

BkM Art Hangouts  
Process

# Goals

In Art Hangouts, learners will:

- Look closely at a work from the collection
- Explore new artistic processes through close looking, conversation, and art-making
- Reflect on their own art-making processes

In this lesson, learners will:

- Observe Wendy Red Star's image of *Pretty Eagle*
- Create an annotated photograph
- Consider how images can hold history and stories
- Consider the roles of context and perspective in a work of art

## Materials

- Photograph of a person who is significant to you
- Pens or markers
- Stickers or tape



BkM Art Hangouts are adapted from a series of virtual classes that took place in spring 2021. These thirty-minute lesson plans are designed for teachers and caregivers to engage learners with works from our collection and to explore hands-on, artistic processes. Lessons are created for ages 9–14, but can be adapted for any age group. In each lesson, participants will look closely at a work of art, consider how an artist finds inspiration, and create their own artworks inspired by these approaches. Art Hangouts are open ended, and students are invited to continue working on their projects even after the lesson ends.

## Wendy Red Star

Apsáalooke (Crow), born 1981

Wendy Red Star's *1880 Crow Peace Delegation* series features the artist's notations about Native heritage, history, and identity, handwritten on reproductions of Charles Milton Bell's photographs of Crow leaders. Bell took the original photographs in 1880, during a historic meeting of the Crow delegation with the U.S. government in Washington, D.C., to negotiate the expansion of the Northern Pacific Railroad through the Crow reservation. Soon afterward, these photographs began to circulate as part of a stereotyped, commercialized, and flattened understanding of Native American leadership.

The artist's notes elucidate the meaning of various costume elements, educating non-Indigenous viewers while commenting on white Americans' ignorance of Native American culture. Red Star also includes information about each Chief: anecdotes of bravery, personal details, and a note about how Pretty Eagle's body was kept for seventy-two years at the American Museum of Natural History, a potent institutional critique. This series includes five additional portraits of these five leaders; for more information, visit [wendyredstar.com](http://wendyredstar.com).

## ● Part 1: Look!

Invite students to look at Wendy Red Star's portrait of [Déaxitchish / Pretty Eagle](#) and compare it to [Charles Milton Bell's photograph](#). Teachers may zoom in to view the photos close up.

→ What is similar about these photographs? What is different?

This photograph depicts Pretty Eagle, an Apsáalooke (Crow) leader. Red Star, who is also Crow, highlights parts of the leader's garments and accessories and draws attention to the markers of Pretty Eagle's identity and status. The highly symbolic clothing and dress tell a story of his importance and his accomplishments.

→ What can we learn from Wendy Red Star's artwork that we can't from Charles Milton Bell's photograph? How do Wendy Red Star's annotations change your understanding of the image?

Wendy Red Star noticed that Charles Milton Bell's photographs were being used by all sorts of people, sometimes for commercial purposes. For instance, she recognized a Crow leader's image on a label for a popular brand of tea. She wanted to contextualize the image by adding culturally specific details, such as the sitter's name, accomplishments, and contributions to his community.

→ Why do you think Wendy Red Star might have wanted to add these details?

→ How do you think Wendy Red Star might have felt when she saw images of her ancestors on a package of tea? How might you feel?

## ● Part 2: Explore!

Wendy Red Star added annotations to existing photographs of Crow leaders. Her text, drawn in red pen, contextualizes the images by sharing information about the subject and his highly symbolic clothing.

→ How will you annotate your photograph so you can share what people might not know by just looking?

**Step 1: Choose an existing photograph.** The subject can be you or a significant person in your life. It does not have to be someone you know personally, but you should have a connection to the person or share some aspects of your identity.

→ How can your personal knowledge expand the meaning of the photograph?

→ Example: I chose a photograph of myself as a child. Through annotations, I explain the setting, my clothing, and tell the story behind the photo.

**Step 2: Consider the information you want to share.**

→ What are some important things you want to share about the person in the photograph?

→ What can you say about clothing, pose, accessories, or other markers of identity?

→ Do you need to add context or information to what is happening in the photo?

→ What questions do you have about that person?

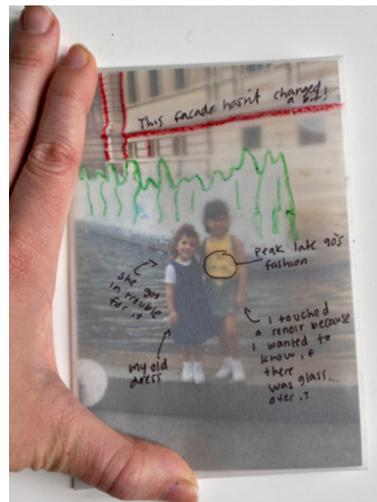
→ Do you need to do research to learn more information?

**Step 3: Annotate your photograph.** Add text and images to your photograph.

→ How will you draw attention to certain aspects of your photo?

→ Tip: If you're using an original or very old photograph, you might consider making a photocopy of it, or using a layer of vellum or tracing paper to make your annotations.

Project in Progress ↓

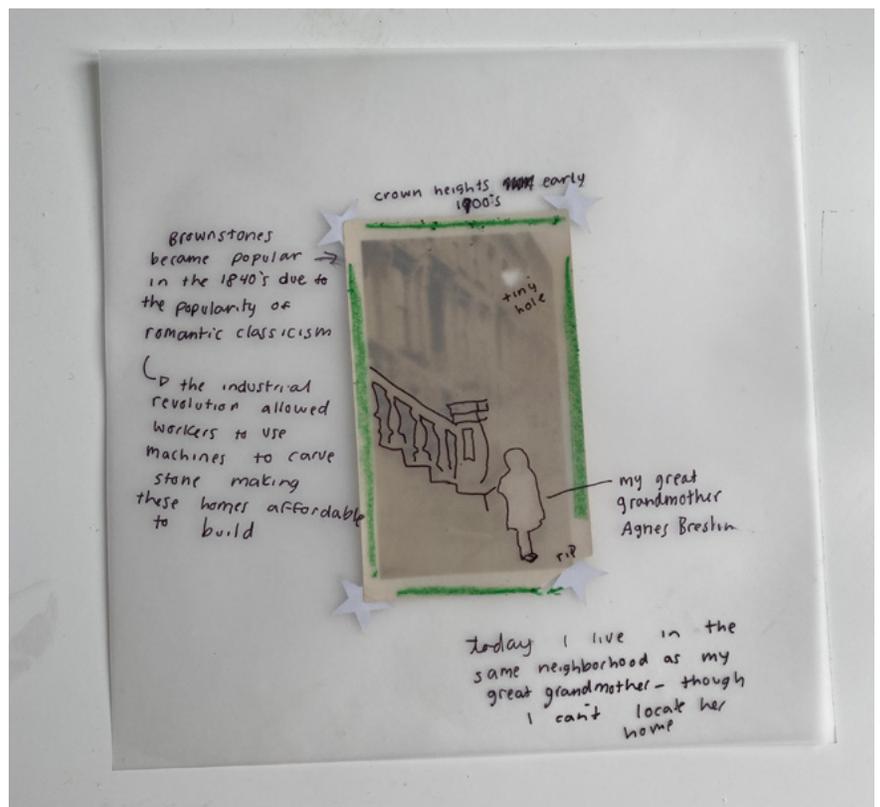


## ● Part 3: Reflect!

What new things did you discover about the subject of your photograph through this process? Did you learn anything new about yourself?

Do you think the context you've added through annotations will change the way someone will understand the photograph? Why or why not?

A Finished Project! ↓



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This resource was written by Sarah Dinkelacker, Curriculum Consultant and Teaching Artist, with assistance from Stacey Kahn, School Partnerships Coordinator and coordinator of the Art Hangouts initiative. Additional assistance provided by Michael Reback, School Programs Manager.