



Courtesy *Art for the People* by Heather Becker, Photographer Peter J. Schulz

Title: *Characters from Children's Literature* **Date:** 1937 **Artist:** Attributed to Frank Reichman

Newton Bateman Elementary School

Title: *Characters from Children's Literature*

Artist: Frank Reichmann

Medium: Oil on canvas glued to the wall

School: Newton Bateman Elementary

Grade Levels: K–3

Correlations

- 4.A. Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations. Listen and respond appropriately to oral messages.
- 8.A.1 Recognize, describe, create, replicate, and extend a variety of patterns including attribute, number, and geometric patterns using manipulatives, diagrams, and symbols.
12. D. 1 Compare and contrast an action and reaction in the behavior of objects.
18. A. 2 Compare and contrast how customs and traditions have shaped various cultures. Identify some of the ways by which cultural traditions are transmitted (e.g., storytelling, poetry, music, painting, drama, special foods, holidays).
- 25.A. Identify the elements of line, shape, space, color, and texture; the principles of repetition and pattern; and the expressive qualities of mood, emotion, and pictorial representation.
- 25.B.1 Understand and demonstrate knowledge of the similarities, distinctions, and connections in and among the arts. Identify concepts used in and/or shared by two or more art forms (line, color, sound [beat, pause, tempo], space, locomotor, and locomotor movement).
- 26.A.2 Demonstrate how to use the media and tools and how to use them in a safe and responsible manner when painting, drawing, and constructing. Printmaking: trays, brayers, and inks (fingerprints).
- 27.A.1a Identify the distinctive roles of artists and audiences.

Materials

- Transparency of *Characters from Children's Literature*
- Overhead projector
- Cassette player
- Cassette tape recordings (*Ravi Shankar, Youssou N'Dour, and America the Beautiful*)
- Fingerprints (or tempera mixed with a liquid detergent)
- Paper (white, construction)
- Butcher block paper
- Foam plates



Vocabulary

Alternating	Movement	Random
Color	Mural	Regular
Line	Painting	Rhythm
Motif	Patterns	Shape

Educational Strategies

The mural *Characters from Children's Literature* created under the WPA has been attributed to Frank Reichmann. The mural depicts characters from fairy tales. Share with students the history of WPA, New Deal and President Roosevelt. (See Introduction for specific information.) Give students an opportunity to examine this work for its visual and descriptive qualities. Explain that a mural is a wall painting that is intended for a particular place. Solicit class discussion about murals. Ask several students to describe murals they might have seen in schools, in their neighborhoods, or on downtown buildings.

(Turn the overhead projector on.) Tell students this mural was painted in the entrance of an elementary school. Have students examine the transparency of *Characters from Children's Literature* for thirty seconds, then turn the projector off. Make a list of student responses on the chalkboard. Encourage students to respond to the following questions:

Can someone tell what was seen in the mural? Can someone name the nursery rhymes in the mural? What are the people in the mural wearing? What colors can be seen in the mural? Does the artist use any primary colors in the mural? Name them. Does the artist use secondary colors in the mural? Name them. Can someone identify the shapes that are in the mural? Are any shapes repeated more than once? Do the characters appear to be moving or standing still in the mural?

After turning the projector back on, ask the students the questions again to compare what was listed to what is actually in the mural. Involve the students in a discussion about remembering details.

Suggest to students that the mural *Characters from Children's Literature* seems as though it were full of action. Ask students to describe what they think the characters are doing in the mural. Ask them to describe the characters' movements and encourage several students to demonstrate the movements for the class. Tell them that in art, movement is a principle of design. *Movement* occurs when artists repeat lines, shapes, or colors (the elements of design). When the elements of design are repeated, rhythm is created. *Rhythm* occurs in various ways. *Random* rhythm has no apparent order, similar to leaves falling from a tree, or coins in a pocket. *Regular* rhythm has identical motifs with equal amounts of space between them. *Alternating* rhythm occurs when the motif is changed at predicted intervals. Explain to students that music, dance, and visual art create and use rhythm in their own special ways. Music creates rhythms that can be heard; dance, through body movements; and visual art, through the arrangement of lines, shapes, and color. Point out the different ways artists show movement in the mural.

Tell the students that they will create a three-panel mural that exhibits random, regular, and alternating rhythms.

If available during this exercise, play a recording by Ravi Shankar, an East Indian raga musician. Explain that East Indian music is a good example of *random rhythm*. Some jazz musicians are also known for the use of random rhythm in their musical compositions. Have students clap their hands to the beat to analyze random rhythm in music. SBE State Goal for Music states that students should recognize a rhythmic pattern and steady beat through interactive activities exhibited by movement, singing, and listening.



Assign partners to each panel. Roll or squeeze a small amount of finger paints into foam trays, one color per tray. Tell one partner to press his/her palms in one-color paint while the second partner holds the tray. Have him/her press his/her palms onto white 9" x 12" pieces of construction paper. Remind students to press down on the paper and lift up while the partner holds the paper. Continue this process on the construction paper with each color while approaching the paper from different directions. Remind partners to wipe the colors from their hands before using another color. Mount the completed prints on poster board.

If possible, play a recording by Youssou N'Dour from Senegal, Africa. African music usually uses *regular rhythm*. The popular hip-hop music is also known for its regular rhythm. Encourage students to march in place to the music. Lead them to analyze that marching is very structured and predictable. Invite students to identify examples of regular rhythm around the classroom, (floor tiles, cinder bricks, and ceiling panels). Point out examples of regular rhythm (patterns) in the transparency of the mural. Explain to students that regular rhythm is the opposite of random rhythm.

Roll or squeeze a small amount of finger paints into foam trays, the same color for all students. Tell students to press their right palms in the paint while keeping their left palms clean. Have students press their hands on 6" x 4½" pieces of white construction paper. Remind students to press down on the paper and lift their hands straight up while holding the papers with their clean hands. Remind students to thoroughly wash the finger paint from their hands. Mount the completed prints, side by side, on poster board.

Alternating rhythm is similar to regular rhythm except by the introduction of a second or third shape. Like regular rhythm, alternating rhythm is structured and predictable. Most songs have alternating rhythm (beats). Lead students in *America the Beautiful*. Allow them to clap their hands to the beat. Tell them that this is an example of alternating rhythm.

Roll or squeeze a small amount (two colors) of finger paints into foam trays, one color per tray. Tell half the students to press their right palms in the paint while keeping their left palms clean. Then press their hands on 6" x 4½" pieces of white construction paper. Tell the other half to press their left palms in the second color and press the color onto the second sheet of construction paper. Remind students to press down on the paper and lift their hands straight up while holding the papers with their clean hands. Remind students to wash the color from their hands. Arrange the completed prints on poster board to show alternating rhythm. Display all three panels to make one large mural.

Accommodations

Enrichment

Have students read folktales and fables. Explain that folktales are traditionally passed down through generations. Fables are stories that have moral meanings or messages. Provide students with opportunities to read or listen to some of the children's stories depicted in the mural (*Treasure Island*, *Alice in Wonderland*, or *Tom Sawyer*). Explain that children's stories traditionally contain messages on morality.

English as a Second Language

Have students substitute the stories in the mural for stories from their own cultures with similar themes.

Have students create a small mural or a section of a mural that reflects the cultural differences.

Have students compare English words that have origins in other languages.



Title: *Characters from Children's Literature*

Artist: Frank Reichmann

Medium: Oil on canvas glued to the wall

School: Newton Bateman Elementary

Grade Levels: 4–8

Correlations

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 2.A | Distinguish among authors' use of literary elements, forms, and devices in significant works of literature representative of various societies, cultures, eras, and ideas. |
| 9.A.1 | Extend geometric patterns using concrete and pictorial models. Identify and draw three-dimensional shapes. |
| 12.C | Observe, describe, classify, measure, and compare characteristics of matter and different kinds of energy. |
| 18.A | Explain how various cultural traditions (language, literature, the arts) contribute to the transmission of culture |
| 25.A.2d | Understand how elements and principles combine within an art form to express ideas. |
| 26.B.2d | Demonstrate knowledge and skills to create works of visual art using problem solving, observing, designing, and sketching. |
| 27.A.2a | Identify and describe the relationship between the arts and various environments (e.g.,home, school, workplace, theatre, gallery). |

Materials

- Transparency of *Characters from Children's Literature*
- Overhead projector
- Storybook character (chosen from trade books)
- 12" x 18" white construction paper
- Bulletin board paper (48" wide)
- Pencils
- Colored pencils, crayons, oil pastels, and/or tempera paint
- Glue or paste
- Staples and stapler

Vocabulary

Attributed	Diagonal line	Harmony
Background	Elements of art	Movement
Complementary colors	Energetic	Overlapping
Complexity	Geometric shapes	Overlapping shapes



Educational Strategies

Tell students to look at the mural painted by Frank Reichmann. He was commissioned by the WPA to create murals for an elementary school in 1937. The painting is located in the main entrance hallway of the Bateman School and greets all who enter the building.

Give students a few minutes to study the painting. Have them name the characters they recognize (Alice from *Alice in Wonderland*, Tom from *Tom Sawyer*, the pirates from *Treasure Island*). Have them name the other objects in the mural. Point out that everything in the mural appears to be active, moving, and engaged in doing things. Tell them that *movement* is a principle of design concerned with creating a distinctive arrangement of the elements of art to show feelings or action or a series of actions and guides the viewer's eye through a work of art. Help students name and identify the elements of art that are used in the mural. The *elements of art* are line, shape, texture, value, color, and form.

Tell students that movement in a work of art can be created by placing people, animals, and things diagonally on the surface plane. Certain combinations of colors also create movement. Ask students to describe the types of colors they see in the mural. *Complementary colors* are opposite colors according to their position on the color wheel. When complementary colors are placed next to each other in a composition, the colors seem to vibrate. Overlapping shapes further enhance the movement and energy of the painting. *Overlapping shapes* are shapes that partially cover other shapes.

Ask students to describe the details in the mural such as clothing and facial expressions. Explain that the mural tells a story or has a story to tell. Give students opportunities to interpret the mural by telling the story to the class. Ask whether the story they told is real or make-believe.

Help students develop a list of some of their favorite storybook characters. While writing the list on the chalkboard, have each student make his or her contribution by naming the character and disclosing the name of the book.

To begin this project, help students choose interesting characters from children's literature or invent characters of their own. familiar images from any of the core subjects may also be used. Students should draw and color their characters on lightweight drawing paper and cut them out. Tell them to include appropriate facial expressions and details in the clothing. Measure and cut a roll of bulletin board paper to fit a bulletin board or wall space. Tell students to arrange their characters diagonally, overlap them, and temporarily adhere them to the format until a satisfactory arrangement is achieved. When finished, show them how to glue or paste their characters on the roll of bulletin board paper so no adhesive shows. Tell students to fill the background in with a variety of cut geometric and organic shapes of various sizes. Add an assortment of diagonal lines of vibrant colors. Tack the mural into place. The mural should result in an illustrated, action-packed story without words.



Accommodations

Enrichment

Have a group of students plan a mural that features characters from literature in an exterior or interior background. Have them paint it first on butcher block paper to be later painted on a wall in the school. Remind them to show movement in their figures by placing the figures diagonally. Show students how to overlap the figures to give the illusion of space.

English as a Second Language

Have students substitute the stories in the mural for stories from their own cultures with similar themes.

Have students create a small mural or a section of a mural that reflects the cultural differences.

Have students compare English words that have origins in other languages.

Students with Disabilities

Break down instructional units into smaller steps. Allow adequate time. Establish criteria and expectation prior to instruction. Use concrete examples. Provide adaptive equipment. Give both oral and written directions. Encourage students to ask for clarification of instructions they do not understand

Evaluation/Assessment

- Did students identify the elements, principles, and expressive qualities of the work of art?
- Did students master the creative medium?
- Did the students develop the theme and use appropriate images?
- Did the students accept constructive criticism, work well in a group, and complete the project within a reasonable length of time?

Home Connection/Homework

Inform students that they can trace action poses of their favorite television characters after pausing them on their VCRs. The light from the television screen allows students to capture their favorites in interesting poses.

Teacher's Notes

Title: *Characters from Children's Literature*

Artist: Frank Reichmann



mural : Characters from Children's Literature

Title: *Characters from Children's Literature*
Medium: Oil on canvas glued to the wall

Artist: Frank Reichmann
School: Newton Bateman Elementary

Grade Levels: 9–12

Correlations

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1.D | Analyze, assess, and use information from primary and secondary sources to support opinions, using textual support to validate inferences and assertions. |
| 4.A | Listen and respond analytically and critically to gain knowledge from formal, informal, and media/viewed settings. |
| 9.A | Identify, describe, and apply geometric relationships (e.g., parallel, perpendicular, similar, congruent, symmetric, proportional) in one-, two-, and three-dimensional models. |
| 12.B | Analyze cycling of matter and flow of energy through ecosystems; living and nonliving components, including dynamic equilibria and limiting factors within populations, communities, and ecosystems. |
| 18.A | Analyze and discuss ways in which the cultural traditions (e.g., customs, language, art, architecture) of major urban ethnic and social groups have contributed to and influenced the development of society. |
| 25.A.5 | Analyze and evaluate student and professional works for how aesthetic qualities are used to convey intent, expressive ideas and/or meaning. |
| 25.B.5 | Understand how different art forms combine to create an interdisciplinary work (e.g., musical theater, opera, or cinematography). |
| 26.A.5 | Analyze and evaluate how the choices of media, tools, technologies and processes support and influence the communication of ideas. |
| 27.B.5 | Analyze how the arts shape and reflect ideas, issues or themes in a particular culture or historical period. |

Materials

- Writing paper
- Scrap paper
- Pencils (blue)
- Canvas squares (12")
- Paint (tempera, or acrylic)
- Rags
- Water brushes

Vocabulary

Complementary colors	Principles of art
Elements of art	Warm colors



Educational Strategies

In the mural *Characters from Children's Literature*, located at Newton Bateman Elementary School, the artist, Frank Reichmann, illustrates images of storybook characters in his mural. Some of these characters include pirates with a treasure chest, the Pied Piper of Hamlet, Mowgli with tiger and wolf, Hiawatha, Tom Sawyer, and Alice the looking glass and the white rabbit. The artist uses storybook characters that she remembers from childhood and paints them to grand proportions, and placed them in the school foyer to happily greet school children as they entered the school.

Show the transparency of the Bateman mural. Ask students to list everything they see in the mural while writing their responses on the chalkboard. Lead the class discussion to help students analyze how the artist uses the element and principles of design. The *elements of art* are line, shape, form, space, value, color and texture. The *principles of art* are balance, emphasis, harmony, variety, gradation, movement, rhythm, and proportion. Point out that the artist focused on the principles of art, design, and movement. Help students recognize the technique that the artist used in this mural to create the image of movement. Movement in works of art can be achieved by arranging the elements (shapes and colors) diagonally on the picture plane.

Have students tell what is happening in the work of art, and give them an opportunity to judge whether the symbolism in the work succeeds or fails. Have students use the Reichmann mural as a starting point for creating illustrations for their own fables, myths, yarns, tales, and stories.

Ask students to select topics from the almost infinite number of fables, myths, or folktales from a specific country, era, or idea. Ask students to select from various resources from class, the library, or the Internet. Tell students to read the story and create summaries by paraphrasing the thoughts that the authors are trying to get across. Ask students to use descriptive words in their writings to create blueprints for their paintings.

Give students a chance to sketch out their ideas for their illustrations on several pieces of scrap paper. Encourage them to study the paintings of the grand masters to gather more ideas and to broaden their understanding of how the elements and principles of art and design can be used. Have them develop their compositions on canvas board. A *composition* is the basic structure that supports all the elements involved in works of art. Tell students to use their sketches to help to develop their ideas.

Have students sketch their drawings with blue colored pencils. The blue pencils seem to blend well with most colors so that the sketched lines do not distract if the paint is unable to cover them. If possible, give students a choice of tempera or acrylic paint.

Remind students to choose their colors carefully. Remind them that certain colors used together produce various results. For example, *complementary colors*, colors opposite each other on the color wheel, when used together in a painting, work together so that they both stand out. *Warm colors* are reminiscent of fire and sunshine. Artists who use complementary colors or warm colors attempt to give the painting strength. When artists use cool colors, their paintings can seem cold and lacking in feeling.

As students complete their paintings, exhibit them as tiles on a wall.



Accommodations

Enrichment

Have students wear their art on T-shirts. Show them how to scan their paintings and print them on T-shirt transfer paper.

English as a Second Language

Have students substitute the stories in the mural for stories from their own cultures with similar themes.

Have students create a small mural or a section of a mural that reflects the cultural differences.

Have students compare English words that have origins in other languages.

Students with Disabilities

Break down instructional units into smaller steps. Allow adequate time. Establish criteria and expectation prior to instruction. Use concrete examples. Provide adaptive equipment. Give both oral and written directions. Encourage students to ask for clarification of instructions they do not understand.

Evaluation/Assessment

- To what extent did the student show the ability to use the elements and principles of art?
- To what extent did the student master the use of the creative medium?
- How well did the student develop the theme and use appropriate symbols and images?
- How well did the student accept constructive criticism, work in a group, clean up his/her area, and complete the project within a reasonable length of time?

Home Connection/Homework

Have students share with family members fables, fairy tales, and short stories from various countries.

Resources

Have students access this Web page to learn about mythology from different countries throughout history: <http://www.cybercomm.net/~grandpa/gdsindex.html>

Teacher's Notes

