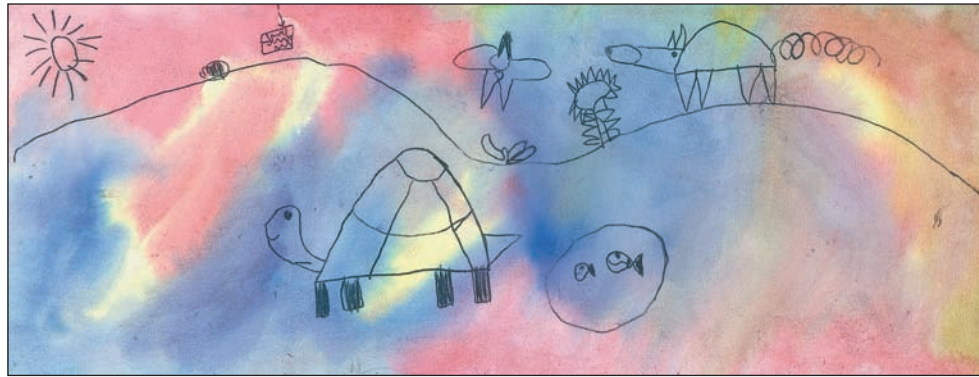


Literature is a wonderful motivator for art educators in sparking new lesson ideas. *Paul Klee: Animal Tricks, Adventures in Art* (Prestel Publishing, 2002), by Christian Rumelin, was such a find that I used it as the motivation for a first-grade animal painting/print-making/drawing lesson that incorporated many elements of art, as well as art history and aesthetics. *Animal Tricks* is part of the *Adventures in Art* series and is a playful examination of some of Paul Klee's works with a special audience in mind: children.

The pieces of art I focused on were *Where Eggs Come From ... and the Juicy Joint* and *Animal Tricks*. I chose to share these two pieces with my students because Paul Klee made them for a friend's daughter, Florina-Irene, who was seriously ill.

Klee Creature

by Casey M. Polczynski



Mason



Brantly

My students enjoyed the telling of the story and the simplicity of the linear drawings that look as though a child instead of an adult created them. The simple nature of these two works are wonderful examples to begin an aesthetics dialogue with younger children since children gravitate to the subject matter of animals. I wanted my students to become aware that art can have comical elements to it and be humorous.

This project took four or five 40-minute sessions and comprised three parts. The first concentrated on Klee's animal drawings and the students drawing animal images. The second focused on painting a watercolor background using only the primary colors and mixing the secondary colors. The third part concentrated on transferring the

drawn images to the watercolor background using carbon paper as a simple printmaking transfer technique.

The first part of the project started with the examination of Klee's drawings and the establishing of a horizon line. Students practiced in their sketchbooks this first week, exploring and drawing different animals they enjoyed. I encouraged them to include animals of different sizes so as to have variety throughout their drawings.

The following class, students were given an 8 1/2" x 22" piece of drawing paper to draw their "Klee Creature Landscapes." Students established their horizon line and were given guidance to make sure that earth-bound animals were touching the horizon line, and not in the air, and that flying winged animals were

above the line. Students were also encouraged to draw their images simply, using basic lines and shapes, and to include a humorous element in their drawings.

The third week of class focused on painting a watercolor background using only the primary colors. During this lesson, students focused on the experimental use of primary colors to make the secondary colors, creating a playful, imaginary background. I gave my students a quick demonstration of the wet-on-wet technique of watercolor application and warned them about the dangers of overmixing the colors, which would result in an unappealing brown. I discovered that using a medium-size bamboo brush provided enough control for the water and paint application.

Landscapes

MATERIALS

- Watercolors in primary colors
- Medium-size bamboo brushes
- Water containers
- Pencils and erasers
- Carbon paper (two 8½" x 11" pieces taped together per student)
- Masking tape
- Drawing paper (8½" x 22")
- School-grade watercolor paper (8½" x 22")
- Book: *Paul Klee: Animal Tricks, Adventures in Art*, by Christian Rumelin (Prestel Publishing, 2002).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will ...

- learn to apply watercolor using the wet-on-wet watercolor technique.
- identify and draw a horizon line in their landscapes.
- incorporate size variety.
- identify the three primary colors.
- mix the primary colors to make secondary colors.
- use different media, techniques and processes to create animal images based on personal experience.

background first, then carbon paper and their drawing on top. When students had all three layers completed, I went around the room and placed a piece of masking tape on both ends to hold all three pieces of paper together. Students then traced over the top of their 8½" x 22" drawings by pressing firmly on their pencils to transfer the images through the carbon paper onto the watercolor background.

I demonstrated that erasing would only create smudge marks and they should avoid it. Also, students could gauge what needed to be traced by peeking underneath the carbon paper without shuffling or moving the masking tape. When a student thought he or she had completed the tracing transfer, I checked the print



Rachel



Jose

The fourth week was the culmination of our combined efforts in drawing and painting to make the final piece of artwork into a one-of-a-kind print. To make the print, students used carbon paper to transfer their drawings onto their watercolor back-

grounds. In preparation for this phase of the lesson, I had taped two pieces of carbon paper together to fit the length and width of the watercolor and drawing paper, which was 8½" x 22".

Students created an "art sandwich," layering their watercolor

with the drawing and removed the tape—if there weren't any uncompleted animal parts.

This lesson provided a new opportunity to teach about one of my favorite artists using simple printmaking and watercolor-painting techniques. The students had the opportunity to explore Paul Klee and make meaningful images involving their own experiences of animals.

By incorporating painting, printmaking and drawing into one lesson, my students of varying ability levels all achieved sophisticated, humorous and playful images. ■

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