

## LESSON PLAN: Nature in Art

By Amy Wunsch and Cynthia Lofquist, June 2008

*Learn about nature in art and create an imaginary plant or animal out of clay.*

**Key Idea:** Humankind has long been captivated by the natural world and how it relates to us personally. Oral and literary traditions relate stories of the natural world's creation and of the creation of the flora and fauna which populate it (Rudyard Kipling's Just So stories and Aesop's Fables use animals to explain natural phenomena and the nature of human foibles and morals). Artists, too, have employed this anthropomorphic approach to not only give in-animate objects, animals, and plants human characteristics but to also make their own personal commentary on these qualities and traits.



### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be introduced to the idea that artists use our natural world to express personal themes or observations. Students will discern what is meant by "nature in art" and what types of subject matter this might encompass. On the whiteboard, the instructor will list student responses: what parts make up **Plants?** (stem, leaves, petals, thorns, vines, roots) **Animals?** (body, head, eyes, mouth, ears, horns, tails, scales, claws, arms, legs, feet)
2. Students will take an instructor-guided tour, viewing approximately six art works, showing how specific artists use nature in art. Instructors will ask a variety of questions to start a meaningful dialogue.
3. Students will create their own imaginative sculpture using something from nature as a base.

### **Materials needed:**

Texture plates  
Crayons  
Model Magic clay  
Markers

White glue  
Beads, pom poms, other misc. media  
Feathers  
Toothpicks

### **Vocabulary:**

Nature = the natural world as it exists without human beings or civilization; the world of living things and the outdoors; the elements of the natural world, as mountains, trees, animals, or rivers.

Anthropomorphism = ascribing human emotions and characteristics to plant, animals, and in-animate objects.

**Assessment:** Students will engage in a class critique of their artworks.

- Describe your sculpture to your classmates: What is the theme of your sculpture? What messages are you trying to convey?
- How do the forms, colors, and textures on your sculpture help you to convey your theme?
- Creating a 3-dimensional art work can be difficult. What techniques did you learn from this experience that you might use on the next 3-D artwork you create?

### **Tour Artwork Images:**



**Eulalia Cabezon** (Panamanian, Wounaan)

*Untitled*, 2005

Palm leaf and natural dyes

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2006.25



**Alberto Bautista Gómez** (Mexican, d. 2007)

*Jaguar*, 1970 – 1980

Clay

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2013.12



**Katie Dallam** (American, b. 1959)

*Tired Beast*, 2014

Recycled tire rubber, JCCC Student Collection

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, SC2014.01



**Barbara Cooper** (American, b.1949)

*Untitled (Vortex)*, 1994

Maple and cherry wood

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 1994.06



**Linda Lighton** (American, b. 1948)

*Dame Edna with Diva Marilyn*, 2000

Clay, glaze, China paint, lustres

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004.32

Gift of Norman and Elaine Polsky, Leawood, KS