



NATURE WORKS EVERYWHERE

PRESENTED BY
The Nature
Conservancy 

NATURE'S FIRST DEFENDERS

Part 3: Activism Through the Arts

Time: 45-minutes with homework; another 45-minutes to share final projects

Objectives:

The student will...

- Examine an artist's statement and original piece to determine how the artist used music to communicate a message.
- Discuss how cultures converge through different art forms.
- Examine how the sharing of art can amplify a message.
- Research and create an original piece about a current environmental or social justice issue.

Materials:

- Teacher access to computer, Internet, speakers, projector
- Tsimka Martin's music video "Grabbing Spree" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQ9bhiyABCs>
- Copies of Tsimka Martin's Artist Statement <https://natureworkseverywhere.org/resources/natures-first-defenders/>
- Other materials will vary based on student projects and may include computer access, instruments, paper, art supplies, etc.

Suggested Flow:

1. In the *Nature Works Everywhere* video "**Since Time Immemorial**": **How Indigenous People Are Reviving Traditional Stewardship** (<https://vimeo.com/200720195>), there were excerpts from Tsimka Martin's rap about mining. Tsimka combines her passion for music with environmental activism. Share her full music video and artist's statement with your students.
 - Tsimka Martin's music video "Grabbing Spree" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQ9bhiyABCs>.
 - Artist's Statement document can be found here <https://natureworkseverywhere.org/resources/natures-first-defenders/>
2. After students have seen the music video and read the artist's statement, have a class discussion using any of the following discussion prompts:
 - What is the message of Tsimka's rap? Why is it important?
 - Describe how Tsimka merged two musical forms—the vocal stylings of rap with instruments and language from her indigenous culture—to convey a message. Use excerpts from Tsimka's artist's statement to explain why she merged the two styles.
 - Describe the symbolism used in the music video.
 - Describe ways that different cultures converge or interact with each other (i.e., through trade, exploration, politics, etc.) and discuss how this sharing of knowledge and tradition can result in new or reinterpreted art forms.
 - Can you think of examples of this in history or in your own life?

- Identify and describe examples where people have used the arts (music, film, photography, painting, etc.) for activism.
 - How does the convergence of culture and the melding of art forms give power to a movement?
 - How does the embodiment of a message (activist or otherwise) in art help to amplify it?
3. Using Tsimka’s rap as an inspiration, have students create a song, poem, graphic novel, comic, or poster about a current environmental social justice issue in your community or beyond. This could be an issue that they have researched as part of the related lesson plans or one that is ongoing in your community.
 4. Have students create an artist’s statement to accompany their work. It might be helpful to use a flowchart like the one found here <https://www.theartofed.com/2015/09/25/use-this-flowchart-to-help-your-students-write-authentic-artist-statements/> to aid them in crafting their statement.
 5. Have students share their work with the class through a combination of gallery walk and performance. Students who write poems or songs may perform them or put them on display along with comics/graphic novels. All works should be accompanied by their artist’s statements.
 6. As an alternative to creating an original work, students could examine existing art forms with which they identify that have a social/environmental justice component. They could describe in a written statement how certain lyrics or images relate to a current issue, why they identify with the piece, and how they find it inspirational and/or informative.

Teacher’s Note:

In her Artist’s Statement, Tsimka Martin mentions the “staking a claim” system. For more information on this system, read the statement by the Yukon Government of Canada found here http://www.emr.gov.yk.ca/mining/pdf/free_entry_system.pdf.

Additionally, for a great story that describes the way this system works, read how First Nations Women Advocating Responsible Mining (FNWARM) members staked a claim on a government official’s property to illustrate how easy it is to do. Find the story here <http://fnwarm.com/first-nations-women-stake-mining-claim-on-minister-bill-bennetts-property-vancouver-coast-salish-territory-tue-jan-24-2017-in-a-twist-on-the-ages-old-story-of-first-nations/>

For an historical overview of the way cultures converge through art, watch the Converging Cultures video (26:44 min) created by Annenberg Learner found here: <https://www.learner.org/courses/globalart/theme/1/index.html>