

Fifth Grade

Title: “A Blackfoot Travois” (1926)

Artist: Edward P. Curtis (1868-1952)

EALR'S: Arts

- 1.1.1- Understands art concepts and vocabulary, line, texture, color, value, shapes- geometric shapes (triangle, diamond, square....) and organic shapes, (curvy, natural look, flowing).
- 1.2- Understands art concepts and vocabulary, principals of organization. (Balance, proportion, movement.....).
- 1.3- Understands and applies art styles from various artists' cultures and times.
- 1.4- Applies audience skills in a variety of art settings and performances.
- 2.1- Applies a creative process in the arts.
- 2.3- Applies a responding process to an arts presentation.
- 3.1- Uses the arts to express and present ideas and feeling.
- 3.2- Uses the arts to communicate for a specific purpose.
- 3.3- Develops personal aesthetic criteria to communicate artistic choices.
- 4.2- Demonstrates and analyzes the connections between the arts and other content areas.
- 4.3- Understands how the arts impact lifelong choices.
- 4.4- Understand that the arts shape and reflect culture and history.

Text:

This simple composition was taken as a photograph during the period when Native American life and culture were rapidly becoming a part of the past. The photograph was selected for the art collection to demonstrate the arts of photography. The photographer plans his photograph the same way an artist plans a painting.

The triangle that forms the most stable base for any composition can be seen here in the three main forms of the man, woman and horse. The effect of the early morning or late afternoon sunlight adds to the mood of the painting.

Questions:

1. Is this an oil painting? (No, it is a photograph). What do you think inspired the artist to take this picture? Was it created a long time ago?
2. What are the dynamics of this composition? In what direction are the Native Americans moving? Where are they looking? Is this important to balancing the composition? Would the composition be balanced if they were looking back over their shoulders? Can you see the focal point triangle formed by the man, woman, and horse?
3. How does the light source add to the composition? (The light adds character and texture to their faces and this adds to the feeling of pride).
4. If the photographer had been high up on a hill, looking down on these same people, would the final picture have given you the same feeling? Where was the photographer standing while he took the picture? The angle or perspective from which the picture was taken adds to the feeling of pride and strength of these people and their lonely isolation.
5. Why isn't there anything else included in the background or foreground? The tiny little dog adds to the mood and feeling. (Adds human interest, inspires sympathy).