



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2017 Volume I: The Illustrated Page: Medieval Manuscripts to New Media

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## **Bringing Alive the Art of the Past: Modern Tattoos and Illuminated Manuscripts**

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In this unit, high school students will look at medieval illuminations in the *Book of Kells* and today's Celtic inspired tattoos to see how art of the past influences art in the present. One commonality among my students is their love of tattoo art. Many are "tatted up," and they take great pride in the images that decorate their bodies. Many of the images within my students' tattoos have cultural and historical backgrounds that have the potential to enhance the overall meaning and appreciation of their tattoos. Strategies in art criticism, visual literacy, journal writing and the production of art will support the unit. The main theme in the unit is to explore how text and images support or conflict in a work of art. Intellectually developing the ability to read images will enhance students' creative ability to produce more innovative and meaningful works of art. Activities in the unit include journal writing that will lead the student into self-discovery, and drawing lessons that will provide a platform of self-expression. This unit addresses the socio-emotional aspects of learning that schools often omit. Elements of this unit could be used language arts, creative writing, literature, history, and social studies.

(Developed for Advanced Drawing & Painting, grades 10-12, and Foundations of Art, grades 9-12; recommended for Visual Arts, grades 6-12)

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