

AMAZING Anthropomorphs



Marianne Bickett

Native Americans and indigenous cultures worldwide created rock art images that are believed to represent human figures. These figures were abstracted and represented both spiritual and actual beings.

Learning Objectives

1. Learn about the different styles of anthropomorphs.
2. Differentiate between anthropomorphic and biomorphic images.
3. Learn about Indian symbols and their meaning.
4. Learn about modern artists who used anthropomorphic images in their work.

Emotional Objectives

1. Feel respect for rock art.
2. Have an understanding and appreciation in order to preserve it.
3. Appreciate anthropomorphic images as an art form.

Behavioral Objectives

1. Create an anthropomorphic drawing using pencils, paper, markers, and colored pencils.
2. Respect rock art by not touching, vandalizing, or destroying.
3. Connect to other areas by writing about the image created, researching and writing about rock art, and reading more about rock art.

Materials

- pencils and paper, large white paper, if desired, for final drawing
- large black construction papers for mounting final drawing

- colored pencils and medium-point permanent markers
- art examples such as work by Klee, Miró, Tamayo, and California Indian artist Frank La Pena
- rock art examples depicting anthropomorphic figures
- biomorphic images can also be shown, such as the Quetzlcoatl snake from Mexico, as a comparison between biomorph (animal abstracted images) and anthropomorph (human abstracted images)

Focus Activity

Students will create an anthropomorphic drawing and then color it with colored pencils (watercolors can also be used) and permanent markers to define the linear qualities. After viewing rock art anthropomorphic images (two basic types: one with the head “empty,” focusing on the inner design of the body only; the other, more detailed abstracted facial features), students will draw using pencil and paper. The drawing will be recreated on another piece of white paper (same size or larger), outlined with permanent marker, and colored in.

This activity works very well for lessons on body proportions, looking at realistic versus abstracted proportions.

Students can use the image for a poem or short essay, or use the image as a cover to a longer essay, report, or narrative. Words can be incorporated into the “body” of the anthropomorph.

The image could be a symbol of a heroic character in a mythic story (see Hawaiian petroglyph images).

Vocabulary Words

petroglyph
pictograph
anthropomorphic
biomorphic
abstract
symbol
myth

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NATIONAL STANDARD

Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

WEB LINKS

www.artsconnected.org/artsnetsmn/identity/talking_rocks/ratzlesson.html#vis
www.sinay.com/rockart
www.arara.org