GET A HEAD START ON LEARNING

What are creative arts? How might they be distinctive to cultural identity? What can we learn about the past by studying creative arts? What were the artistic sights and sounds of the portage like in 1832?

Explore this season’s theme in depth through hands-on activities with this free learning guide—a valuable resource for families, homeschoolers, and anyone who likes to learn. Although geared toward grades 4 - 6, this curriculum is readily adaptable for younger or older children and adults. In a classroom setting, it may be used as a stand-alone unit, or the lessons may be used as a la carte to supplement a standard art, humanities, or social studies curriculum.

Contents:
I. What are creative arts?
II. More than meets the eye
III. The vibrant arts of 1832
IV. Threads produce a tapestry

Wisconsin Educational Standards are also included for the convenience of educators.

www.agencyhouse.org/arts

CULTIVATING PERSPECTIVE: THE CREATIVE ARTS OF CONVERGING CULTURES

Dear Friends,

Creative arts are powerful tools of expression within cultures, offering insights into the hearts and minds of people groups. Our trademark sounds and creative arts of all varieties are often a part of our cultural identity, associating us with a group. They differentiate, yet at the same time they connect. If we trace our arts to their roots, we find that they are embedded in the soil of our shared history and human experience.

In October, 1830, Juliette Kinzie found herself ascending the winding Fox River to the portage after having married the new Fort Winnebago Indian Agent. She wrote of her excitement as she passed through a land which was foreign to her urban Eastern senses, but more importantly, that her voyage up the Fox River and her early years at the ancient Fox-Wisconsin portage placed her on a winding path through the complexities of the cultures surrounding her, each with its own creative traditions: Hoocak (Ho-Chunk) families, French voyageurs, the Métis, Euro-American and Black settlers, and others with distinctive ethnicities of their own.

In the midst of a history which is otherwise saturated with upheaval and conflict, we find these stories of cultural discovery as people from widely dissimilar backgrounds navigated their daily lives in close quarters. Unique modes and flavors of music, fine and decorative arts, storytelling, and dance flowed into the portage, converging at the confluence of the rivers.

This season’s programming is designed to bring us together to enjoy and explore the diverse arts of our site’s past. We hope that it will inspire us all to appreciate a sense of unity in our differences well beyond the realm of cultural arts. We look forward to a fantastic season of discovery with you!

Respectfully,

Adam Novey
Executive Director and Curator
creative arts speak! They express thoughts, ideas, and emotions. They can convey beliefs, customs, traditions, and history. They may seek to persuade, educate, or inspire.

This season, come and enjoy a wide range of captivating performances, fascinating demonstrations, and extraordinary hands-on experiences for all ages. Four cultural arts weekends offer a taste of the creativity which was on display in this region nearly 200 years ago. Experience the pulsing energy of Indigenous singing and dancing by the Wisconsin Dells Singers and Dancers of the Ho-Chunk Nation; the lively strains of French-Métis fiddling by Pierre Pleau; dynamic Métis step dancing by Danielle Enblom of The Step Collective; and Euro-American folk music and hymns sung and performed on intriguing historical instruments by John and Connie Nicholas of Salty Strings Music Ministry. Watch demonstrations of skills such as Norwegian spoon chip carving, Ho-Chunk beadwork, and Métis finger weaving. Investigate “Everyday Elegance” with The Galena Living History Society as they illuminate the creative artistry in the setting of everyday life in 1832.

...and try your own hand at a wide variety of historical cultural arts and skills, from flutemaking to flintknapping, fiber arts to pottery, and a whole lot more. A plethora of unique creative expressions converged here at the Fox-Wisconsin portage in 1832: music, dance, painting, poetry, storytelling, architecture, fashion, and everything in between.

A grant from the Kohler Foundation and a contribution from Nan Rebholz in memory of Edward (Ted) Rebholz funded a permanent outdoor exhibit between the visitor center and the Chipstone Foundation. The informational kiosk presents the home’s historical context.

WE ARE THANKFUL
2023 events & exhibits are made possible by:
- Chipstone Foundation
- General Engineering Company
- Community Foundation of SC Wisconsin
- Myrtle Fund - Wm. O’Connor/Krista Raya
- Kohler Foundation
- Brakebush Family Foundation
- City of Portage / Portage Tourism
- George J.N. Meyer Foundation
- The Historical Timekeepers
- Thomas & Lynnan Casper
- Ho-Chunk Museum & Cultural Center

Please see THANKFUL, Page 4

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES...DEMONSTRATIONS...HANDS-ON OPPORTUNITIES...MORE!

Creative arts are a means by which we as people can connect, enjoy one another, inspire one another to think more deeply, and look at life from new perspectives. We look forward to sharing and exploring with you!

agencyhouse.org/cultural-arts

NEW EXHIBITS INSTALLED
Two brand new exhibits are installed and ready to be explored and enjoyed by visitors admission-free.

Our season-themed special exhibit, funded with grants from the Community Foundation of South Central Wisconsin and the Chipstone Foundation, will open with a ribbon cutting on May 20. This visitor center exhibit explores the core ideas of this season’s theme.

A grant from the Kohler Foundation and a contribution from Nan Rebholz funded a permanent outdoor exhibit between the visitor center and the Chipstone Foundation. The informational kiosk presents the home’s historical context.

agencyhouse.org/exhibits

SPEAKER SERIES TO OFFER CULTURAL INSIGHTS THROUGH HISTORICAL ARTS

Join us on a Tuesday evening each month at 6:30 pm from June through September for a series of fascinating and thought-provoking presentations.

Ho-Chunk Nation Museum & Cultural Center Director, Josephine Lee is slated to speak June 13 on “Ho-Chunk Creative Arts in Cultural Context.”

On July 11, Dr. Alphonso Simpson, Chair of the African American Studies program at UW-Oshkosh, will present “Hand in Hand: Music and Storytelling in the African American Community.”

August 22 brings Sumpter Priddy III of Alexandria, Virginia, to Portage, Wisconsin. A pioneering researcher and author on American decorative arts, Mr. Priddy will discuss “American Fancy: The Cultural Phenomenon of Exuberance in the Decorative Arts, 1790-1840.”


Admission is free, thanks to the co-sponsorship of the Museum at the Portage, the Kohler Foundation, and the Chipstone Foundation.

ONLINE SERIES FEATURES COMMON THREADS

“Common threads” is the title of this season’s Explore History online video series. Cultural creative arts are expressions of creativity which can be distinctive marks of cultural identity. Yet these diverse creative expressions blend into a beautiful tapestry attesting to our shared human experience.

Creative arts play a variety of roles in people’s lives. Survey creative artifacts from various cultures which converged at the portage in 1832. Value the differences which make people unique while reflecting on the commonalities that tie us together across cultural lines.

www.agencyhouse.org/common-threads

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