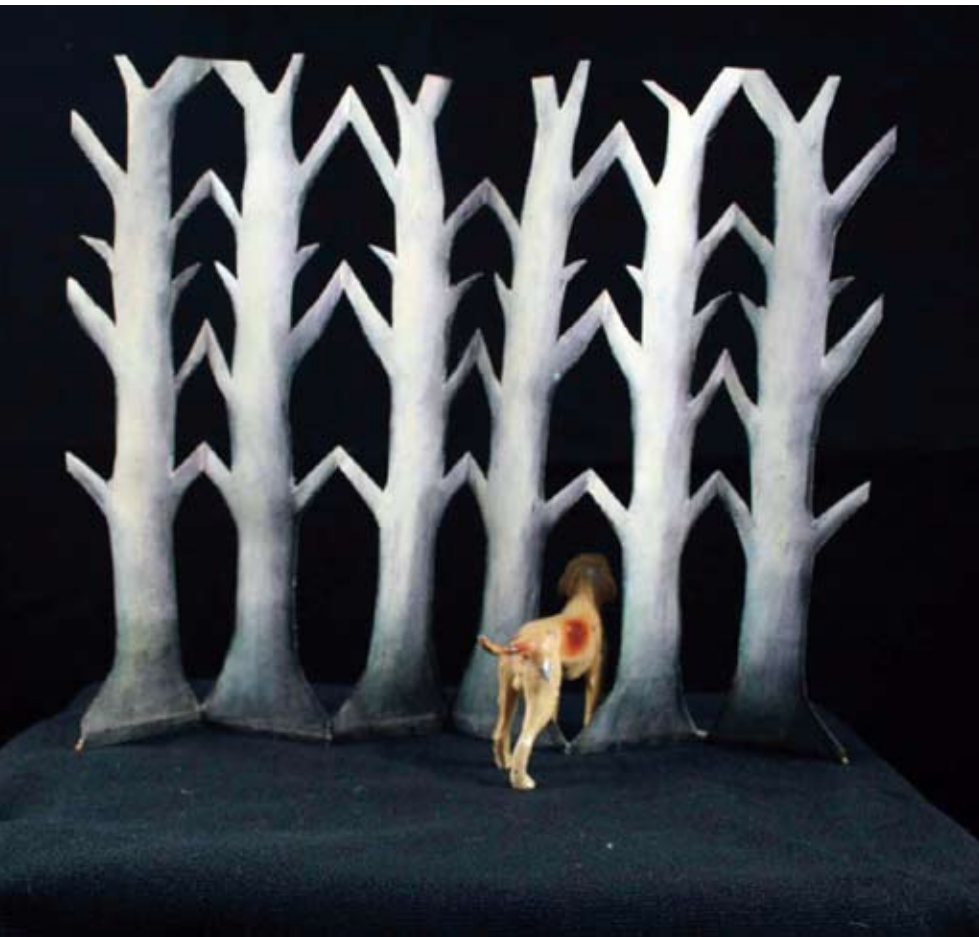


Time as Art



Forest Dog, a series by Elisa Wiedeman.

Pam Stephens

This month's Art Teacher Round Table deals with the elusive system that we commonly refer to as time. By definition, the term "time" suggests a sequential continuum of events; that is, before, now, and later. Albert Einstein once jokingly remarked that, "The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once." Whether Einstein actually said this is difficult to verify, however, the gist of the comment rings true and is seen in a wide variety of artworks and the way that we as art educators teach.

As we well know, sometimes the questions that artworks ask are as important as the answers we give.

A Serendipitous Opportunity

As I was writing this column, a good friend stopped by my office to share her most recent art. Isn't it funny how sometimes the most serendipitous

opportunities occur? You see, Elisa is working on a Master of Fine Arts degree and her focus happens to deal with the element of time. Elisa's current body

of work is a series of photographs that she titled *Forest Dog*. This series of eleven photos follows the progression of a dog approaching, entering, and disappearing into a forest of grayish trees. The dog, by the way, is an

antique toy; the eerie forest a chain of paper cut-outs; the setting a small box with a black felt floor.

Intrigued by these eleven photographs, I began to contemplate the symbolic nature of the dog in relationship to the passage of time and the trees in relation to our fears of the future. Elisa did not give hints about her intent, so perhaps the photos only show a dog entering and disappearing into a forest. As we well know, sometimes the questions that artworks ask are as important as the answers we give.

Other Ideas about Time in Art

Here are some ways to present ideas about time to students of all ages:

- Have students research and create chronologies and timelines that place art along a continuum of world events and everyday happenings. Encourage students to note how events in music and science (and other fields) often go hand-in-hand with art.
- Art can recall the past, expose the present, or anticipate the future. Find artworks that document past eras, show today, or predict tomorrow. Examine how ideas of what can be art and who can be an artist change over time.
- Create stop-action videos. Try placing sequential digital photographs into a PowerPoint presentation and then set the transition time to 00.00. This will create a quick animation.
- Create a graphic novel that tells a story with a beginning, middle, and end.

Share

How do you teach ideas about time? We encourage you to join our round table discussion on the *SchoolArts* Facebook page or follow the discussion at schoolartsroom.blogspot.com. ☺

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