

Artistic Expression Through Animals

Animals have had a prominent role in art throughout history. Artists often depict strong interpersonal relationships they share with animals, and they often find inspiration in animal life and behaviour.

Curriculum Connection

Alberta Education Program of Studies: Art (1985)

DEPICTION (Component 4)

(Level One) Concept B: Shapes can be depicted as organic or geometric.

(Level Two) Concept C: Images can be portrayed in varying degrees of realism.

(Level Three) Concept E: Shapes can be abstracted or reduced to their essence.

EXPRESSSION (Component 10 (i)) PURPOSE 1

(Levels One, Two & Three) Concept B: Special events... can be recorded visually.

(Levels One, Two & Three) Concept C: ...relationships can be recorded visually.

Alberta Education Program of Studies: Health and Life Skills (2002)

Relationship Choices: Understanding and expressing feelings.

Materials

- pictures of pets or other animals
- paint, crayons, pencil crayons
- pencils
- paper



Original drawing of animal using organic form.

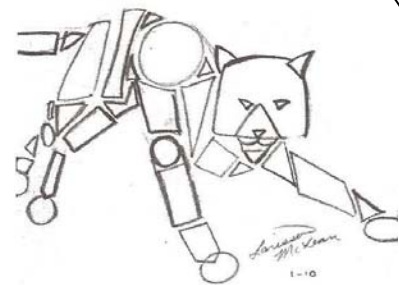
Activities

1. Geo-pets

Lines and shapes can be used to evoke emotion and express feeling. Geometric shapes are generally mathematically constructed (ex. triangles, circles, regular polygons) while organic shapes are free form and irregular.

Just like all things in nature, animals can be represented using a series of geometric shapes. By varying the type of lines used to create shapes, we can change the mood of the picture and our depiction of the animal.

1. Ask students to bring in a picture of a pet or any other animal.
2. Ask them to sketch their pet/animal using both curved and straight lines (organic shapes) .
3. Using a picture of an animal as an example, ask the class to find and indentify the geometric shapes that make up that form of the animal.
4. Ask students to re-draw the picture of their pet or animal using only 2-D geometric shapes.



Drawing using geometric shapes

Artistic Expression Through Animals (continued)

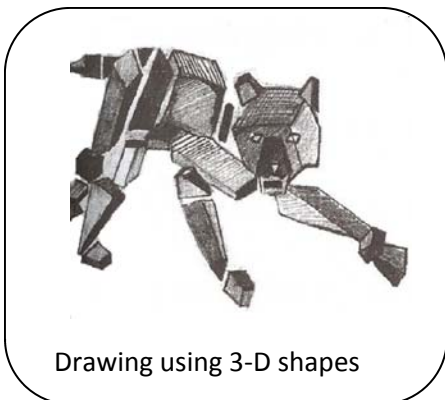
5. How do these geometric pictures compare to the original sketch of their animal?

Extensions or Variations

A. Lines and Expression (*Level 3*)

Lines can be used to express feelings and emotions. Artists use lines, ranging from delicate curves to bold angles to create images expressing different emotions.

Ask students to draw the same picture using 3-D shapes. How does the 3-D drawing compare to the 2-D drawing? How can lines be used to convey emotion and feelings?



Drawing using 3-D shapes

2. Ani-motion

Art is an excellent vehicle for students to express their emotions about an event that has occurred or their feelings regarding an issue that they feel passionate about.

1. Ask students to think of an interaction that they have had with an animal. This experience can be either positive or negative.

Examples:

- being scared of a large barking dog,
- being surprised by the grandeur of a moose
- getting a puppy.

2. Ask students to draw/paint this moment in their life, expressing through their picture the emotion that they were experiencing at the time.

3. When the students are finished, ask them to write the emotion that they were trying to convey on the reverse side of their picture.

Post the pictures on the wall and ask students to try and identify the depicted emotions of the other students.

Extension:

Ask students to write a short story describing the situation that they had depicted.

For older students: brainstorm a list of animal issues and ask them to create artwork that expresses their viewpoint or feeling on that issue—for example:

- animal cruelty
- zoos
- animal testing
- rodeos
- trapping

Literature Cited:

Naested, I.R. (1998). *Art in the Classroom: An Integrated Approach to Teaching Art in Canadian Elementary and Middle Schools*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company Canada, Ltd.