

May 2025

Indigenous Education Online Newsletter



From the Indigenous Education Online Support Team:

Sandra Rutherford, Indigenous Support Teacher sandra.rutherford@sd71.bc.ca

Alana Alix, Indigenous Support Worker alana.alix@sd71.bc.ca

Annette Blecic, Indigenous Support Worker annette.blecic@sd71.bc.ca

Giselaine Ballantyne, administrative assistant giselaine.ballantyne@sd71.bc.ca

Website:

<https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/indigenous-education/online-learning/>

Spring Wishes

Spring is considered a time of rebirth and renewal in many Indigenous communities. Warmer months are coming and our activities shift with the season.

We wish you continued success in your learning and would like to remind you that we are here to support in any way we can.

Our Indigenous Education Online Support team can connect you with a variety of resources including academic tutors, mentors, mental health supports and food security supports. Please reach out to a team member at any time.

Newsletter Contents:

- Indigenous language revitalization Information and language learning resources
- Respectful harvest information
- Douglas Fir tip tea recipe
- Gratitude rock craft instructions
- Spring scavenger hunt



Mailout Contents:



Spirit Stone- Spirit Stones feature artwork designed by a variety of Indigenous artists. Spirit Stones were made as little reminders to stay connected and keep thriving each day. Keep a spirit stone in your pocket to help gently remind you of your needs, wants, and dreams. <https://nativenorthwest.ca/spirit-stones>

Hacky sack- This hacky sack was beautifully handmade, by families in Guatemala, through a fairtrade partnership with a Canadian company dedicated to connecting Mayan artisans and families to a larger market so that they can support themselves with their art. <https://tribalrootsimports.com/artisan-connection/>



How do you play hacky sack? Hacky Sack (or "circle kicking") is played by kicking a footbag to each player in a circle. Play to keep the footbag in the air for as many rounds as possible. A round is counted after every player has kicked the footbag, while the footbag is still in play and has not touched the ground. One of the fundamental rules is to not touch the footbag with your hands. Footbag-like activities have existed for many years across many cultures. The modern day game version became popular in the 1970's and the inventors based it on an ancient Indigenous game that involved kicking a small, soft object.



Spruce Tip Sugar- Young Spruce tips have a delightful citrus flavor that creates amazing culinary products of all kinds. For this product, wild harvested spruce tips have been ground and combined with organic cane sugar to create a delicious wild spice. This spruce tip sugar will bring incredible wild flavor to your favorite dishes. We recommend using our spruce tip sugar as a garnish for sweets.. A few suggestions could include strawberry shortcake with fresh whipped cream sprinkled with spruce tip sugar, or top a vanilla lemon zest cupcake with a sprinkle of spruce tip sugar. <https://wildmuskoka.com/products/spruce-tip-sugar?srltid=AfmBOor1uOldY8VrOmU1KY280ciJy6Lu2PjenALsaOC1q0KSIBIKjhhr>

Moose Hide campaign pins and information. For more information about the Moose Hide Campaign day on May 15th : <https://moosehidecampaign.ca>



Sockeye Salmon tin from Indigenous owned St. Jean's Cannery. Hand packed wild Pacific salmon, tuna, and shellfish from British Columbia's only remaining seafood cannery.

Did you know that there are numerous initiatives of Indigenous language revitalization across our province and Canada? Here are a few:

1. **Language Immersion Schools:** Some communities have established schools that teach entirely in a First Nations language. For example, the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board on Vancouver Island runs a SENĆOŦEN immersion program, helping students grow up fluent and connected to their heritage.
2. **Digital Resources and Apps:** Technology plays a big role in revitalization efforts. For example Apps like:



Kwumut Lelum

AND



SpeakMichif.ca

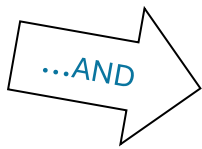
<https://www.kwumut.org/news/hulquminum-language-app>

<https://speakmichif.ca/about>

..provide tools to learn and practice First Nations languages, featuring vocabulary, pronunciation guides, and games.

3. **Master-Apprentice Programs:** These involve pairing fluent elders with younger learners for immersive, one-on-one language experiences. It's a great way to pass down knowledge in an organic setting.
4. **Community Language Classes:** Many nations offer classes that are open to all community members. These classes often combine language learning with cultural practices like song, storytelling, or ceremonies.
5. **Media and Arts:** Indigenous filmmakers, musicians, and authors are incorporating First Nations languages into their works to make them more accessible and celebrated.
6. **Official Recognition:** Governments and organizations are increasingly acknowledging the importance of Indigenous languages through funding, policies, & partnerships. [NEW in 2025- Indigenous Languages Component & Funding model](#)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/aboriginal-peoples.html>



7. Recognition, education and awareness through **Canadian University's:**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8Zf-ld0SQ4>

ALSO!

It is the **UN International Decade of Indigenous Languages** (2022-32) with National Indigenous Languages Day, on March 31st each year.

There are [more than 70 Indigenous languages](#) across 12 language families in Canada. And they represent countless generations of accumulated traditional knowledge and ways of knowing and being.

“ As an Indigenous person who was systematically denied the opportunity to grow up with my language, I cannot stress enough the importance of National Indigenous Languages Day. In our communities I always hear the Elders talk about how concerned they are about language and the need to prioritize language revitalization. On this day, I hope everyone stops and reflects on languages. For Indigenous people, through Canadian policies and practices such as residential schools and child welfare, speaking Indigenous languages was intentionally forbidden. Post-secondary institutes now need to provide as many opportunities as we can to revitalize languages and intentionally create opportunities to learn them.

—Qwul'sih'yah'maht Robina Thomas, Vice President Indigenous

<https://www.uvic.ca>

Indigenous Language Learning Resources

Learn phrases, hear a story or song in an Indigenous language, find out what language is spoken in an area, and more.

 <h2>FirstVoices</h2> <p>First Voices is a collaborative platform where Indigenous communities manage, curate, and share their languages. Language champions collaborate with Indigenous Elders, youth and speakers to create and share language resources like words, phrases, songs and stories.</p>	 https://www.firstvoices.com
 <p>Ojibwe.net is an independently run non-profit website. The site aims to preserve and promote Anishinaabemowin by providing resources for learning and using the language creatively. There are lessons, stories, songs, and other resources.</p>	 https://ojibwe.net/
<h2>Inuktut Tusaalanga</h2> <p>Learn Inuktut with lessons, grammar, and dialogue. There are language maps and an overview of dialects. Tusaalanga means, 'Let me hear!' and features thousands of sound files to help you learn Inuktitut</p>	 https://www.tusaalanga.ca/
 <p>Michif Language Come together in the community to discover Southern Michif and other Métis languages. Prairies to Woodlands Indigenous Language Revitalization Circle is a non-profit grassroots community organization focused on the revitalization of Southern Michif and other Indigenous languages spoken by the Métis.</p>	 https://michif.org



Douglas Fir Tip Tea

“Tree tips are packed with vitamin C and electrolytes, you could equate them with Gatorade or Emergen-C, but without the sugary downside. Indeed – many Northwest Native People have eaten spring tips to ward off thirst and hunger. They have also been used to combat scurvy, colds, coughs and fatigue.”

- From: <http://wildfoodsandmedicines.com>

Recipe:

1. Add 2 handfuls of tips in a quart jar and cover with room temperature water.
2. Place in a warm spot and let sit 3-8 hours.
3. Strain and drink straight, or mix with lemon or lime juice and sweetener.

Harvesting Spruce Tips

Spruce tips are packed with Vitamin C and are incredibly tasty, they have a bold and beautiful citrus flavour – we refer to them as our local lemons!

When you see a spruce tree that looks like a Christmas tree lit up, that's when you know its spruce picking time! Generally, spruce tips are best harvested during spring (late May, early June) and the colour of the tip is the prettiest green you'll ever see! Spruce tip season comes and goes, like many other foraging flurries, so be sure to act fast when you see those little green tips starting to burst!



Once you have figured out which are spruce trees, picking tips really is a no brainer - all you need are your fingers and a bucket! Pinch each of the tip with your fingers and the bud will fall off. Remember, only pick scattered tips and you want the tree to look like it did when you got there. If the tree is small and immature, leave it and move to the next. Once the tip has become stiff and a darker green, you know the season for spruce tipping is sadly over.

Like most of our vinegars, spruce tip vinegar is great for the base of a salad dressing – combine the vinegar with oil, a sweetener, like local honey or maple syrup, some tangy ginger and wait for the crowd to ask you 'what made that salad so tasty!'

<https://wildmuskoka.com/blogs/recipes/spruce-tip-infused-peanut-sauce>

Respectful Harvesting Protocols

“Our Elders remind us that we are related to everything around us: the earth, the plants and the animals. We came last. Our existence is dependent on our relatives and we must always remember to give respectful thanks when we harvest. Prior to going out to harvest, we must first have the knowledge of how to harvest without harming. We need to consult with community to make sure we are stewards of the land, and not destroying a sensitive area or denuding a community harvesting location. For example, in harvesting birch bark we consult our Elders to find out protocols (only take what you need), the correct time of year (in spring when the sap is running), how deeply to cut (just short of the cambium layer), what part of the tree (the north side is the thickest – a piece with few knots) and what tools to use (traditionally stone knife – modern steel knife). You might also need to know where the stand of large birch trees are. Finally, equipped with this basic knowledge, we can prepare to harvest. Different nations have different protocols for showing respect in harvesting but generally the idea of giving thanks is universal. Some nations have gathering songs traditionally sung by women while harvest. Similarly, some nations use drum songs prior to harvest to honour our relatives, the plant people.” (excerpt from SD #83 Aboriginal Education, Aboriginal Protocol for Respectful Harvesting)

Plant Harvesting Tips, from book, *Feasting for Change* (www.indigenousfoodsvi.ca)

- There are knowledge keepers who have practised and learned from their elders and from practise on how to successfully and respectfully harvest plants.
- Could bring an offering such as water (traditional offerings are the tobaccos plant) for Mother Earth and offer a prayer and thanks before harvesting.
- Try to harvest in the morning,
- Be gentle and tread softly, plants are living.
- Take only what you need and leave some for the animals.
- Share your harvest with others.
- Don't pollute

...and from , Alaska Native Healers,

(http://accs.uaa.alaska.edu/files/botany/publications/1999/Medicinal_Flora_Alaska_Natives.pdf)

- Think about or say your intentions when gathering plants and leave something after you disturb them. Talk to the plants and share your plans for usage.
- Traditionally people learn how to use plans by going out with someone else who uses them.
- The time of year when you harvest plants is important. Different parts of the plant are storing at different times of the year. Know your intended use of the plant and when it is most appropriate to harvest that plant.
- The plants show themselves in abundance when they want to be picked. If plants are scarce in an area in an area, it may be best to search somewhere else rather than pick the few plants that were found.

Safety Tip

Ask someone or refer to a plant identification book or plant cards if you are unsure if a plant is edible.

To our online families,

In this mail out package you will have received a spirit stone. The idea behind this is that we were hoping you will be inspired to create a gratitude/spirit stone for someone that you are grateful to have in your life.

In your fall mail out packages you would have received some art supplies. The acrylic paints you received in our first mailout of the year would be sufficient to paint spirit/gratitude stones. The acrylic paints are perfect for creating your gratitude/spirit stone.

Materials needed:

- Smooth flat rocks
- Paints (acrylic paints work best)
- Brushes (depending on what you wish to create)
- Sealant to protect your art (optional, helpful if keeping outside)
- Palette for mixing Colors



Most importantly have fun with your creations!

We look forward to seeing your fabulous artwork

Tips for rock painting:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryf4xXRucdU>



🌿 Kwak'wala Nature Scavenger Hunt 🌿

Find each item below in nature and say its name in Kwak'wala!

wilkw (red cedar) – Look for its strong, fragrant bark.



giwas (deer) – Look for hoof prints or tracks.



gwa'wina (raven) – Watch for a black bird soaring overhead.



kani (mushroom) – Look near logs and shady areas.



Tsalis (sun) – Feel its warmth and see its golden glow.



damsxi (ocean) – Listen to the waves; what do they tell you?



tla'yi (black bear) – Look for signs like paw prints or statues.



kamdzakw (salmonberry) – Can you spot these berries?



k'wikw (eagle) – Scan the sky for this powerful bird.

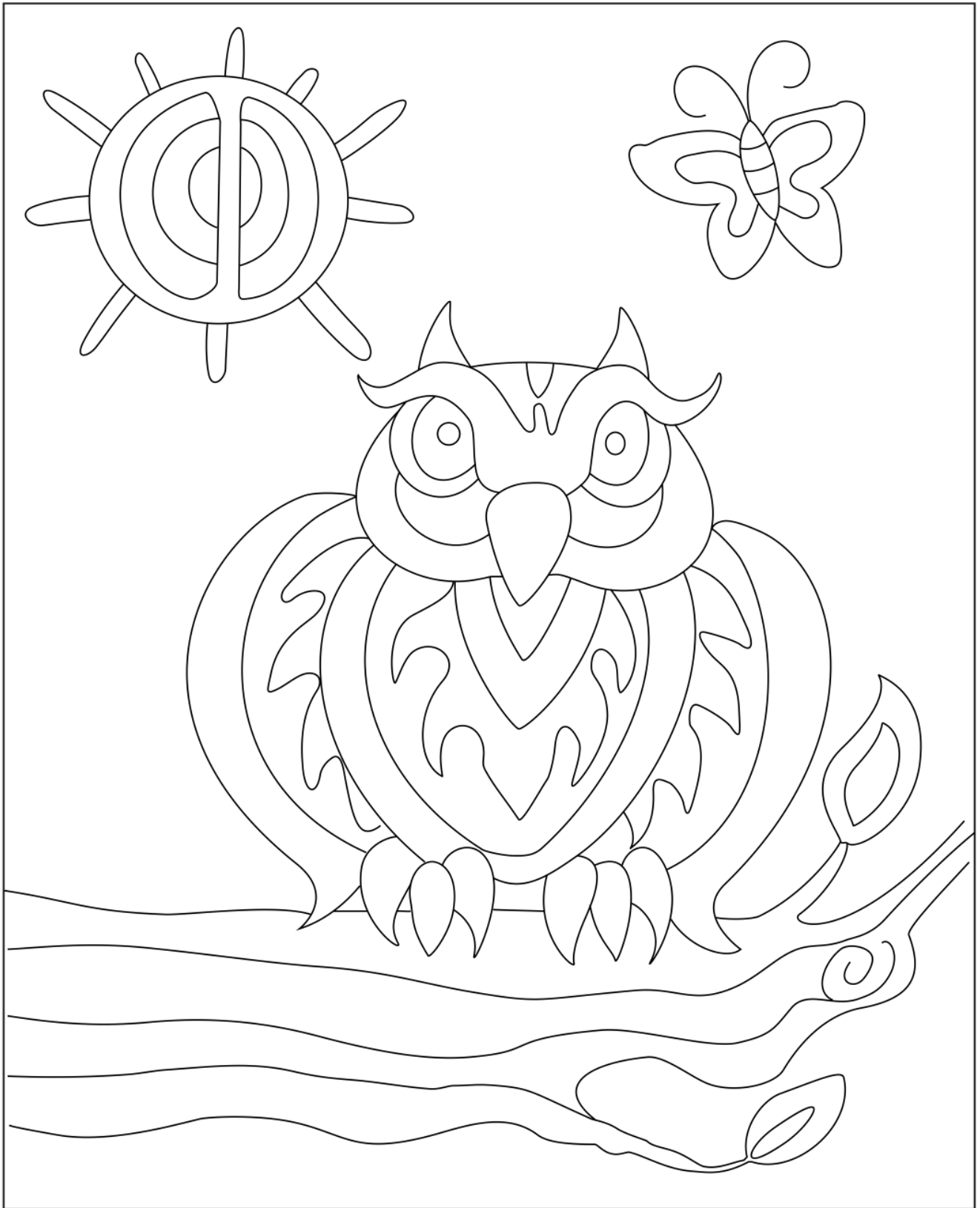


The Kwak'wala language is the traditional language spoken by the 18 Kwakwaka'wakw tribes who live on the lands ranging from Northern Vancouver Island SE to mid-Island and includes the smaller islands and inlets of Smith Sound, Johnstone Strait and Queen Charlotte Strait.

1 Kēya mawka? How about you?	2 Ji paw baeñ I am not fine	3 Mēyawshin Good	4 La pen dayawn I am sad	5 Ni nishtōhtehn I understand	6 La pen dayawn I am sad
7 Tapwā ōtā For sure	8 ____ niwēkin I live in (place)	9 Jinē kēshitāō Dinner is cooked	10 ____ niwēgin I live in (place)	11 Marcē Thank you	12 Kipāhtahṭin I hear you
13 Bōñ swair Good night	14 Kamañ sa vaa? How are you?	15 Kipāhtahṭin I hear you	16 Bōñ swair Good night	17 Kēya mawka? How about you?	18 Kamañ sa vaa? How are you?
19 Tapwā ōtā For sure	20 Jinē kēshitāō Dinner is cooked	21 Ji paw baeñ I am not fine	22 Marcē Thank you	23 Ji baeñ I am fine	24 ____ niwēgin I live in (place)
25 Mēna mātahwā Play it again	26 Ni nishtōhtehn I understand	27 ____ niwēkin I live in (place)	28 Mēna mātahwā Play it again	29 Mēyawshin Good	30 Ji baeñ I am fine



Ōhōw | Owl | Hibou



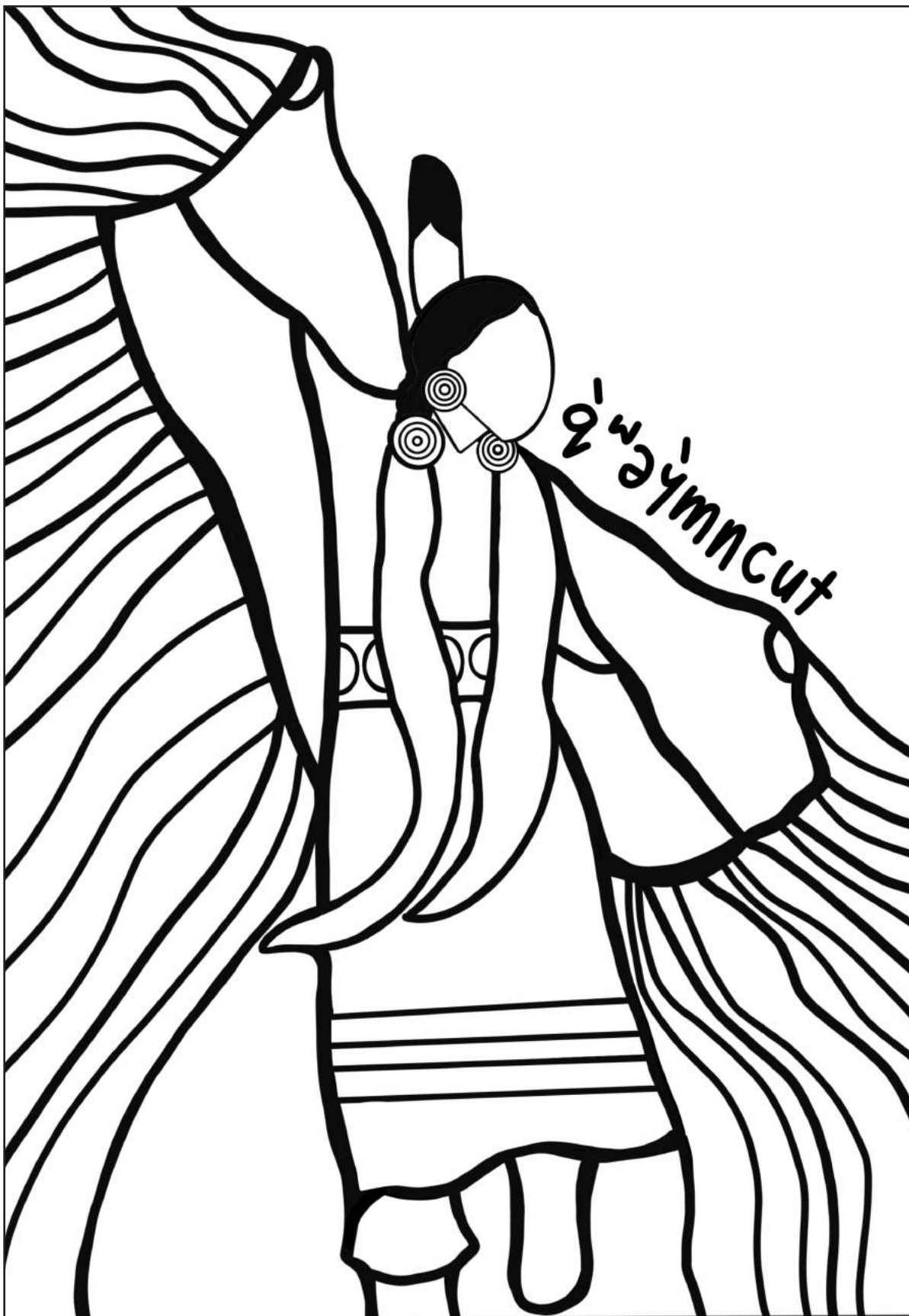
NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS
Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.

by/par Donna Langhorne

INDIGENOUS THÉÂTRE
THEATRE AUTOCHTONE

Cree translation/traduction by/par Solomon Ratt

Q'wəym'ncut | Dancer | Danseuse



NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS
Canada is our stage. Le Canada en scène.

by/par Kara Froese

INDIGENOUS THÉÂTRE
THEATRE AUTOCHTONE

Syilx translation/traduction by/par Kara Froese