

Lesson 2: Water Stories: Mapping, Memory, and Stewardship

Teacher Handout

This lesson uses Oscar Tuazon's *Water Map (Bahsawa bee, Spring Valley, NV)* and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's *Wallowa Waterhole Series #6 and #7* as tools to explore how maps are can tell us more about a landscape and the people who inhabit the space, and how cartographers are critical to determining values placed on the land.

Grade Levels: 3-5

About *Water Map (Bahsawabee, Spring Valley, NV)*:

In Tuazon's 2018, *Water Map (Bahsawa bee, Spring Valley, NV)*, he creates three conceptual maps and drawings that reflect a collaborative, and functional, public work of art. This lesson plan refers to one part of this three-part artwork. This idea for a public artwork is a "water school" that would be located near Cedar Spring, Nevada to serve as a public artwork and an experimental school. Cedar Spring's natural resource of water had been threatened by a potential \$15 billion pipeline that would divert water from the underground springs to Las Vegas, Nevada and beyond. Though this undertaking did not take place, the concept of the Cedar Springs Water School remains an important example of how the preservation of water is crucial to our survival, as well as the environment's.

This collaboration between Tuazon and Chairman of the Confederate Tribes of the Goshute Reservation, Rupert Steele focuses on understanding sustainable water management practices and strategies developed by and rooted in Indigenous knowledge.

This idea of the Water School has come to fruition in a different area. In 2018, Tuazon founded a Water School in Los Angeles, California and the space is used for dialogue and engagement surrounding complex water and environment issues.

About Oscar Tuazon:

Oscar Tuazon, born in 1975 in Seattle, Washington, is an artist who works in mixed media, sculpture and architecture. Now living in Los Angeles, California, he primarily focuses on our environment and our social engagement with it. His dialogue and reflection from most of his work revolves around critical issues surrounding ecological awareness and water conservation. Using water as a central theme, Tuazon explores its multifaceted nature and its impact on the environment and society. By sharing these themes, he calls the viewer to focus on their own environmental consciousness, and they interact with our resources.



Resources:

Oscar Tuazon's Website:

<https://www.luhringaugustine.com/artists/oscar-tuazon#tab:thumbnails>

Oscar Tuazon on Mapping Waterways:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3FJbAW-fkk>

Oscar Tuazon's Los Angeles Water School (LAWS)

<https://www.frieze.com/article/oscar-tuazons-water-school-targets-pollution-and-climate-change>



About *Wallowa Waterhole Series #6 and #7*:

Jaune Quick-To-See Smith:

Jaune Quick-To-See Smith, born in 1940 in Montana, was an artist, educator and advocate who used storytelling to introduce themes of Indigenous identity, history, understanding Indigenous land, ownership of land and the impact of colonialism in America, specifically its impact on Indigenous groups. She was an enrolled citizen of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and was of Métis and Shoshone descent.

Her 1983 works, *Wallowa Waterhole Series #6 and #7*, refer to Wallowa Water Hole in the Wallowa Valley of present-day Oregon. Quick-To-See Smith incorporates lines, symbols, shapes and colors to represent people, animals, trails, dwellings and place.

The Nez Perce people were the first inhabitants of Wallowa Valley and they used the land for fishing, hunting and gathering. In 1855, many Northwest Indigenous tribes signed a treaty with the United States stating that Indigenous people would be able to retain access to the millions of



acres of land and Wallowa mountains in what is present-day Idaho and Washington. Soon after in 1863, the increased pressure from settlers and the discovery of gold, a drastic reduction of these lands was approved by the US government. This is nearly six-million acres or about one-tenth of the land that was in the initial agreement.

Resources:

Harvard's Project Zero Thinking Routine for Colors, Shapes and Lines:

https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Colors%20Shapes%20Lines_2.pdf

Jaune Quick-To-See Smith: Memory Map by the Whitney Museum of Art

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhgccxUcrmY>

About Bahsahwahbee:

For over 10,000 years, Bahsahwahbee (Bah-saw-wah-bee) has been a gathering space for the Newe people of the Great Basin. Bahsahwahbee translated means “Sacred Water Valley.” The Shoshone and Goshute peoples, descendants of the Newe, rely on this space as a place for healing, spiritual practice, healing and more.

This area depends on water, as it is one of the wettest places in Nevada. With wetlands, springs and an underground aquifer, it creates an environment of biodiversity. The Swamp Cedars that grow in the valley are junipers that are usually seen above 8,000 feet, but these Swamp Cedars grow at about 5,800 feet, making them unique to the area. These trees also stand as a spiritual embodiment of those who were lost in the massacres that took place on this land.

Resources:

Background on Swamp Cedars in Bahsahwahbee:

<https://www.swampcedars.org/>

Tools and Resources for Understanding Nevada’s Water: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/nevada/stories-in-nevada/groundwater/>

Lesson Plan Prep:

Before the lesson, make sure your students are familiar with the vocabulary terms: Aerial View, Cartography and Natural Resource. There are questions integrated into the lesson that refer to these terms.

Oscar Tuazon’s *Water Map (Bahsawa bee, Spring Valley, NV)*:

- When presented with this artwork, students may say that they see words, water, dirt, a key, etc.. Accept all answers.
- There is wording on the right side of the piece. “Spring Valley South” and “Vicinity Map” (Location), “MyTopo” (Topography Map Store), “Source Map Information” and “Land Status Legend”
- There is wording within the map: “Bahsahwahbee”-Indigenous term for “grove of swamp cedars” and “Basonip (Village 12)” is a Western Shoshone village translating to “grass water”

Jaune Quick-To-See Smith’s *Wallowa Waterhole Series #6 and #7*

- When presented with these artwork, students may say: Left Piece: Tools, People, Water, Chicken Feet Tracks or Right Piece: Teepees, Tools. Accept all answers.

Additional Vocabulary:

- **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK):** The on-going accumulation of knowledge, practice and belief about relationships between living beings in a specific ecosystem that is acquired by indigenous people over hundreds or thousands of years through direct contact with the environment, handed down through generations, and used for life-sustaining ways. This knowledge includes the relationships between people, plants, animals, natural phenomena, landscapes, and timing of events for activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, agriculture, and forestry. It encompasses the world view of a people, which includes ecology, spirituality, human and animal relationships, and more