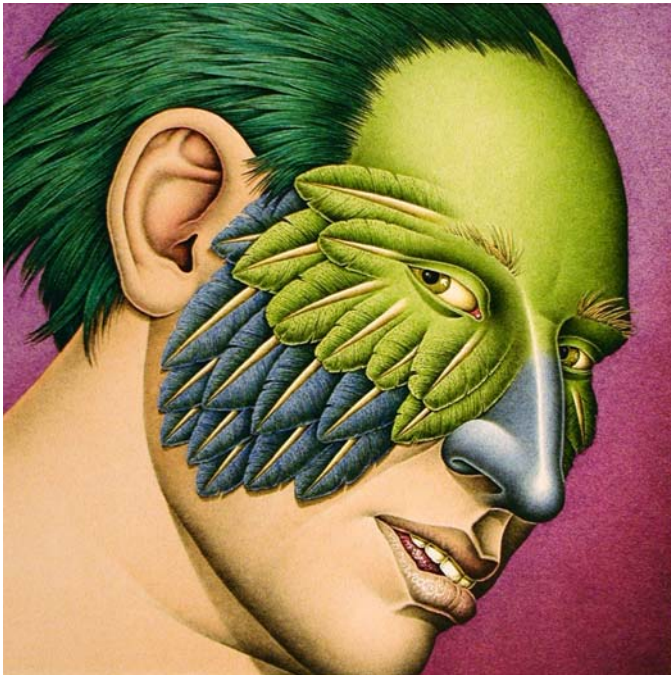


Purdue University Galleries
Educational Ideas and Activities 2004-2005
Written by Susan Uhlig

Creature Feature

8/30/04-10/10/04 Ringel Gallery

Creatures and beasts from the collection with room for visitors to add their own artworks to the display



Did you know?

- Animals have been depicted as subject matter in art since prehistoric people depicted animals on cave walls 30,000 years ago.
- Animals are used symbolically in art, such as: fish- knowledge; bird-transcendence and the soul; cow-nourishment; coyote-prankster; and dog-fidelity.
- John James Audubon was born in Haiti in 1785, raised in France, and came to the United States when he was eighteen to escape military duty.
- In order to capture life-like qualities of birds, Audubon chose not to stuff the birds but to string wires through freshly killed birds to pose them in more life-like positions.

In the Gallery suggestions for questions and focus

Standards 11 and 12 are met by physically going to the gallery and discussing the space and the people who set up the exhibition

Focus on **Media**- standard 3

- What kind of media is the artwork created in?
- How did the artist create it?
- How did the chosen media affect the meaning or mood of the artwork?
- Describe or reenact the process of its creation.
- Compare and contrast similar animals that use different media or approaches. What effect does the medium used have on your reaction to it?
- Which works use natural materials?

Focus on **Subject Matter**- standards 1, 2, 3

- Choose one work of art. Describe the artwork in detail.
- How is the creature represented? Choices can include naturalistic, expressionistic, abstractly, fancifully.

Focus on **Intention**- standards 3, 4, 5, 6

- There are masks, prints, illustrations, and paintings in the gallery. Why did the artist choose to create the creature in that particular medium? What purpose does the artwork serve?
- Does the size of the artwork affect your reaction of the subject matter or medium used? How?

In the Classroom *standards 7, 8, 9, 10*

- Tessellations One of the pieces in the exhibition is a tessellation of frogs. Look at more animal tessellations by M.C. Escher. Design your own animal tessellation.
- Animal Mobile Alexander Calder created abstract creature mobiles, such as *Lobster Trap* and *Spider*. Create a unique animal mobile, abstracting and simplifying the form.
- Animal Masks There are a few animal masks in the exhibition. Create a mask using natural materials depicting a specific animal.
- Exquisite Corpse The Surrealist artists invented a group game where each member draws a different part of an artwork without revealing what the previous artist had just drawn. This can have an animal focus to it. Fold a piece of paper into thirds. The top third will depict a head of an animal. Continue lines ¼” down into the middle section. Fold back top and pass to next person, who then continues the drawing, but doesn’t reveal the top part, by depicting the body of an animal. Continue lines ¼” down into the bottom section. Fold back to show only bottom section and pass to the next person, who then draws the legs of an animal. Once completed, the collaborative drawing can be revealed.
- Mythical Beasts Many creatures in myth have body parts from different animals put together. Create a collage using heads, bodies, legs, and tails from different animals. The website Switch Zoo (see below) allows the participant to create strange and mythical beasts with the click of the mouse.

Interdisciplinary Connections *standard 13*

- Audubon drew birds in a very naturalistic way, illustrating a variety of birds down to the most minute detail. Scientific illustrations of insects are also represented in the gallery. Using stuffed or real specimens (if possible) of birds, reptiles, insects or mammals, draw as accurately as possible, down to the precise details.
- Classify the creatures in the gallery. In what class, phylum, and genus do they belong?
- Some of the animals exhibit human traits, and others depict humans with animal features. Explore the use of personification and fantasy. What traits are being represented?

Selected Bibliography

Animals by Claude Delafosse and Gallimard Jeunesse with illustrations by Tony Ross. Moonlight Publishing Ltd., UK; 1994.

Interactive children’s book using transparent overlays on well-known works of art

Animals Observed by Brigitte Baumbusch. Stewart, Tabori and Chang, New York; 1999.

Children’s book using photographs and hand drawn reproductions of animal images from a variety of cultures and time periods

Animals Observed by Dorcas MacClintock. Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York; 1993.

Children’s book depicting a wide selection of animals in art, categorized by type of animal

John James Audubon by Margot Keam Cleary. World Publications Group, Inc.; 2004.

Websites:

<http://www.audubon.org/nas/jja.html> Site of the Audubon society, with information on birds and on John James Audubon

<http://switchzoo.com/> This is a child friendly site that allows the participants to create their own unique animal, switching body parts of various animals (ex. head of a dog, body of a pig, legs of a zebra, tail of a horse). There are also lesson plans for teachers