

## Northwest Coastal Collage Inspired by Jay Bowen

A HANDS-ON ART ACTIVITY  
DESIGNED BY MONA EDUCATORS



Example by Lynn Prewitt

### Description

Students will create a collage, drawing inspiration from symbols and shapes used in the work of Jay Bowen, an artist from the Upper Skagit Tribe. Students will also engage with an array of picture books to help design their collage.

### Materials

#### Vocabulary

- ✓ Collage
  - ✓ Symbols
  - ✓ Colors
  - ✓ Layer
  - ✓ Overlap
- Biography information on Jay Bowen and pictures of his work (included in this lesson)
  - Crayons
  - Glue sticks
  - Card stock paper in assorted colors (including white for the background)
  - Pencils
  - Scissors
  - One or more of the suggested storybooks recommended on page three of this lesson

## Instructions

**1)** Read as many stories as you wish to prepare for this lesson. Some titles are suggested on the next page. Take time to discuss and explore the symbols found in both the writing and the pictures. You might choose to read and discuss one book each day leading up to the art project.

**2)** Share some information on Jay Bowen using the About the Artist page at the end of this lesson. Then share some of his work and use Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to discuss his sculpture and paintings. More information on VTS is attached at the end of this lesson.

Consider asking:

- What's going on here?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

**3)** Distribute printed images of frog, raven, whale, eagle, and coyote (included at the end of this lesson). Discuss what students see. Are there any patterns or common elements regarding colors or shapes?

**4)** Provide students with white and colored card stock, scissors, and glue.

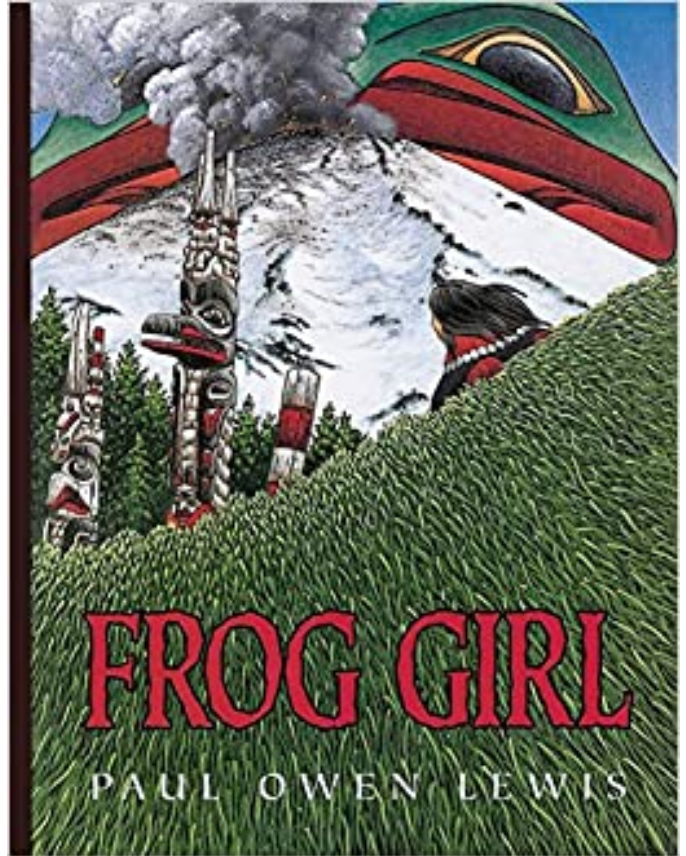
**5)** Ask them to plan out their collage by drawing their design using pencil to make a series of shapes on the colored card stock.

**6)** Once they have their plan drawn out they can cut out the individual shapes and arrange them on the white card stock. Encourage them to layer and overlap their shapes to create a more complex design.

**7)** When they have their design arranged the way they want it, they can use the glue sticks to attach it to the paper.

## Recommended Storybooks

- Frog Girl by Paul Owens Lewis
- Storm Boy by Paul Owens Lewis
- Button Blanket by Nan Mcnutt
- Raven by Gerald Mc Dermott
- Coyote by Gerald Mc Dermott
- Fresh Strawberries by Joesph Bruchac



*Above: Cover of Frog Girl  
by Paul Owen Lewis  
Image Source: Amazon*

## Learning and State Standards

Fulfills **Washington State Arts Learning Standards:**

- **First Grade: (VA:Cr1.2.1)** Use observation and investigation in preparation for making a work of art **(VA:Cr2.2.1)** Demonstrate safe and proper procedures for using materials, tools, and equipment while making art
- **Second Grade: (VA:Cr1.2.2)** Make art or design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity **(VA:Re7.1.2)** Perceive and describe aesthetic characteristics of one's natural world and constructed environments

# Visual Thinking Strategies

MoNA's Education programs utilize Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), which is a research-based teaching method that promotes aesthetic development, including critical thinking and communication skills. Here in the MoNA, we use VTS to engage students and general visitors with art, encouraging them to observe closely, think critically and discuss respectfully; however, VTS can be effectively used across curricula. This approach teaches its participants how to take the time to observe closely, describe what they see in detail and provide evidence for their observations. Students learn that their reflections and thoughts are valued and appreciated in this inclusive teaching method.

In order to facilitate a VTS discussion, you first encourage viewers to take a quiet moment to observe the work you are going to explore. Then you ask the following questions and paraphrase the responses without adding any of your own judgements. You can insert additional vocabulary and point to specific parts of the artwork.

*What's going on in this picture?*

*What do you see that makes you say...?*

*What more can you find?*

## Visual Thinking Strategy Links

If you are interested in learning more about VTS, [here is their website](#). If you already know and love VTS, but want help finding great images to use in your classroom, here is a [fantastic gallery](#). You can also visit this website for additional resources: [www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators](http://www.monamuseum.org/resources-for-educators)



# About the Artist: Jay Bowen

Jay Bowen was born into a traditional Upper Skagit family and raised in Skagit Valley, Washington. He received his higher education at Western Washington University, Institute of American Indian Arts, and Rhode Island School of Design. He has created art in a wide range of media, including poetry, steel sculpture, glass blowing, fine gold jewelry and oil paintings.

He says of his work: "My paintings are healing and are all meant to be medicine. My sculptures are healing and uniting humanity in a common goal of understanding and concerns for each other's lives. My poetry speaks of the human experience, unspoken." For more on his art and poetry, you can visit [his website](http://jaybowen-art.com).



Image source: <http://jaybowen-art.com/wordpress/about/>



Image source: <http://jaybowen-art.com/wordpress/>

**"THE QUEST OF EACH  
ARTIST IS SEARCHING FOR  
THE WELL OF ELIXIR OF  
CREATIVE IDEAS YET  
EXPLORED."  
-JAY BOWEN**



*Wood Raven and Sun*, Jay Bowen,  
Oil on Canvas

Image source: <http://jaybowen-art.com/wordpress/gallery/>





*Spirits of Our Valley, Jay Bowen,  
Stainless- and weathered-steel structure*

*Image source: <http://jaybowen-art.com/wordpress/valley-of-our-spirits-2/>*



*Raven Family Wisdom, Jay Bowen,  
Oil on Canvas*

Image source: <http://jaybowen-art.com/wordpress/gallery/>





Image from *Frog Girl* by Paul Owens Lewis



Image from *How Raven Stole the Sun* by Maria Williams



Image from *Coyote* by Gerald Mcdermott



*Moon Catcher* by Marvin Oliver  
Image source: [Alaskaeaglearts.com](http://Alaskaeaglearts.com)



*Haida Eagle II* by Clarence Mills  
Image source: [Art Country Canada](http://ArtCountryCanada.com)