

ANIMALS IN ART

ARTIST: Daniel G. Hildreth (1964-) Pleasant Grove, Utah

TITLE: *Snowshoe Hare* 1996

MEDIA: bronze sculpture

SIZE: 9" x 8" x 5"

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

" I try to achieve softness with texture," comments Dan G. Hildreth, a self-taught sculptor who created *Snowshoe Hare*, which is featured as one of the "Animals in Art" examples in this Evening for Educators packet. "I wanted to give the illusion of a rabbit, but purposely left thumbprints to remind one of the process--that it is a sculpture!" Dan speaks of valuing the artistic quality of a sculpture while creating a realistic object: "I want to preserve the magic of feeling when I sculpt, and that involves knowing what to leave and what to smooth out. It's tough to take hard, cold bronze and make it look soft; I've tried to do that with texture." Dan also notes that rhythm is an important part of his work: "I began with a square base, an abstract design, and created movement; your eye is always moving, from the head, around the body, and back, in the pattern of a wave."

Dan's natural ability to create wildlife and animal subjects began, he believes, as a young boy when he spent hours hiking, camping, and observing animals in the out-of-doors. He was born in Portland, Oregon, September 30, 1964. He moved to Provo when he was seven and claims to have possessed a "wild imagination." He feels he was most influenced by the great sculptor, Rodin. By the time he was 18, Dan was working with Stan Johnson in Mapleton, creating bronze work with western and Native American themes. He attributes his further artistic development to the opportunity to study with Gary Price, a well-known local sculptor, with whom he has continued to work full-time.

Their studio is located in Springville in the Reynold's Building, where they have 5,000 square feet at their disposal.

Though Dan grew up three blocks away from his future wife, Lori, they were not well acquainted at Timpview High School, where she was a freshman when he was a senior. After he served a mission to Alabama, he and Lori became reacquainted at a dance in Provo, later married, and now have two daughters: Aubrey, 12, and Hannah, 8. The youngsters love to draw and paint, Hannah especially showing artistic talent at an early age.

Becoming a husband and father has tremendously influenced Dan's work as an artist. "I am," he says, "consumed by my family and by my art!" Since his *Snowshoe Hare* won recognition at a Springville Museum of Art Spring Salon and was purchased by the Museum, Dan has had two other sculptures purchased and placed on permanent display in Springville: *The Dance*, a bronze work of a mother dancing with her baby (displayed across from the Villa Theater), and *White on White*, two Arctic Hares exhibited at the First Security Bank.

In addition to using his wife and children as models, Dan uses the family pets quite often for his sculpture. The family owns rabbits, a basset hound, and English setters, good evidence a love of animals continues to be a part of his life.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

(History, Aesthetics, Criticism)

Compare Albrecht Durer's *The Hare* (research in an art history reference source; books or internet) with Hildreth's *Snowshoe Hare*. They are both realistic, with variations. What are the similarities? (The subject; realism; the composition--neither are jumping, standing, etc.;) Can you think of others? What are the differences? (The media, the texture, the dimension- Durer's is two-dimensional, Hildreth's is three-dimensional.) A major difference is in detail. Durer's very "every hair drawn " detail is totally different

from Hildreth's "illusion of a rabbit with the thumbprints left in to remind one of the process, sculpture."

Look further for similarities or differences as you compare parts of each animal's body: the ears, the head, the eyes, the nose, the legs, the hair, the body, the tail (visible in Hildreth's but not in Durer's!) Which art work is more realistic? Why? Analyze how each uses various elements of art: line, shape, space, value, texture, color, and form. (Note how Durer gives his drawing the *illusion* of form by using value, and Hildreth of course creates form by producing a three-dimensional work.)

Which do you like best as an art work? Why? (With a lot of discussion, students will probably determine that they like certain aspects of each work.) Have students explain why each is a successful or non-successful work of art to them.

ACTIVITIES

Art History/Language Arts

Objective: Students will demonstrate the ability to research a famous artist, and compare a current artist with a famous one from the past.

Read the biography of Dan Hildreth, and compare his life to Albrecht Durer's, noting similarities and differences. Write an essay comparing their lives, interests, and the two *Hare* art works. Hildreth was born in Portland, Oregon, September 30, 1964. Durer was born in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1471. Both became artists at a young age, and both were apprentices to other artists. Durer was apprenticed from the age of 15 until he was 19 to the artist Michel Wolgemut in Nuremberg, Germany. Hildreth at 18 worked with Stan Johnson in Mapleton, Utah, creating bronze sculptures, later with Gary Price of Springville, Utah. Durer's marriage was arranged by his parents to a coppersmith's 15 year old daughter. Hildreth married a girl he had previously met in high school; Durer's style was greatly influenced by the Italian Renaissance painters; Hildreth idealized the great sculptor, Rodin.

Using these kinds of comparisons helps to make great artists from the past more real to students, and gives a different twist to a historical look at artists.

Art

Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding of form by creating an animal from water-based clay. They will vocalize their use of elements and principles of design in a critique when finished.

Create a sculpture of an animal using the Hildreth approach: the illusion of the animal without too much realistic detail. Plan the animal in a compact form: lying down, curled up, head curled into body, etc. Brainstorm ways an animal might be created with clay, preserving the compactness of form.

Students should research their selected animal, making thumbnail drawings from all angles to be sure how to present the art work in a three-dimensional form..Create the animal using a water-based clay medium, remembering to hollow out the body to about 1" thickness.

Give just enough texture to create "softness" as Hildreth did, or whatever texture the animal requires. Some

suggestions are a porcupine, a reposing cat or dog, a reclining lion, etc. If pieces are attached (like the head to the body, etc.) , be sure and score each piece and attach firmly with slip (a mixture made by thinning clay with water).

Keep the clay artwork tightly covered with plastic until completed. Cover it loosely for several days to allow it to dry slowly, uncovering it after two or three day to allow thorough drying. The clay will feel very cold to the palm if it is not completely dry. When thoroughly dry, fire in a kiln. The students may choose to paint with acrylics and spray or paint with a finish, or glaze and refire in the kiln.

Display each art work individually. Have the students orally critique their own work, evaluating their composition, texture, shape, and form. Have them acknowledge at least one thing they have done well, and at least one thing that could be improved.

Art

Objective: Students will demonstrate skill in producing a finished art work from their own sketches and photography.

A FIELD TRIP TO HOGLE ZOO OR THE BEAN MUSEUM

Plan a bus trip for an art class to the Hogle Zoo or the Bean Museum to draw animals. Depending on distance, budget, and time, allow a full school day or half day. Time of year and weather will be factors, as the Hogle Zoo is outdoors and the Bean Museum indoors.

Make a check list to help students prepare for the outing:

- Wear appropriate clothing, including a hat if outside and sunny
- Bring a lunch if a full day outing, or money to buy lunch if appropriate
- Bring sketch pad and pencil/pen
- Do not bring cumbersome, unnecessary books, bags, etc.
- Bring money for bus fare if department budget doesn't cover fees (if the outing is booked ahead with Hogel Zoo as an educational field trip, entrance into zoo is free for students and teachers.)
- Bring a camera, if desired, to take photographs of animals that may be used later to create assigned art work

Require students to make at least five to ten sketches of animals while at the zoo or museum.

These will be used later to create a finished artwork. If the art work will be in color, encourage the students to make notes about color, or bring colored pencils for their sketches. When they return to school, they will have the assignment of creating an art work from a selected sketch or sketches. They may also refer to their own photography if done.

The completed assignment should be turned in with sketches attached. Exhibit the finished works and have students do an oral or written critique. (See the examples of "sketches" done at the zoo, on the upper right, and a finished artwork on the left, "giraffe," done by a student.)

Art

Objective: Students will give context to a drawing by adding something to a sketch of an animal drawn with pen.

Have the students sketch an animal from life (or taxidermy) with pen. When they return to the class, have them put it into context by adding something in the picture (such as the stereo in the accompanying illustration, "Can't Slow Down.")

Graphic Animal Designs

Age group: 9th grade (Commercial Art Class)

Objective: Students will create a design of an animal, focusing on simple lines and shapes. The object is to create a suggestion of an animal as simply as possible without creating an illustration of that animal.

Rationale: In the world of design, knowing how to simplify is a valuable tool.

Materials: pencil, eraser, paper, illustration board, black fine-tip felt pen, pictures of animals

Time frame: 2-4 days (class periods)

Activities: brainstorming, thumbnailing, sketching, presenting, drawing, finishing, testing

1. Brainstorming

Students need to first decide which animal they want to design. This step is simply a narrowing-down process. Students should come up with a few (probably no more than three) animals to work with. Using pictures of animals will help in this process.

2. Thumbnailing

Thumbnails are small, quick sketches which serve the purpose of sparking more ideas. Students should cover a few pages with different ideas. They will find that one design may create another idea, then another, and so on. Each thumbnail should differ at least slightly from the previous ones.

3. Sketching

After drawing a few pages of thumbnails, students now should narrow the choices down. They should pick 4 or 5 thumbnails to work with. On separate sheets of paper, they should do a large mockup of each choice (large-size sketch).

4. Presenting

At this stage, students need to finalize their choice. A good way to do this is with input from fellow students. They can discuss which drawing is the most effective. The artist can discuss why he or she chose to draw his or her animal that way, why certain choices were made, and what the strengths and/or weaknesses are of each one. The artist will then find out what the other students perceive. Sometimes, what may be obvious to the artist may not be obvious to the observer, and vice versa. Tactful suggestions can be made, and the artist can choose to implement them or not.

5. Drawing

Now that the final choice has been made, the artist can start the final drawing. This should be done on a piece of hot-press illustration board. A light drawing should be made with pencil, paying attention to placement.

6. Finishing

Now that the pencil drawing is finished, students will complete the drawing with the fine-tip felt pen. It should be large enough that the drawing can be identified from a distance. Once the ink drawing is completed and the ink is dry, students should erase any pencil lines which still show.

7. Testing

The way to test whether or not the design works is to photocopy it at a very reduced size (about an inch across). If the animal is still readable or recognizable, it worked. If it isn't, the student can still rework it to make it better.

Once this project is finished, students can put it in their portfolios.

*all artwork courtesy of Jessica, a student at Lakeridge Jr. High School, Orem, Utah.

Language Arts Application:

Objective: Students will write an ad for a company which uses the animal design as their logo.

Rationale: Writing ads is an integral part of Commercial Art.

Materials: paper, writing instrument, finished drawing

Time Frame: 1-2 days (class periods)

Activities: brainstorming, prewriting, writing, revising, finishing, presenting

1. Brainstorming

Students will come up with a company, a slogan, and possible ad campaigns. This is the equivalent of thumbnailing for a drawing.

2. Prewriting

Students should create a rough draft of their ad and slogan.

3. Writing

Once the rough draft is complete, students should work on the final product. They should check for spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence correctness, and message clarity.

4. Revising

Using peer review, students should exchange their ads to have them checked for the same items in 3, above, then make any necessary changes.

5. Presenting

Once the ad is finished, the student presents the ad with the drawing to the rest of the class. The drawing is shown, and the ad is read. Comments are made, suggestions given, and changes made, if necessary.