

Editor's Letter



It's hard not to smile when encountering folk art like this at the Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland.

Though my kindergartners are my toughest audience, they are the most fun. They are up for anything and everything I ask them to do and are always excited when they walk in the door. They allow me to be funny, silly, or do whatever it takes to get their attention. Now if I could just keep them in their seats!

We usually start the year off with toys and talk of the Toy Story films, establishing some common ground. They are sometimes surprised that I have seen these movies (Is there an adult out there who doesn't appreciate Pixar movies?), but they are happy to talk about it, make toy collages, and design new toys. They have no problems seeing the humor in art.

Humor, like art, is a universal human language that everyone can understand. We may have different senses of humor, but we are all likely to find something to be funny. What kind of art do you find humorous? How about your students? Do any artists come to mind? Cartoonists? Designers?

We have based this issue of *SchoolArts* on humor, inspired by PBS's episode of Art:21, available online at www.pbs.org/art21/series/seasontwo/humor.html. "Humor" explores how five contemporary artists use irony, satire, and sarcasm in their artwork. Though most of the videos and slide shows are better suited for secondary students (definitely review first), Raymond Pettibon and Elizabeth Murray will appeal to elementary students.

Another remarkable online resource is *Art and Play* (www.art-and-play.com/Art_and_Play/Art_and_Play.html), a book and website by Caroline Rutledge Armijo that features six artists whose work can be traced back to their childhood interests and experiences. The artists are Marcel Duchamp, Alexander Calder, Jean Tinguely, Claes Oldenburg, Elizabeth Murray, and Joseph Cornell.

We wish you grins and laughter as you explore humor with your students.

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