



VIRTUAL EXHIBIT

MARCH 11 TO MAY 12, 2021

# Walking Gently: Spirit Stories and the 13 Moons

Leah Dorion and Gary Sutton

Image Credit: Left: 'Marijke' (detail) by Gary Sutton, 2017  
Right: '12th Moon' (detail) by Leah Dorion, 2019



## ART REFLECTION

A RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS

GRADES 7 - 12

gallery@501

FESTIVAL PLACE  
Cultural Arts Foundation

STRATHCONA  
COUNTY

“Walking Gently: Spirit Stories and the 13 Moons features the work of two Métis artists, Leah Dorion (from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan) and Gary Sutton (from Redwood Meadows, Alberta). Dorion and Sutton create captivating storytelling in their paintings using vibrant colours and symbolism to reflect both a contemporary expression of Métis culture and the interconnectedness of all life.”

– Kris Miller, Gallery@501 Coordinator

[Experience the exhibition virtually](#)

gallery@501

#120 - 501 Festival Avenue,  
Sherwood Park, AB T8A 4X3  
strathcona.ca/artgallery  
780-410-8585

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Linder Hamer. Gary Sutton, 2017, 36" x 48" acrylic on canvas (detail).  
Exhibition: Walking Gently: Spirit Stories and the 13 Moons

Gary Sutton is a Métis artist from Ontario working in Alberta. His paintings are in the Woodland Style, also known as legend or medicine painting, and is generally used by First Nations people in Canada to convey visions, myths or stories.

### Watch and listen

Hear directly from the artist and pay attention to the symbols, the meaning of colour, and connecting black lines he describes in this [video](#).

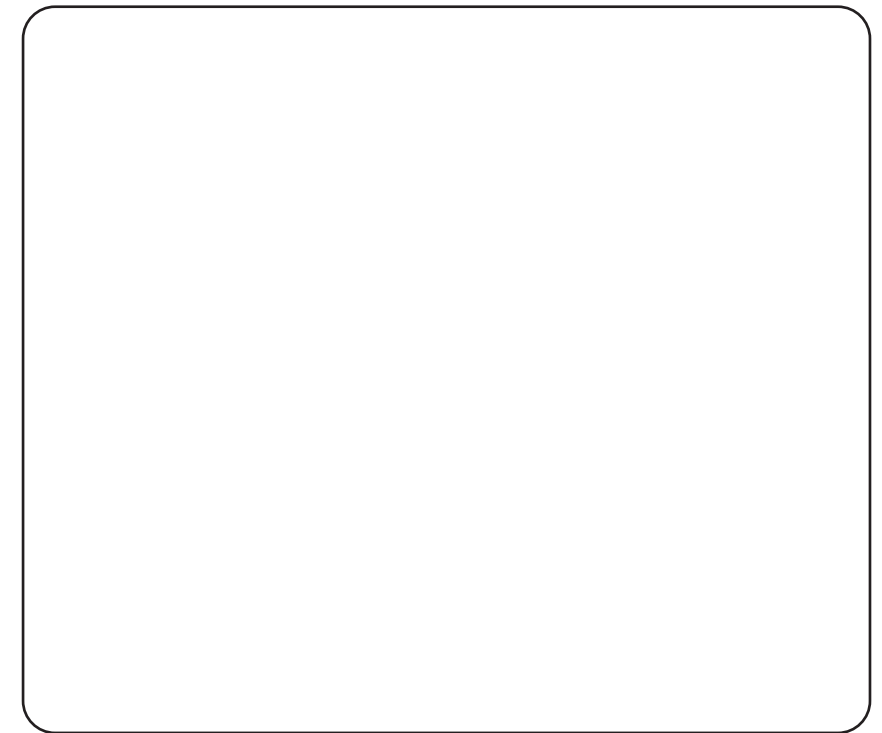
### Creative response

Pick at least two animals, two colours, one plant, and any other symbols that you think best represent you in this moment in time. Draw them in a composition.

*\*Art tip:* In the traditional Woodland Style, black lines are used as a communication or connection line. Consider how you will connect the symbols in your drawing.

### More resources:

[Read more about Gary Sutton.](#)



### Discuss

- Are there any common or repeating symbols amongst your classmates?
- Did you include symbols that represent other people in your life?
- What symbols in your drawing/sketch do you think will never change?



*Berry Picking Moon.* Leah Dorion, 2020, 30" x 40" acrylic on canvas.  
Exhibition: Walking Gently: Spirit Stories and the 13 Moons

“For generations, Indigenous women connected with the moon for teachings and guidance. The related moon teachings have been the source of women’s wisdom and traditional cultural knowledge. The moon known by many Elders as, “Our Grandmother,” marked the passage of time as she travelled around the night sky. All women naturally cycle with the moon as “life givers.”

- Leah Dorion

Leah Dorion is a teacher, painter, filmmaker and writer, from Saskatchewan and of Métis heritage. Leah paints stories of the “Grandmother Moon”, as it is known in Métis tradition.

### Watch, listen and imagine

[Watch this video](#) of Leah Dorion talking about one of her paintings, *Berry Fasting*.

What is your first impression of Leah’s paintings? How would you describe the style of her artwork?

What makes this artwork:

- narrative?
- decorative?
- harmonious?

Based on the artist’s description of the painting *Berry Fasting*, what symbols do you recognize in *Berry Picking Moon* (pictured left)?

Heighten your senses. What would you smell, hear, feel, if you were a character in this painting?

[Watch this video](#) to learn more about *Berry Picking Moon*.

### Discuss with your class

Leah Dorion’s paintings depict and share the story of important roles women play in Métis heritage.

- What role do women play in your family and in your community?
- Aside from painting, what are some ways in which we can share knowledge and stories with each other?

### More resources:

[Read more about Leah Dorion.](#)



*Vision Moon*. Poem banner (detail).  
Exhibition: Walking Gently: Spirit Stories and the 13 Moons

The poems shared in this art show were created at the same time the visual artwork was developed and they are connected to a specific moon teaching. The poetry and visual artwork were blessed by Grandmother Elders who still practice and carry the moon teachings, protocols, and ceremonies.

Read Leah Dorion's poem *Vision Moon*.

### Vision Moon

Dreams, visions, and feelings, Our inner potential,  
Everywhere we go,  
In everything we see,  
Pray, meditate, ask for inspiration, Go inward,  
Seek to find the truth,  
Our strength from spirit power, Finding the seeds,  
Planted inside all human beings, Receive the visions,  
When the heart is open,  
There is nothing to fear,  
When you believe it will appear.

- Leah Marie Dorion

### Discuss

- What is the mood of the poem?
- What does the poem invite the reader to do?

### Creative response

It's your turn to look inward and envision your dreams and inner potential. Read the poem again if you need to and draw your vision in this moon.

