

The American artist, Stuart Davis, once said, "A line must be thought of as a place where something is going on." Our fourth-grade art students certainly had a lot of interesting and exciting things "going on" in these line drawings of wild and exotic hairdos. This one-session exercise emphasized line, repetition, pattern, contrast, confidence, and originality.

After a short discussion at the chalkboard of the variety of line (straight, squiggly, spiraling, curly, zigzag, thick, thin, wavy, etc.) and how repetition of line can form bizarre patterns, students took pen in hand, began with a U-shaped curve (for the face) in the lower half of their 9" x 12" paper, and from

the forehead upward and outward serendipitously created these outrageous hairstyles.

Or the more "macho" ones in your class can try this: Draw an "inverted" U-curve at the top of the paper (as the bald pate of some grizzled character). As the bird's nest of a beard begins to emerge, students will discover another important aspect of good design—the element of *contrast* (exhibited here between the stark bald head and the elaborately patterned detail of the beard.)

Felt pens were used instead of pencils to encourage boldness and confidence in drawing, and to assuage the fear of making "mistakes" (which in our class are referred to as "happy accidents," an opportunity for a new idea or pattern to form). Discourage scribbling (the sign

of a lazy imagination) or too much overlapping of lines. Emphasize repetition: Make a wacky line, then repeat it at least a half dozen times before moving on to another idea.

To paraphrase the Swiss artist Paul Klee: Drawing is nothing more than "taking a line for a walk." Encourage the less-imaginative students to pretend their pen is like a dog that they are taking for a walk; only in this case, like an over-eager dog tugging at the leash, their pen is leading them and taking *them* for a walk. It works, and the results will be downright hair-raising! ■

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A Hair-Raising EXPERIENCE

by Ted Barlag



Line, repetition, pattern, contrast, confidence and originality were emphasized as students created wild hairdos and beards.