

Mythical Creatures

SCHOOL WORKSHOPS | Classroom Connections
Grade Level: 1st -4th

The
Nelson-Atkins
Museum
of Art



WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Students search the museum for mythical creatures such as griffins, dragons, mermaids and chimeras in works of art from different cultures. After touring, students create imaginary creatures working with paper collage, oil pastel and watercolor.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Define a mythical creature as a creature found only in stories and composed of familiar animal features.
- Create a mixed media collage creature that demonstrates the use of pattern, invented texture and line variety.

COLLECTION FOCUS

A variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional creatures are viewed in the Museum and may include a Mermaid, Dragon, Unicorn, Gnome, Winged Rhino, Chimera, Makara, or Serpent. Galleries visited could include the Chinese, African, European, and Ancient Galleries.

Certain collections or galleries may be unavailable due to rotations or construction. We apologize for the inconvenience

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

National Visual Arts Standards

- Elaborate on an Imaginative Idea (VA:Cr1.13a)
- Use Observation and Investigation in Preparation for Making a Work of Art (VA:Cr1.2.1a)
- Create Artwork Using a Variety of Processes and Materials (VA:C2.1.3a)
- Explain Where Different Cultures Record Stories Through Art (VA:Pr6.1.3a)
- People From Different Places Have Made Art for a Variety of Reasons (VA:Cn11.1.1a)



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BEFORE YOUR VISIT

- Read a book to your class about creatures with patterns. Some suggestions are: *Anansi the Spider*, Gerald McDermott. *The Singing Snake*, Czernecki and Rhodes.
- Create texture bags by collecting objects with various textures. Ask students one at a time to touch the object in the bag and describe to the class how it feels without telling what it is. See if the class can guess the object.

VOCABULARY/CONCEPTS

Mythical/Imaginary: Existing only in someone's imagination or in stories.

Pattern: Decorative visual repetition

Texture: Element of art that refers to how something feels on the surface

Collage: Two-dimensional work of art consisting of many pieces glued onto a surface

Line variety: Zig-zag, curvy, straight, thick, thin, horizontal,

AFTER YOUR VISIT

- Invite students to share about the mythical creatures they saw at the museum, including which was their favorite and why.
- Ask students to choose a name for the creature they made and write a short story describing the creature's habitat, and its adventures.
- Allow students to classify their creatures, grouping them by characteristics such as wings, number of legs, or types of eyes. Create a chart of how many creatures had four legs, how many had fish tails, and how many had horns, etc.



Max Ernst, French, 1891-1976, b. Germany
Capricorn, 1948



Ralph Toft, English, act. 1660-1680s
Charger, ca. 1660-1680



Etim Abassi Ekenyong, Nigerian,
act. Early 20th century



EDUCATOR RESOURCE CENTER

The ERC can help you expand your before and after visit activities to fully connect your museum experience with your classroom curriculum. The ERC provides:

- Curriculum consultations
- Circulating Resources including Art Connection Kits
- Professional Development Workshops

nelson-atkins.org/educators/