



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Elementary students will ...

- use the elements of shape and texture to create the bears.
- use Monet's technique of dabbing paint to show the texture of fur.
- create an artwork based on familiar objects in the environment.
- demonstrate flexibility in their design, in representational drawing and in the use of art materials.
- connect their art with other disciplines.

MATERIALS

- 9" x 12" light blue construction paper
- White tempera and thick paintbrushes
- 3" x 3" white paper for snowflakes
- Crayons, glue and scissors
- *Polar Bears* by Jason and Jody Stone. Blackbirch Press; 2000.

COOL POLAR BEARS: Dabbing on the Texture

by Jean O'Connell

Winter in Ohio was the perfect time for my second-graders to create their cool polar bears!

After reading *Polar Bears*, by Jason and Jody Stone (Blackbirch Press; 2000), we talked about the characteristics of polar bears. We discovered some interesting facts, such as polar bears are really black under all that white fur!

We looked at several photographs of polar bears, some from calendars and others from books. The students talked

After making basic shapes with white tempera paint, students used crayon to add dimension and detail.

about what they had seen polar bears doing at zoos, and we discussed other places we had seen the bears, such as the Coke® commercials that air around the holidays.

We became excited about painting some bears of our own. The students could paint one bear or a whole crowd.

First, I demonstrated how to use shapes to make just the head and shoulders of a bear. We used Monet's technique of dabbing paint so as to give the bear some texture on his fur. We used white tempera to paint a large white triangle in the center of a sheet of 9" x 12" blue construction paper.

Then, we painted smaller circles for the ears. We painted the shoulders attached to the bear, and dabbed on some large paws. We also added a few dabbed snowflakes in the air around the bear.

I gave a second demonstration on painting the whole body of bears. I painted some snow on which the bears could walk. Then I painted an oval for the body, a small triangle for the head, little round ears and long, thin rectangles for the legs. The same shapes were used to paint some baby bears.

After the students finished painting the basic bear shapes without small details, they began cutting small snowflakes to add to the background of their picture. During the next class period, we used black crayon to add a nose, claws and eyes. The nose was shaded a little to add some dimension. Some students gave their bears scarves and hats of various colors, and others chose to have their bears look more realistic.

The students enjoyed working on their bears, and learned about endangered animals and the arctic climate along the way. ■

Jean O'Connell is a visual art specialist at Fairfield West Elementary in Ohio.

