

Multicultural Art Series

The Art of the Eskimo: An Arctic adventure

Grades 6- 12 (23 Min)

Summary

The Art of the Eskimo: An Arctic adventure brings warmth to the northern tribes; emphasizing their inter-connectedness to the animals they lived with and to nature itself. The program focuses on the Eskimo's mask art, which was used in dances that demonstrated the relationship between human and animal, Eskimo and nature.

During the program, viewers get a sense of what it is like to endure long dark winters with no sunlight, and how such times gave rise to create arts and crafts. The program closes with a look at modern Eskimo art and its relationship to traditional roots and world markets.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how Eskimos rely on animals to survive and how they respect those animals.
- Learn about the complexity of Eskimo mask art and its social value.
- Learn how influences from the outside world changed, or didn't change the Eskimo community and art practices.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the Eskimo's reliance on whaling and the use of ivory, both which are denounced by environmental groups today.
2. Do you think it is strange that the Eskimos made their hunting gear as beautifully as possible to please the animals they hunt? Why do they do this?
3. What do you think it would be like not seeing the sun for several months at a time?
4. Discuss the fact that masks of the Eskimos were only be worn by men.
5. Do you think European and Russian influence had a negative or positive effect on Eskimo art?