



LOOK! THERE'S A UNICORN! EDUCATION GUIDE

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

(one 45-minute class period)

Students will view the video and answer questions that have been placed on the board. After a class discussion, students will use Worksheet 1: You Can Imagine a Mythical Creature to imagine and invent their own hybrid creature. Students will see several demonstrations on methods of arranging parts to make a whole, ideas for rethinking the use of parts, and methods for attaching parts together. Then students will gather some materials from the recycling and craft parts boxes, and play/experiment with trying out various arrangements to recreate their creature in 3-D form. After construction, when their creatures are finished they will use Worksheet 2: There's a Unicorn in the Forest! to consider elements of surprise in preparation for how they would like to display their hybrid creation.

Before Viewing

Introduce the scope of the lesson to students, sharing the key concepts, critical questions, and objectives. Share the quote on the board with students and ask students to think about it. Today's artist says, "Play is another word for experimenting." That is what she does when she makes art. When you make art does it feel like playing? How is experimenting like playing? Allow students to share their ideas. Let students know they will get to play- and experiment- with materials like the artist they will learn about.

Have the following questions on the board, ready for watching the film. You might also hand them out on a sheet for the older grades. Tell students to listen for the answers, then pause the video as each question is answered and ask for student responses. Use the discussion guide to help with the answers.

Discussion Guide for Teachers

1. Why does Calder Kamin use trash for her artwork?
Calder Kamin says it is her "mission" to use garbage and turn it into something beautiful, because people create garbage and so she thinks people should clean it up. She also says, "Nature never wastes; that's why I reuse. That's my mission."
2. Why does Calder Kamin make a unicorn for her sculpture?
She sees a giant troll built of wood in the area, and is inspired to create another "mythical beast", since a troll is a mythical creature, too.
3. What does "mythical beast" mean?
Mythical means imaginary or pretend. It is something that is not real. Beast is a term used for animals, and sometimes means a large creature that may be a little scary but it doesn't have to be scary.
4. What did Calder Kamin like to make when she was young?
Calder Kamin took her art box everywhere, and she asked people "What is your favorite animal?" and then made a little animal out of clay for the person.
5. What are some of the recycled ingredients Calder Kamin uses?
She uses sleds, marker caps, plastic bottles, fast food dishes, tiny plastic toys, newspapers, beads from party necklaces, cans, etc.

View the full education guide at craftinamerica.org/guide/play and pbs.org/craft-in-america/education/play



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After Viewing

Allow students to ask questions and share thoughts about the artist. Let them know they will also be creating a mythical creature out of recycled materials.

Studio Production

(three 45-minute class periods)

Hand out Worksheet 1: You Can Imagine a Mythical Beast. On this sheet students will draw some favorite animals and then create a hybrid drawing by combining different parts of the different animals. Go over the worksheet with students and make sure they understand what to do. Referring to the visuals of hybrids, ask: What are some hybrids you see hanging on the board? Can you think of any others? Gather students for a demonstration on creating hybrids. Space the remaining demonstrations out when students appear to be ready for the next part of studio work.

Demonstrations

Drawing hybrids

Repeat the idea of hybrids being made from more than one species. Ask students what animals Calder Kamin's unicorn is created from. (It has the head, body, and legs of a horse. It has the horn of a narwhal or rhinoceros. It has the wings of a bird.) Demonstrate Worksheet 1 by showing students how you would sketch or doodle two animals, and then mix up their parts to make the hybrid.

Playful experimenting with materials

As students work on their sheet, pause to show them the boxes of loose parts. Show them what is available in the recycled parts box and the craft materials box of supplies. Hold up various parts and suggest how one item could be a body, another a leg, etc. As you lay parts on a table surface, rearrange them saying your ideas out loud: "This plastic soda bottle holder might make a good jellyfish...If I use this bottle for the body of my bear, the pipe cleaners would be very skinny legs. But I kind of like that" (or not). Encourage students to gather some materials to play and experiment with when they are ready. Let them know: You may return materials if after experimenting you think some are not right for your project, and try some different parts.

Connecting parts to make a whole creature

After students have played/experimented with arranging some materials, demonstrate connecting pieces. This will be experimental, too, as they play with different materials and try different connecting methods. Set up a glue gun in a place you will be able to monitor and demonstrate how to use a tongue depressor instead of a finger to "break" the glue thread and smooth the glue. Show the use of hole punches for plastic, cardboard, etc. and what they work on and what they do not. Demonstrate drilling, which will work for thicker plastic pieces or plastic in which a hole punch can't reach the desired location. To drill: First, clamp or use duct tape to attach the wood to what will be the drilling location surface. Show students how to tape their piece to be drilled (such as a plastic bottle) securely to the wood (so they have both hands to hold the drill) and then how to carefully place the drill and crank the handle to make the hole. Show methods and ideas for attaching pieces with wire, brass fasteners, tape, and/or glue. Ask students what works well and what is good and not so good about each method.

CRAFT IN AMERICA

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Finish with care

When students are almost finished, ask for a final check of their projects. Point out how Calder Kamin added wings to the unicorn so that people wouldn't climb on it and possibly get hurt (or hurt the artwork.) Talk about checking for rough or pointy parts on their creatures that can be fixed by bending inwards (such as wire) or trimmed. Have them consider "quality control" to make sure their creatures are fastened together well and will not fall apart when hung up or displayed. Help them reinforce connections where needed, or add last minute details.

CLOSING STRATEGIES

After students have finished their creatures, hand out Worksheet 2: There's a Unicorn in the Forest! Engage students in a discussion about how they can surprise people in school by where they place their creatures. Ask students how Calder Kamin surprised people by where she placed the unicorn. She states: "She's a really big surprise in the forest. People come off the trail just drawn to her."

Help students develop a plan for how to hang or place their creatures throughout school. They can use the back of Worksheet 2 for the following reflection activity.

Reflection

Students can research the element of surprise and extend the lesson by mapping the location of their creatures in school. Tell students they are researchers looking for mythical creatures. Using clipboards with paper and pencil, take a tour through the school as students find and record their own and others' creature locations. (The clipboards are useful and also tend to increase students' enthusiasm for acting as researchers.) They can make a sketched or doodled list or create a map with locations marked. Have students place a star on their page next to any creatures found in especially surprising hiding spots.

Assessment

In discussions with the class and with individual students throughout the lesson; by examining the students' worksheets; and by witnessing the students' studio work, it should be evident that the student:

- Understands that playing, or experimenting, with materials is a way of developing ideas for art making.
- Developed ideas for an imaginative creature.
- Imagined and implemented ways to surprise someone with an artwork in its design and/or its placement.

Additional Resources

Another Craft in America featured artist who uses recycled materials is Leandro Gómez Quintero. He creates models of vehicles that are in daily use in his hometown in Cuba.

Extensions

Consider creating an ongoing classroom recycling center; a large box in which students can add materials for use in projects. Such a collection may inspire future artworks.