



## LOOK! THERE'S A UNICORN! EDUCATION GUIDE

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In this lesson, students are introduced to artist Calder Kamin, who infuses her artistic practice with playfulness. Calder Kamin creates large sculptures from recycled materials that often feature mythical creatures. Students will view a segment on Craft In America that shows the artist constructing an imaginative unicorn that is placed in a woodland setting where trail visitors will come upon it. After viewing the video and engaging in discussion, students will plan imaginative creatures using ideas of hybrids as a theme. Students will review why the artist uses recycled materials in her work. Then students will play and experiment with recycled materials to further visualize features for their creatures. Finally, students will consider presenting a surprise in the manner of display of their artworks in school.

### Key Concepts

- Artists play and experiment with materials when making art.
- Artists can imagine creatures and turn them into an artwork.
- Artists can add surprising elements to their art.

### Critical Questions

- Why do artists play with materials when making art?
- How do artists imagine creatures and turn them into an artwork?
- How can artists surprise people with their art?

### Objectives

Students will:

- Students will understand that playing, or experimenting, with materials is a way of developing ideas for art making.
- Students will develop an imaginative creature.
- Students will imagine and implement ways to surprise someone with an artwork.

### Interdisciplinary Connections

- Language Arts: Examining mythical beasts and hybrids in classic and contemporary fairy tales and other stories can help inspire ideas for creating imaginary characters.
- Science: Calder Kamin mentions that estrogen in waterways has caused mutations in frogs. This could be an interesting and accessible lesson for students.
- Science: Technology is creating more human hybrid forms, in which we can get such interventions as replacement joints, electronic devices embedded to enhance hearing, and robotic walkers to increase mobility. Highlighting these examples in a lesson is valuable for students' understanding of themselves and others.

### National Standards for Visual Arts Education

This lesson addresses the following standards. The performance standards listed here are directly related to the lesson's goals.

- Visual Arts/Creating #VA:Cr1.1.4a  
Brainstorm multiple approaches to a creative art or design problem.  
Process Component: Investigate/Plan/Make  
Anchor Standard: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Visual Arts/Creating #VA:Cr.1.2.1a  
Use observation and investigation in preparation for making a work of art.

View the full education guide at [craftinamerica.org/guide/play](http://craftinamerica.org/guide/play) and [pbs.org/craft-in-america/education/play](http://pbs.org/craft-in-america/education/play)

# CRAFT IN AMERICA

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Process Component: Investigate/Plan/Make

Anchor Standard: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

- Visual Arts/Creating #VA:Cr.2.2.4a

When making works of art, utilize and care for materials, tools, and equipment in a manner that prevents danger to oneself and others.

Process Component: Investigate

Anchor Standard: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

- Visual Arts/Presenting #VA:Pr4.1.3a

Investigate and discuss possibilities and limitations of spaces, including electronic, for exhibiting artwork.

Process Component: Select

Anchor Standard: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation

- Visual Arts/Reflecting #VA:Re.7.1.3a

Speculate about processes an artist uses to create a work of art.

Process Component: Perceive

Anchor Standard: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

### Worksheets

- Worksheet 1: You Can Imagine a Mythical Creature
- Worksheet 2: There's a Unicorn in the Forest!

### Materials

- Sketchbooks
- Pencils and Markers
- Scissors
- Recycled materials as loose parts for constructing: plastic utensils, fast food containers, milk cartons, bottles, lids and caps, newspapers, magazines, cereal and snack boxes, marker caps, plastic bits and pieces from packaging, and the like. In the video, Calder Kamin shows an array of recycled materials including small plastic toys.
- Craft materials as loose parts for constructing: pipe cleaners, buttons, colored wire, beads, cardboard tubes, egg cartons, strips of fabric, fake fur, corks, yarn, tongue depressors, bamboo skewers, toothpicks etc.
- NOTE: Place the recycled and craft parts in boxes or on trays for students to handle and choose from.
- Non-electric hand drill and bits (more than one drill may be helpful since it will be a popular tool)
- Pliers for wire; diagonal cutters for cutting wire
- Scrap piece of wood at least ½ inch thick as a base for protecting tables from drilling
- Tapes, yarn, string, wire, brass fasteners, white glue and hot glue for connecting parts of the creatures.
- Wire, string, tape and tools needed for hanging and/or otherwise displaying creatures in school.



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## ABOUT CALDER KAMIN

Artist Calder Kamin transforms trash into beautifully crafted creatures and opportunities to inspire others to be creative and courageous about the future. Nature's endless ability to reuse and adapt motivates her to eliminate waste and reimagine it as art. Kamin's creative reuse art projects and public workshops have traveled to museums across the states including The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art American, The American Museum of Natural History, The Contemporary Austin, The i.d.e.a. Museum, and The Amon Carter Museum of American Art. She was the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art's Art Truck Artist, the first AIR at the Beach Museum of Art, and Artist-in-Residence at BreckCreate, Landmark Apartments, and the DoSeum, San Antonio's Children's Museum. Kamin is a board member of Austin Creative Reuse, a non-profit that diverts community waste to artists, crafters, and educators as resources.