

LESSON PLAN



Image: Cannupa Hanska Luger (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, and Lakota, b. 1979), *Midéegaadi - Light*, 2022, from the series *Future Ancestral Technologies*, mixed media bison regalia, installation dimensions variable, © Cannupa Hanska Luger, Courtesy the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.

KEY TERMS

Regalia	Culture
Sculpture	Kinships
Craftsmanship	Colonization

MATERIALS

Paint	Recycled and Found Materials such as:
Paper	Fabric
Glue	Cardboard
Pencils	Plastics
Mod Podge®	Wire

FUTURE KINSHIPS – IMAGINING FUTURES WITH THE NATURAL WORLD

Inspired by: *Cannupa Hanska Luger* (Nov 15, 2025–Mar 8, 2026)

Created for: **Secondary Educators and Students**

Focus: Art-making, material exploration, connection to local environment and heritage

Themes: Future imaginaries, ecological accountability, cultural respect, kinship with the land and animals

Big Ideas: Students will learn to...

Understand how some Indigenous communities of the Great Plains regard the bison as a relative, an emblem of resilience.

Explore how connections to animals and landscapes help shape one's understanding of community, place, and self.

Consider how personal relationships to land, water, and animals might influence ideas of art and environment, and imagine alternative futures.

Learning Goals: Students will be able to...

Analyze how Luger uses materials and narrative to imagine Indigenous-rooted futures.

Choose an animal or natural element (from the Midwest environment or their personal cultural heritage) and research its ecological and cultural significance.

Design and create a speculative artwork that honors that relationship and imagines a future context.

Use materials thoughtfully—especially repurposed or found materials—to reflect care for land and sustainability.

Lesson Outline

Introduction and Looking

Show images of Luger's *Future Ancestral Technologies* and discuss:

What materials do you notice?

How does the artist mix old and new—traditional forms with futuristic ideas?

How do the works show respect for the bison and the land?

Share that Luger is a living Indigenous artist from the Northern Plains whose work combines ancestral knowledge, science fiction, and recycled materials to imagine futures rooted in responsibility and kinship.

Important note for students: This lesson draws inspiration from Luger's ideas, but we are not copying Indigenous practices or symbols, known as cultural appropriation. Instead, we are learning from his approach—connecting to our own places, stories, and responsibilities.

CULTURAL NOTE

The legacy of colonialism, including the myth that Europeans discovered America, perpetuates the erasure of Indigenous peoples. It is thus important to remind students that there are over 2,000 tribal groups living across the Americas today, each with their own unique and dynamic culture. It is also important to discuss cultural appropriation with students so they understand how to celebrate, not use, a group's culture. For further resources regarding Native American cultures, see Native Knowledge 360°: Essential Understanding about American Indians published by the National Museum of the American Indian: americanindian.si.edu/nk360

Keep in mind AIR (Ask, Invite, Reflect) Framework when teaching another person's culture. Introduced by Dr. Browning M. Neddeau at National Art Education Association's professional learning webinar Cultural [Mis] Appropriation: Permissions for Honoring Cultural Ownership in Art Education on January 15, 2020.

A - Ask elders; be aware of tokenism; engage in conversation

I - Invite and honor cultural traditions; collaborate with guest artists; connect to first hand knowledge

R - Reflect and research the culture; assess stories being told; determine the project's intent



Image: Cannupa Hanska Luger (Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara/Lakota, b. 1979), *Lightning as Remarkable Landscape, 2025*, from the series *Future Ancestral Technologies*, eight-color lithograph, edition of 7, sheet: 38 × 26 in. (96.5 × 66 cm), © Cannupa Hanska Luger. Courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York. Photo by: Wendy McEahern

Brainstorming: “Future Kinships”

Students choose one animal or natural element that feels significant to them.

Option 1: A species native to the Midwest (e.g., deer, bison, coyote, crane, fox, turtle, prairie grass, river).

Option 2: An animal important to their own family heritage, ancestry, or personal story.

Ask Students:

What qualities do you admire about your choice?

How does it survive or adapt to change?

What would it look like—or how would it live—with humans in a respectful future world?

Students sketch or brainstorm notes about how they might represent that relationship visually.

Artmaking: “Speculative Sculpture or Wearable Form”

Students create a 3D artwork, mixed-media piece, or wearable sculpture/object inspired by their chosen being.

Encourage use of repurposed or recycled materials, reflecting the idea of sustainability and reimagining the detritus of capitalism.

Ask Students

How could this object exist in a future world that values balance and kinship?

What forms, textures, or materials can represent both the natural and the futuristic?

How can your design communicate care, adaptation, or survival?

Teacher tips

Support by circulating, prompting next steps, and encouraging craftsmanship and thoughtful material use.

Encourage quiet observation or short artist check-ins rather than written reflection—let the artmaking be the thinking process.

Extension Options

Gallery Walk & Discussion

Set up the finished works for a class walk.

Students can include a small card with their name, chosen being, and a short title.

Use open, nonjudgmental questions to guide looking:

What might this future world feel like?

What choices in materials tell us something about respect or adaptation?

How does each piece express connection to place or heritage?

Multidisciplinary Lesson

Option for cross-curricular link: collaborate with a science or social studies teacher on local ecology or environmental ethics.



Image: Cannupa Hanska Luger (Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara/Lakota, b. 1979), *Midéegaadi – Thunder*, 2022, from the series *Future Ancestral Technologies*, mixed media bison regalia, installation dimensions variable, © Cannupa Hanska Luger. Courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York. Photo by: Brandon Soder



Image: Cannupa Hanska Luger with his *Remarkable Landscape* lithographs. Photograph by Shayla Blatchford (Diné), 2025

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Image: Cannupa Hanska Luger with *Nuxbaagaʔhdiia: To Go Forth*, 2024–25, from the series *Future Ancestral Technologies*, made from repurposed afghan blanket, industrial wool remnants, and yarn. Photograph by Shayla Blatchford (Diné), 2025

Cannupa Hanska Luger's work combines creativity, storytelling, and community. Born on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota, he is an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold and is Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, and Lakota. This exhibition takes its title from Luger's Hidatsa clan, the Awa xee (Dripping Dirt), who over-saw the repair of earth lodge dwellings. A trained ceramicist, Luger cites his application of clay as a natural extension of his lodge-building forebears' labor and care for their communities.

Luger uses many materials and methods—including sculpture, video, performance, and public art—to explore how we care for one another, the land, and our shared future. His art sometimes invites community members to collaborate, helping them imagine new ways to connect to one another. The artist's work is included in several major museum collections across the United States and around the world. Luger lives and works from his studio in Glorieta, New Mexico, where he develops projects that celebrate Indigenous knowledge, collaboration, and creativity.



Image: Cannupa Hanska Luger (Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara/Lakota, b. 1979), *We Survive You—Midéegaadi*, editorial photograph featuring seven mixed media bison regalia made of repurposed materials, © Cannupa Hanska Luger. Courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York. Photo by: Brandon Soder, 2023