bond paper
- Small chunks of matt board cut into patterns with ridges etc on one side.
- Star blanket pattern
- Rulers
- Pattern blocks
- Rhombus pattern pieces
- White pencil crayons

Procedure

1. Look at images of Star Blanket by Wally Dion
2. Point out the colour and symmetry within his pieces.
3. Talk to the children about the significance of the Star Blanket.
4. Using pattern blocks create a pattern similar to Wally Dion used in his Star Blanket pieces. Demonstrate how the star begins with 8 rhombus shapes together in the center. The narrow rhombus in the pattern blocks is the one to use.



Print this image at the size you want the children to use for their pieces of their star blanket.

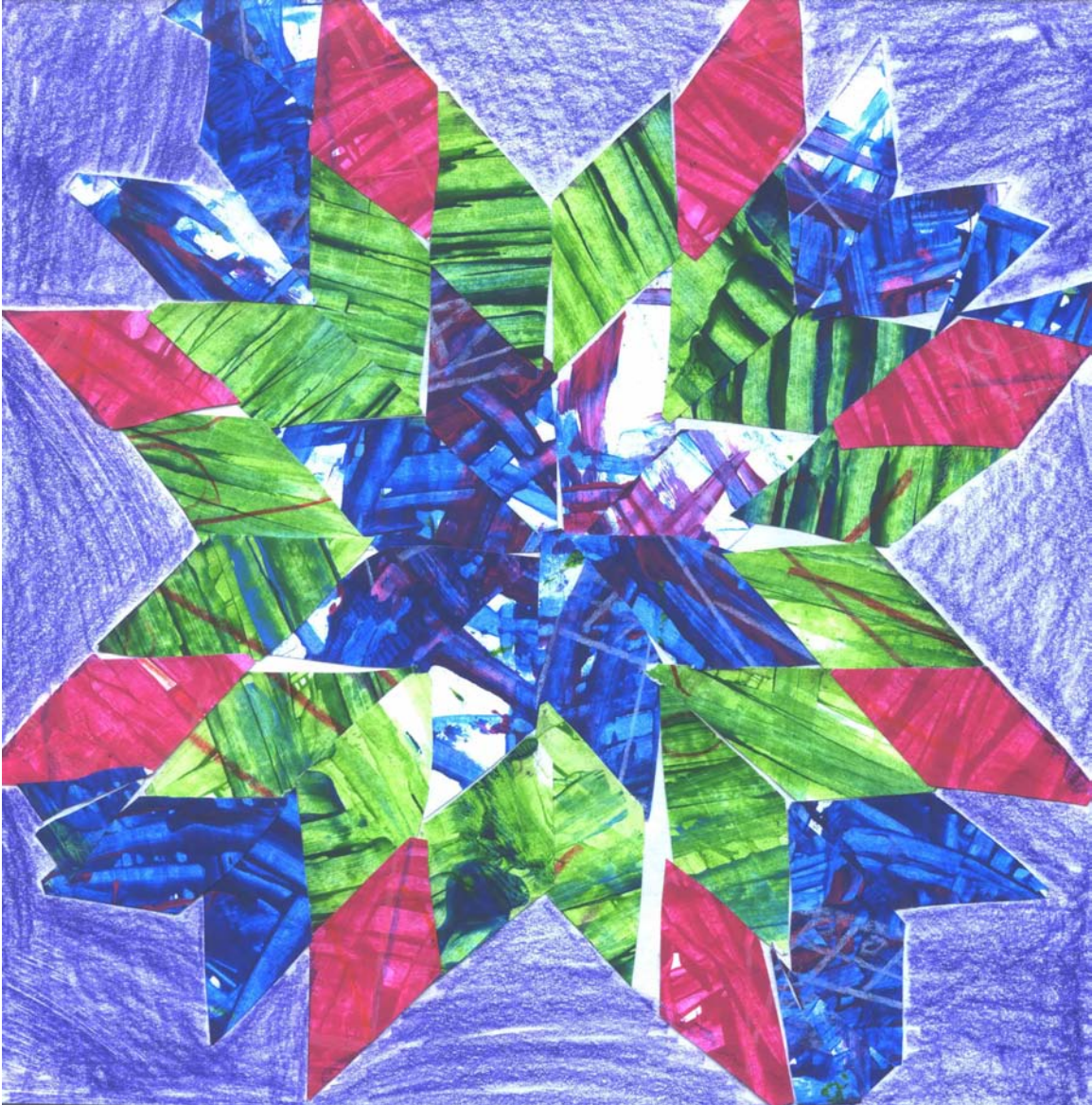
The students will be creating a collage piece in the pattern of a star blanket. Every child will make textured paper that will be shared and then used in the pattern. I had the children create textured pieces of paper to mimic the computer circuit board.

“To receive a Star Blanket indicates that the giver holds you in very high esteem for your generosity and accomplishments.” It is with this concept that the children will create the paper that they will share with each other to create their blanket.

1. Use the same star blanket pattern above.
2. Print on 11 x 17 paper. Make one on stiff paper and cut apart for a pattern.
3. Create textured paper using small pieces of matt board with jagged edges and drag paint across paper. The pattern will mimic the computer circuit boards in Wally Dion’s work.



4. Once the pieces of paper have dried. Show the children images of computer circuit boards. Using white pencil crayon create images similar to those appearing on circuit boards. It is best to have the images printed out for the children as they are detailed.
5. Using the rhombus pattern piece that is on stiff paper the students trace this pattern onto their textured paper. It is advisable to use StickyTac to hold the piece onto the paper as they trace around it. The students will have much greater success when doing it this way than if they were to hold it with their fingers.



Livia Belchinger – Grade 3

6. Cut the pieces from the patterned paper to create the star blanket. You will want to have the children think about the grain of the piece of paper they are using and think about how the texture of a particular piece influences the whole. Wally Dion has a very systematic way of using the circuit boards in his work. The pieces can be glued very carefully to the star blanket pattern. I would use the back of the paper for gluing rather than the photocopied side, it just looks better in the end as the black lines will not appear between the shapes. The children need to glue all the way to the edge of each shape so that it does not lift when it dries.

