

Animals with a Message

Inspired By: Jo LaPorte and Ashley Mitchell

Topics: Science, History, Art

Grades: 3 and up

Estimated Time: 45+ minutes

Materials

Paper, thin cardboard, brads, Colored pencils &/or watercolor, thin sharpies, scissors, glue, hole punch. Optional: dowel rods & string

Key Terms

- **Interactive Art:** A form of art that involves the viewer interacting with the art.
- **Anthropomorphism:** To give human traits, emotions, or characteristics to non-humans.
- **Artistic Activism:** Using art to bring about social change.
- **Advocate:** To support or recommend publicly.
- **Slogan:** A short and striking statement, often used to advertise something.

Introduction

Artist Jo LaPorte creates animal paper dolls as a way for viewers to interact with the stories she shares about the Clark Fork River Basin in Montana. Her piece, Snow Geese Paper Dolls, was created to go along with the stories of the Snow Geese dying after landing in the Berkley Pit in Butte, Mt, which is filled with toxic water left over from mining. She imagined that if the geese could say something to the humans, they would advocate for clean water for all, not just humans.

Artist Ashley Mitchell creates paintings of animals wearing human clothing, often with slogans on them. She uses anthropomorphism, which causes the viewers to see the animals in a new way and gives the animals their own voice.

Process

Step 1: Choose an animal and brainstorm what message they might have. If we could understand them, what would they say to us? Choose something short and to the point like a slogan. For example: If a squirrel were to have a message it might be: "More Trees, Less Dogs."

Step 2: Either trace or draw your animal's shape. Draw the animal's features. Color the body. Using a fine tip sharpie try to match the animal's texture. Is it furry? Scaly? Smooth? Use different marks to make different textures.

Step 3: Cut out your animal. Cut the parts that you want to move like the legs and the arms. Trace all of the parts onto thin cardboard and cut the cardboard pieces out. Use glue to attach your moving parts to the cardboard pieces. Do not glue the main body yet.

Step 4: Create clothing for your paper doll by tracing the body onto a sheet of paper. Be sure to make your clothing slightly bigger than the body. Leave at least 4 fold tabs on the clothing to attach when finished. Use colored pencil/watercolor then write your message with fine-tip sharpie.

Step 5: Glue the cardboard and drawing of your main body. Place a dowel in between them before you stick them together. (The dowel is optional but is a great option if you want to use your doll as a puppet).

Step 6: Using a hole puncher, punch holes that connect your moving parts to your main body and use the brads to attach them.

Step 7: Cut out your clothing and be sure not to cut the fold tabs!

Reflection

- Share your paper animals and their message with others.
- Get together with some friends/classmates and create a puppet show with your paper dolls.
- Stage your paper animals and take photos
- Think about your artwork, what do you like about how it turned out? What would you do differently next time?
- Share your photos on AMM's community gallery!

Standards

- **Anchor Standard #1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- **Anchor Standard #3:** Refine and complete artistic work
- **Anchor Standard #6:** Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work
- **Anchor Standard # 7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work
- **Anchor Standard #8:** Construct meaningful interpretations of artistic work
- **Anchor Standard #10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art