Black & Indigenous
with artwork by Wapahkesis

look closely
Take a whole minute to look closely at the artwork by Wapahkesis.

▶ What images, words, and colors do you see?
▶ What materials do you think this artwork is made of?

one-of-a-kind medallions
Indigenous beadworkers create one-of-a-kind, hand-beaded medallions that you can't find in any store. Medallions combine traditional beadworking techniques with inspiration from bling and chains in Black hip-hop culture. They often depict pop culture images, sports teams, and tribe's logos. Rocking a unique medallion shows Native pride.

▶ How are medallions connected to both Indigenous and Black culture?
▶ Based on this artwork, what do you think the artist is proud of?

art activity
What parts of who you are are you proud of? How would you show that in an image? Draw your own one-of-a-kind medallion to show your pride in your identity. Using a pencil, trace the rim of a cup to make a circle on paper. Sketch and color your image. You can cut it out and put it on a string to wear and show your pride.

meet the artist
Wapahkesis is a Nihithaw and Afro-Caribbean artist. They are a member of Lac La Ronge First Nation in Saskatchewan, Canada. They say, "I wanted to emphasize solidarity between Black Folks, African Diasporic Folks, and Indigenous people to Turtle Island."

▶ If you could meet the artist, what questions would you ask?

Wapahkesis' story*
https://fiveoaksmuseum.org/ua-wapahkesis/

After you listen to Wapahkesis's story, reflect on these quotes:

"When I was beading, I was putting my thoughts and good medicine into my beadwork."
"Black and Indigenous liberation on this land is deeply connected."

▶ How would you explain what the artist is saying in your own words?

*Content Note: 'Wapahkesis’ story contains complex, sensitive topics including genocide, police shooting, and suicide. Take time to reflect together on how it makes each of you feel and talk about what questions come up. You can preview the transcript at the link provided.