

American Indian Heritage Day

at the BULLOCK MUSEUM

Bison Hide Art

OVERVIEW

Some American Indian groups recorded their histories by painting on bison hides. They used pictures and symbols, called pictographs, to tell stories of events that happened to them. They also created calendars, called winter counts, with one picture for each year showing the most important event from the year. Observe the bison hide art pictured below. What events are taking place? What animals are represented in the story? In this activity, we will be creating our own "bison hide art" to tell a story.



Shunka Ishnala (Lone Dog), Yanktonai. About 1870. National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. Photo by Janine Sarna Jones.

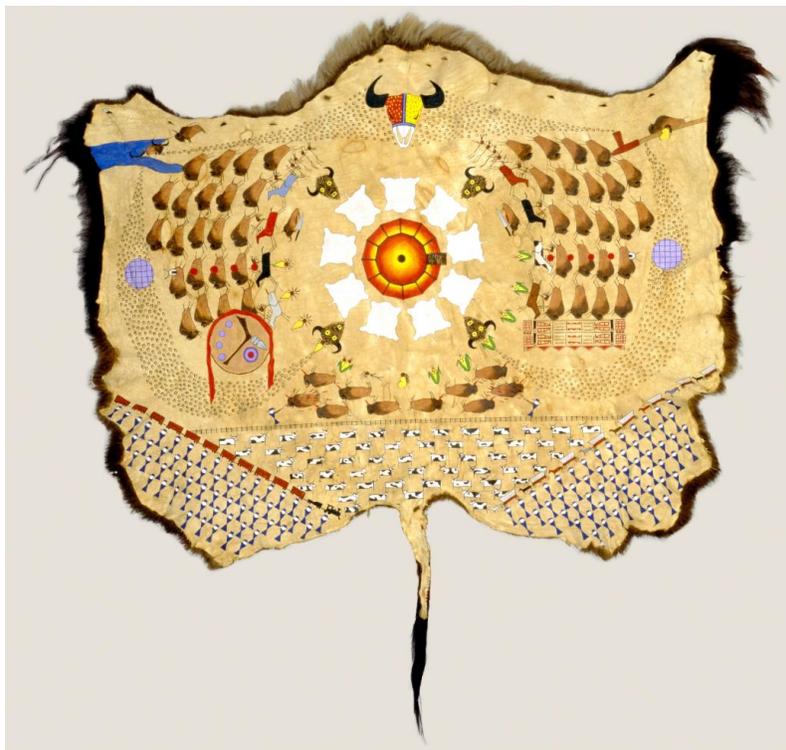
Learn About It

Visit these pages from the National Museum of the American Indian to explore more about bison hide art.

[Buffalo Hide Painting](#)

[What Story Does it Tell?](#)

[Lone Dog's Winter Count](#)



Buffalo Hide, National Museum of American History.

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Make It

Materials:

- Construction paper, paper grocery bag, or fabric
- Scissors
- Markers/crayons

Instructions:

Step 1- Choose a material to use to become your "hide" canvas. Brown construction paper, a grocery sack or fabric will work.



Step 2- Cut the paper/material to the bison hide size and shape you need to create your story.



Step 3- Use markers/crayons to tell your own story or make a calendar of your life on the paper or fabric. Select symbols that represent you, such as a cougar because you are a fast runner. This example shows a flower that represents the artist.



Step 4- Continue selecting symbols that represent important people or events in your story. This example shows the story of the artist moving from Kansas to Texas. Continue to always share your own story!

