

Key Ideas

- Children can creatively explore and interpret their ideas.
- Artists interpret their ideas in a variety of ways.
- Sketches in Idea Books can be beginning points for creating art.
- Exploring ideas for art can mean choosing one idea and experimenting with a number of variations, or combining a lot of different ideas.

Program Summary

THE BIG A children are ready to use the ideas for art that they have collected in their Idea Books. Don explains that getting ideas is just the first step in creating art. Exploring and experimenting with these ideas helps to refine and clarify them.

The children want to use the ideas they gathered at the zoo to make animals that move. Visits with Javanese puppet master Widiyanto Putro and sculptor Clayton Bailey encourage the children to take the most important parts of their ideas and experiment with them by imagining and trying variations. They learn to question, to make changes and combine elements, and to incorporate "mistakes" in their artwork. A variety of delightful creative artwork soon begins to emerge.

Key Words

exploring—thinking about how a subject might be interpreted; asking questions about it; playing with the idea; imagining how something might look with parts left out, exaggerated, recombined, enlarged or reduced; considering how feelings and moods are expressed by lines, colors, shapes and textures; and being open to new ideas while working.

puppet
robot

Featured Artwork

Shadow puppets: *Old Prince; Young Prince; Princess; Clown*; Widiyanto S. Putro; 1980; Buffalo and cow leather, buffalo horn, acrylic paints

The Robot Exhibit: History, Fantasy and Reality; Organized and circulated by the American Craft Museum, New York, NY. Exhibition sponsored by International Paper Company Foundation. Seattle, Washington host: Pacific Science Center; 1986

Bird robot (work in progress); Clayton Bailey; 1986; Aluminum and found objects

Before the Program

Select four or five reproductions of different artists' work, all with the same kind of subject, but each with a different mood or feeling. If your subject is animals, choose one with a *gentle* mood, one with a *fierce* quality, one that is *funny*, and another with a *lazy* feeling.

Ask your students to study the reproductions and then identify the differences in their moods and feeling. Tell the students that they will see how THE BIG A children explore different ways to use their zoo sketches and how two artists explore different versions of their ideas.



After the Program

Recall the Program

Discuss how THE BIG A children used their zoo sketches. How did they get new ideas as they made their puppets and robots? (For example, they asked themselves questions about different ways they might portray their zoo sketches.) What was different about the way Javanese puppet master Widiyanto worked and the way sculptor Clayton Bailey worked? (For example, Widiyanto created his shadow puppets the same way they have been created in his culture for hundreds of years. Clayton Bailey tried out different materials, changed his ideas as he worked, and rearranged body parts.)

Discuss Ideas for Creating Art

Ask your students to study the sketches in their Idea Books. Could they be used as ideas for stick puppets or robots? Brainstorm other possibilities, such as tempera paintings, crayon drawings and collages. Discuss possibilities for combining several sketches.

NOTE: The artwork created by THE BIG A children was actually produced in stages and required several class periods to complete.

Create Art

Select one or two of the above media for the students to use in exploring ideas in their Idea Books. (See "Puppets" and "Robots" in the Appendix.)

While the students work with the chosen medium, encourage them to refer to their Idea Book sketches with imagination and flexibility. Ask them questions such as the following: What is the personality or mood of your subject? Is it happy, sad, active, quiet or gentle? What shapes, colors, textures and lines will express that personality or mood? What could you enlarge or add to the original sketch? What should be reduced or taken away? Should any shapes be distorted or exaggerated? How could you use accidents or mistakes to best advantage?

Respond to Art

Before or during the weeks of creating art, ask the students to bring to class commercially made puppets, dolls and toy robots. Display them on a table. Explain that these, too, are works of art that show how artists have explored ideas in different ways.

Invite the students to study them and to name their personalities. Write the names on the board. Challenge students to figure out what visual characteristics give the toys their personalities. (For example, "The green and purple colors make it seem wild." "Her sweet smile makes her have a loving personality." "It's scary because the shapes are sharp and jagged.") This same activity may be repeated using the students' completed products.