

Surreal Hand Creatures



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Fantastic flora and fauna creations explore self, nature, and Surrealism

Surrealism as an art movement gained momentum following World War 1 and continues to thrive in the present day. Surrealism, a term that means "above or beyond what is real," is expressed artistically through many forms: painting, sculpture, photography, video, writing, and more. A common theme is exploring the subconscious mind through dreams, memories, and associations that connect places and things in unusual ways.

Surrealism is based on a degree of realism - we must be familiar with images and ideas before we arrange and transform them into something fantastic and out-of-this-world. "Self" is the most familiar source; beyond that, artists often look to common elements and inhabitants of nature, including plants and animals.

Surrealist Dorothea Tanning painted her pet dogs as companions with human attributes. Lenore Carrington used horses, hyenas, and other animals to indicate aspects of her personality. Frieda Kahlo said that she painted monkeys to represent the children she was not able to have.

For this project, students will look to the plant and animal kingdoms and create a surreal connection with a part of themselves: their hand. Start with a simple tracing and morph the outlined shape into a fantasy creature with the help of collage papers and craft items. While a particular animal might be favored, consider how individual traits such as flight, speed, and craftiness, for example, might be interpreted and possibly blended to create a true surreal piece of art.

As part of the story, students can name and describe their surreal hand creature through writing.



Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Materials (required)

Pacon Railroad Board, 11" x 14", 6-ply, 50 sheet assortment (13105-0659); share one across class

Pacon Tru Ray Construction Paper, 12" x 18", pkg of 50 sheets (11406-0079); share one across class

Printed paper, recommend:

Hygloss Animal Skin Tissue Assortment, 20" x 30", pkg of 20 sheets (11300-1003); share one across class

Pacon Fadeless Safari Prints, 12" x 18", 24 sheet assortment (12852-1018); share one across class

Roylco Design Paper, animal patterns, 8.5" x 11", pkg of 40 (11262-1020); share one across class

Craft Embellishments, recommend:

Creativity Street Wiggle Eyes Stack Pack, pkg of 560 (61766-1560)

Creativity Street Plumage Feathers, Bright, 1 oz pkge (83727-1021)

Sesame Street Yarn

Lion Brand Go for Faux Yarn, 64 yards, assorted colors (62818-)

Lion Brand Sesame Street Fuzzy Friends Yarn, 33 yds, assorted colors (02832-)

Creativity Street Sequin Mix, 4 oz (60718-1004)

Blick White Glue, 4 oz (23882-1004); share 12 across class

Blick Essentials Value Foam Brushes 1" (06027-1001); one per student

Westcott Soft Handle Scissors Teacher Pack, 5" blunt, 12 pair (58477-1005)

Prang Classic Fine Line Markers, tub of 96 (22308-1096); share one across class



Ready to order materials?

Go to www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plans/surreal-hand-creatures to access a product bundle for your convenience.

Preparation

1. Mix glue with a small amount of water; just enough to make it brushable. If too much water is used, it will weaken the materials being used. Store in an air-tight container until ready to be used.
2. Cut board into pieces to fit students' hand and wrist size, approximately 8" x 10" to 11" x 14".
3. As a warm-up exercise and to ignite imagination, have students brainstorm some of the qualities they admire and relate to in plants and animals. Think of physical attributes, behaviors, and attitudes. Create a list.
4. Gather supplies for collage and assemblage. Some suggestions:
 - Paper and fabric with prints or textures that look like animal prints or plant components.
 - Magazines or books with nature images.
 - Yarn, felt, pom poms, fluff, and scraps that resemble fur.
 - Wiggle eyes, feathers, sequins, silk flowers and leaves, furry craft stems, and other embellishments.

Process

1. Using a pencil, trace one or both hands and wrist onto a piece of railroad board, cardboard, or poster board. Working with a partner may make it easier to trace. Cut out hand shape with scissors. Keep scraps to use to create appendages such as a tail, wings, or ears and also to make a stand for the hand once it's completed.
2. Refer to the list of plant and animal traits and make a sketch of a plan for the surrealistic creature to be created. Gather supplies to accomplish the plan.
3. Create spots, stripes, or cover the hand with papers by tearing pieces and brushing the glue on the back side using a foam brush. Secure the paper in place, then brush more glue over the top. Use the same process for attaching fabric scraps. Allow pieces to overlap each other. A generous application of glue is preferred because it will provide strength for the hand creature once it has dried.
4. Attach embellishments other than paper using glue straight from the bottle. The thickness will help heavier materials stay in place. Use imagination to turn sequins into scales, yarn into manes, tails or vines, and tissue into gossamer wings.

NOTE: Because Surrealism is a balance between reality and fantasy, it is important to keep the hand recognizable as a hand. Fingers, even if decorated, should remain visible so that the viewer understands the connection between human and non-human portrayed in the creature.

5. If Surreal hand creatures are to be displayed on the wall, the back side does not need to be finished. However, if the hand will stand as a 3-dimensional assemblage, work the design to the back side as well. Allow to dry.
6. Design a stand for the creature using scrap pieces of board. Cut a strip, bend it, and form a slot stand at the base (A). If the creature is too heavy for just a base stand, create an easel-back stand (B) and (C).

Options

- Imagine a story to go with the surreal creature, giving it a name and describing its habits, its diet, its environment, etc. Attach the description to the back side or display alongside it.



Step 1: Trace hand(s) onto a piece of board and cut out using scissors.



Step 2: Attach paper collage-style by brushing glue mixed with a small amount of water to the back side, then over the front once it has been placed.



Step 3: Embellish with leaves, feathers, wiggle eyes, etc to further develop the look of the surreal hand creature.

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National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

Responding

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

