

Anthropomorphism Paintings

Inspired By: Ashley Mitchell & Jo LaPorte

Topics: Math and Art

Grades: Grades 7th and up

Estimated Time: 60+ minutes

Materials

acrylic or tempera paint, canvas or wood panel & paintbrushes

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.

Intro

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.

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 copper. She imagined that if the geese could say something to the humans, they would advocate for clean water for all, not just humans.

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." What do you want your message to do? Your message can be to advocate for change and inspire others, or it may just be to make people laugh. Both are important! Sketch out your design.

Step 2: Find an image of an animal you want to paint on the internet. Copy the image onto a word document and adjust the size. You want your image to be half of the size of your canvas or wood panel. For example: If your canvas or wood panel is 8" X 10", you will want your image to be 4" X 5". If your canvas or wood is larger than 16" X 20", you will have to divide by thirds. Print your image in either black & white or color.

Step 3: Using a ruler, mark every inch on the top and bottom of your image, do the same for your sides. Connect your lines using pencil. On your canvas or wood panel, mark every two inches. Connect your lines, very lightly, just visible.

Step 4: Use your grid to draw your animal. The grid allows you to draw proportionately, and accurately. Start with the outline and work in. Your grid squares should all match up. Once you have everything drawn out, you will want to erase any grid lines that you can see.

Step 5: Now is the time to draw your item of clothing. If you have not sketched or planned your clothing on your animal, be sure to do so before you draw on your canvas or wood. Once you are confident with your design, lightly draw your clothing and slogan on your canvas or wood.

Step 6: Paint background to foreground. You will want to paint what is farthest away first and closest to the viewer last. Typically, your background will be painted first, then your animal, then your item of clothing, then your text on the clothing. You may need two coats of paint so don't rush. Once you have painted your animal, add your texture using a smaller brush and darker or lighter color (add either black or white to your animal color).

Reflection

- Share with your peers and discuss the choices you made- animals, messages, colors, etc...
- Display: People will love seeing these fun animal paintings!! Put them up in your school or share online.
- Share your work 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 #5:** Develop and refine artistic work for presentation
- **Anchor Standard #7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work
- **Anchor Standard #8:** Construct meaningful interpretations of artistic work •