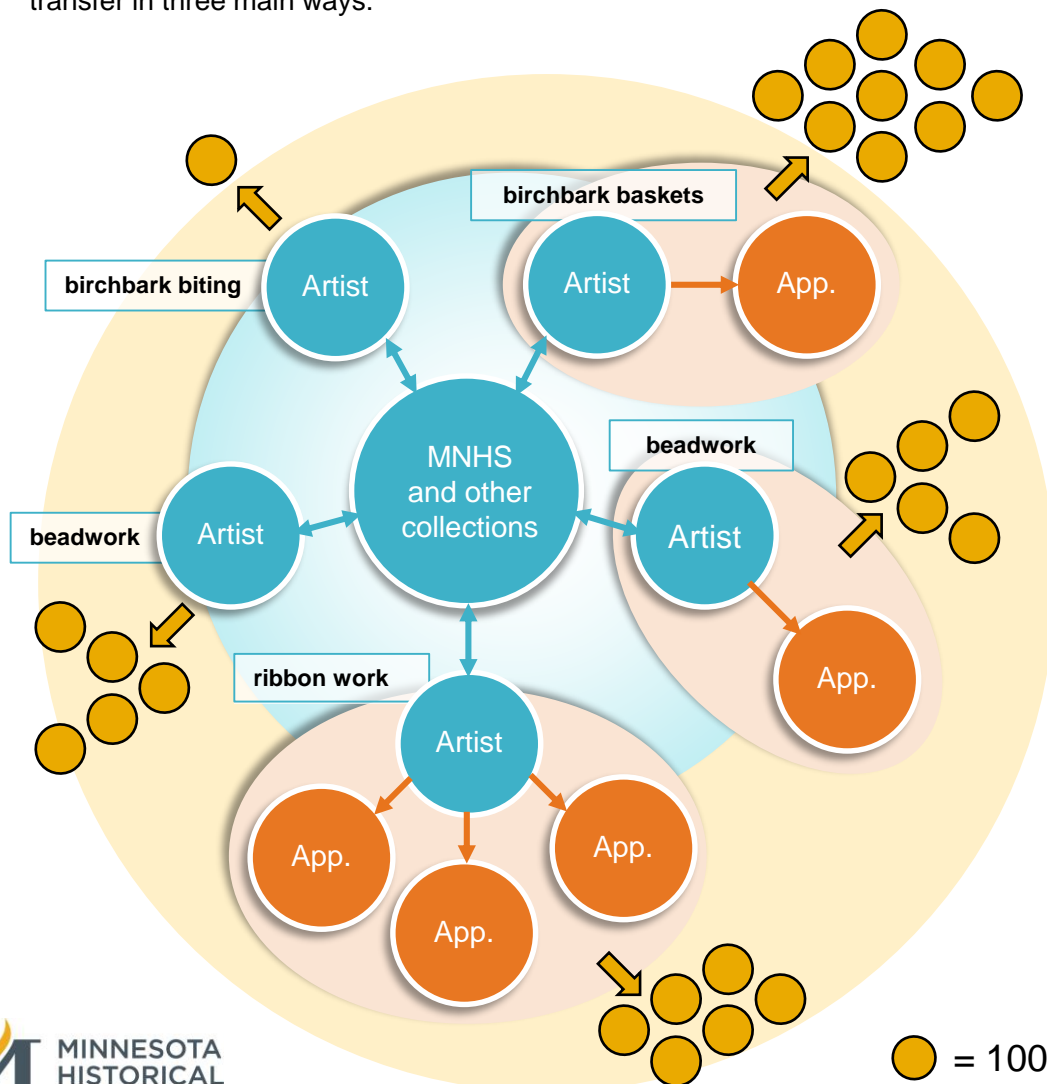


# Native American Artist-In-Residence program

*How is cultural knowledge transferred between MNHS, artists, and their communities?*

Transfer of cultural knowledge during NAAIR's first three years

NAAIR's relationships with their artists-in-residence are the foundation of the program's cultural knowledge transfer. With the support of MNHS staff, the artists-in-residence study their cultural patrimony in MNHS's collections, and then share the knowledge they gained with their community. The diagram below is based on the ways that artists chose to share their learning during NAAIR's first three years. During this time, NAAIR facilitated knowledge transfer in three main ways:



**1. Between MNHS and artist** — In its first three years, NAAIR worked with five artists. The transfer of knowledge between MNHS and the artists-in-residence is bi-directional. Through their relationship with MNHS, artists gain access to numerous cultural objects; likewise, MNHS learns more about the cultural significance of the objects in their collections. Artists also about their cultural patrimony from each other, and from elders with whom they have relationships.

*"It really didn't dawn on me until I went into the collections and I could hold these things in my hands. The intergenerational transfer was not just from me to my apprentices. Just to touch something that a Dakota person had made 150 years ago brought that idea of responsibility forward to me."*  
—Artist-in-residence

**2. Artist to apprentice** — Three of five artists in NAAIR's first three years chose to work with apprentices. Two artists worked with one apprentice each, and the third artist worked with three apprentices — for a total of five apprentices. Like artists-in-residence, apprentices have the opportunity to interact with objects in MNHS's collections. Apprentices also receive hands-on teaching from artists about their cultural art form.

*"The apprenticeship inspired and motivated me to pass on my knowledge and skills to others, not just to the younger generation. There's a whole generation [older than me] that didn't learn how to do beadwork because of colonialism."* —Apprentice

**3. Artist/apprentice to wider community** — With support from MNHS, artists in NAAIR's first three years showcased their work at Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post, Lower Sioux Agency, the Minnesota History Center, and at some Native-owned art spaces and businesses. MNHS also supports artists to attend larger events to showcase their work, such as the Great Lakes Culture Keepers convening. In total, in NAAIR's first three years, artists engaged more than 2,500 community members through these showcase opportunities.