

SCRAPS

Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Travelling Exhibition Program



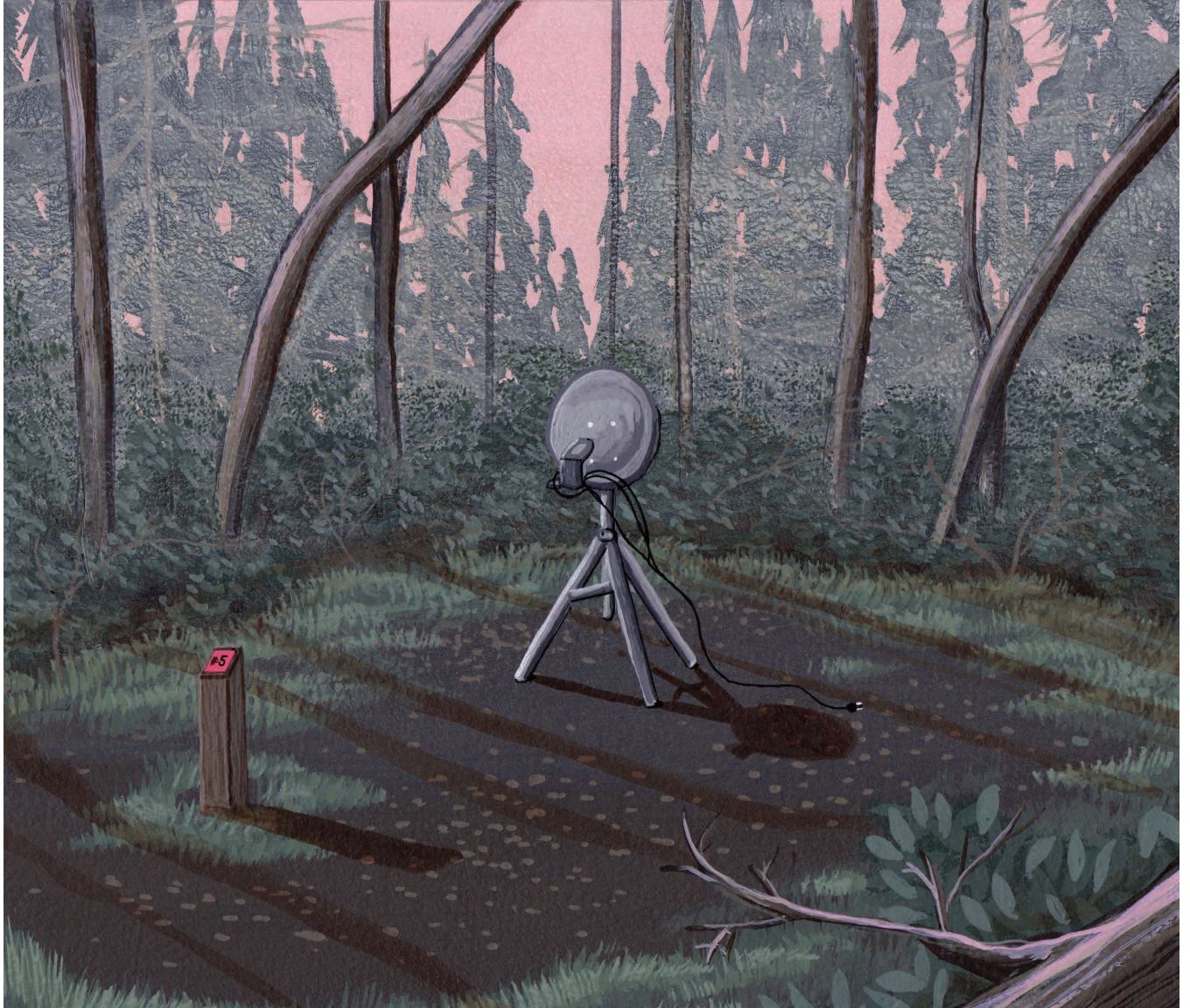
SCRAPS



Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Travelling Exhibition Program

Interpretive Catalogue and Educators Guide: AFA Travelling Exhibition Program (Trex)
Curated by Xanthe Isbister, Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre

Cover artwork: Landscaping Garbage, 2019, fluid acrylic on, paper, 8" x 8"



Campsite #5, 2019, fluid acrylic on paper, 8" x 10", collection of the artist

Table of Contents

6	About the Esplanade
7	About the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program
9	Curatorial Statement
11	Biography
13	Artist Statement
14	List of Works
21	Introduction to Educator's Guide and Lesson Plans
23	Lesson1: Accordion Book
29	Lesson 2: Personified Object
33	Lesson 3: Collaborative Storyboard
37	Acknowledgements

About the Esplanade

The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre is where the stories of our great collective culture are told through music and dance, painting and sculpture, plays and concerts, exhibitions and installations, artifacts and art, education programs and private events. Featuring a 700- seat main stage balcony theatre which boasts superior technology and striking design, the Esplanade is where Medicine Hat celebrates arts and heritage.

A marvel of contemporary Canadian architecture on traditional Blackfoot territory just steps from the South Saskatchewan River, the Esplanade occupies an eminent position on downtown's historic First Street Southeast. From its rooftop terrace, you can see Saamis, the dramatic shoreline escarpment which is the setting for the story of how Medicine Hat got its name.

Inside, visitors discover the vibrant Esplanade Art Gallery, the prized Esplanade Museum, the Esplanade Studio Theatre across the lobby from the Esplanade Main Stage Theatre, the expansive Esplanade Archives and Reading Room, an art education space called the Discovery Centre and the catering-friendly Cutbanks Room.

In the northeast corner of the Esplanade grounds stands the oldest remaining brick home in Alberta, the Ewart-Duggan House. With its gingerbread trim and quaint heritage gardens, it now serves as a charming venue for select cultural events and a home away from home for artists in residence.

The Esplanade opened in celebration of Alberta's centennial in 2005 and ever since, Medicine Hat has welcomed a steady procession of artists and audiences, storytellers and story-lovers from around the region and around the globe. The celebration continues today.

About the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program



The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) has supported a provincial travelling exhibition program since 1981. The mandate of the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program is to provide every Albertan with the opportunity to enjoy visual art exhibitions in their community.



Three regional galleries and one arts organization coordinate the program for the AFA:



Northwest Region: The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie

Northeast and North Central Region: The Art Gallery of Alberta,

Edmonton Southwest Region: The Alberta Society of Artists, Calgary



Southeast Region: The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat



Each year, more than 300,000 Albertans enjoy many exhibitions in communities ranging from High Level in the north to Milk River in the south and virtually everywhere in between. The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program also offers educational support material to help educators integrate the visual arts into the school curriculum.



Exhibitions for the TREX program are curated from a variety of sources, including private and public collections. A major part of the program assists in making the AFA's extensive art collection available to Albertans. This growing art collection consists of over 8,000 artworks showcasing the creative talents of more than 2000 artists. As the only provincial art collection in Alberta, the AFA collection reflects the development of the vibrant visual arts community in the province and has become an important cultural legacy for all Albertans.





Playground at Night, 2019, fluid acrylic on paper, 8" x 10", collection of the artist

Curatorial Statement

This exhibition features twenty hand-painted illustrations by Calgary-based artist Geneva Haley. Haley is a multitalented creative: a graphic designer, an illustrator, a painter, and a musician. She is unequivocally original, with a quirky sense of humour, and she works nonstop at generating intriguing ideas—from new pages in her graphic novel to a commission painting of someone's cat to a promotional ad for a new podcast. On top of that, she's the lead singer in the punk band Stripmall, which performs in Calgary and neighbouring cities.

The works in this exhibition were inspired by Haley's practice as an illustrator and her comic book *Scraps*. A comic book is a mode of visual storytelling, and is closely related to literature in its use of metaphors, myth, and symbols.¹ Haley explains, "The idea originated as a comic book about being a teenager in Alberta and how the natural landscape mirrored the lives of the characters navigating their way through a young city as young people."

Originally from Olds, Alberta, Haley grew up on a fifteen-acre barley farm. Being the youngest and the only girl in a family of five children, she spent a lot of time on her own exploring her imagination in this rural habitat. Her series of illustrations conveys isolation, fragility, destruction in small-town Alberta, and the impact these things have on our subconscious and consciousness. The slightly melancholy subject matter is balanced by an upbeat aesthetic influenced by her wicked sense of

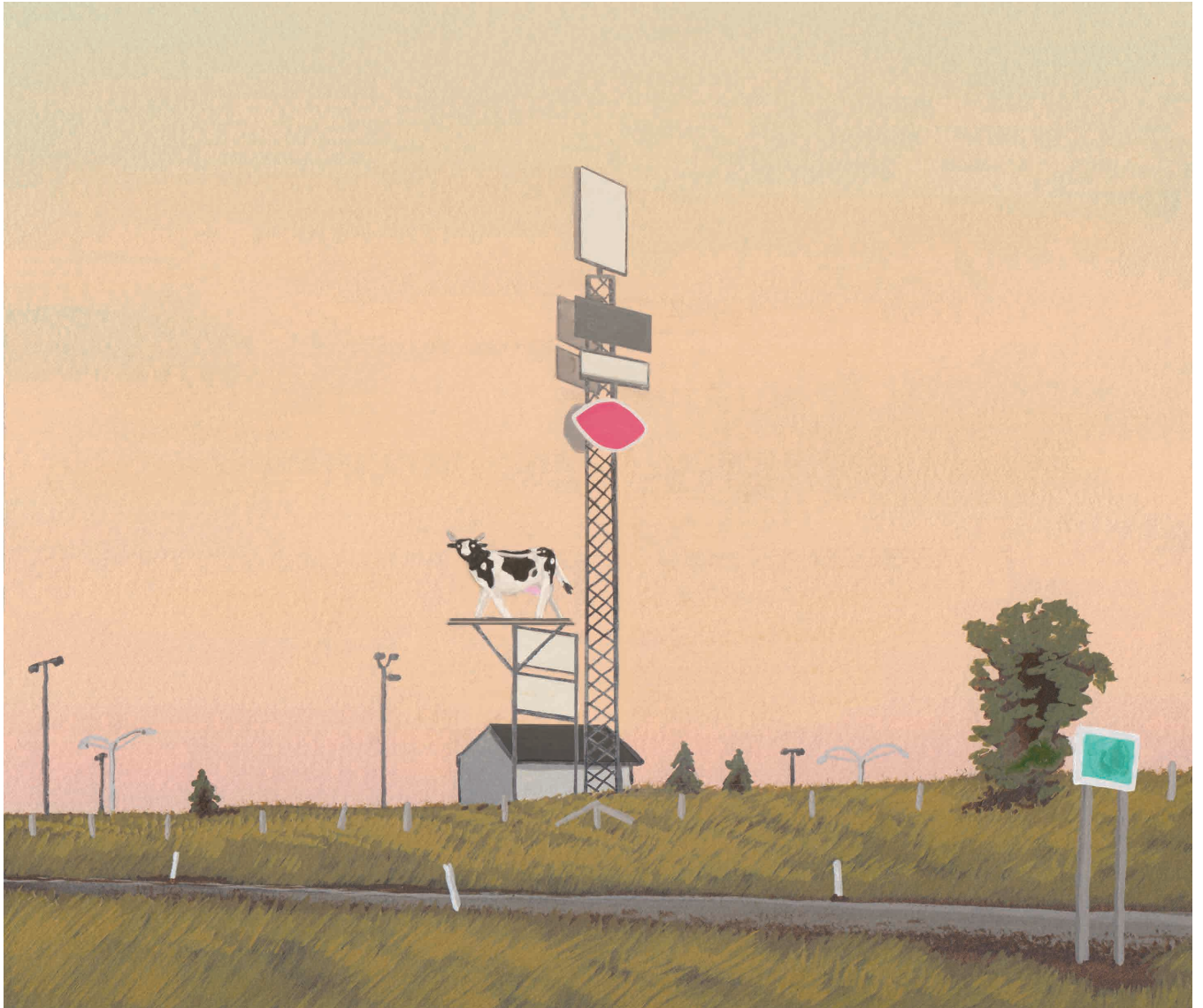
humour and "don't take life too seriously" attitude. The spectrum produces endearing imagery and a relatable visual narrative of her life in small-town Alberta.

From highway signs advertising "divorce-ez.com" to rabbit nests in tall grass to abandoned playgrounds at night, these works transport the viewer to their own adolescence. They spark memories of when one began to grasp the complexity of adulthood, the naive sheen of childhood rubbed away. The piece *Roadside Grave* is an example of this; placed along the sides of highways, wreaths and crosses communicate loss and connect us to a level of understanding of our own mortality and the mortality of those we care about—an understanding we typically experience in our teen years.

Through visual metaphors, the works in this exhibition express the struggle to balance chaos and control. Haley explains, "As a lifelong Albertan, I believe that examples of our own performativity leak into the ways in which we represent and manipulate our landscape, which many of us consider an aspect of our collective identity." Haley encourages viewers to develop relationships with her paintings through their own experiences. What can the landscape teach you about yourself? This is the question Haley asked herself as she developed the series.

This exhibition is curated by Xanthe Isbister, Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre

¹ Gary Hoppenstand, *Critical Insights: The Graphic Novel* (Amelia, NY: Grey House Publishing, 2014), 42.



Forest Fire, 2019, fluid acrylic on paper, 8" x 8", collection of the artist

Biography



Geneva Haley is an illustrator and artist originally from Olds, Alberta, Canada. She credits her rural roots as a key influence in her contemporary work. Haley studied at the Alberta University of the Arts (formally the Alberta College of Art and Design) and completed her Bachelor of Design in illustration.

Haley builds up her lacquered paintings from multiple layers of thinly applied paint. She is driven by her fascination with the obstructed landscape as a personified subject and her interest in communicating realist narratives. She explores ideas of performativity, control, and Western culture through quietly reflective and boldly visceral images.



Fiberglass Cow, Clean, 2019, fluid acrylic on paper, 8" x 8"

Artist Statement

Scraps is a collection of work I've been eager to make for the last three years, and thanks to AFA TREX, I've finally been allowed the opportunity to do so.

The idea originated as a comic book about being a teenager in Alberta and how the natural landscape mirrored the lives of the characters navigating their way through a young city as young people. As an adolescent, the need to be perceived by peers in a specific way can be a dominating force that often overpowers our natural instincts.

This force becomes easier to hide as an adult, but the desire to control how others choose to categorize us can often persist. I believe this tendency can manifest in a certain neurosis that often leaks out of our bodies and is directly reflected in the ways in which we visually render our natural environments.

Through time and distance from my original idea, I've brought this concept into a broadened context. Told through visual metaphors, this is a story of the struggle to balance chaos and

control that we experience as people, told through the lens of the Alberta landscape. As a lifelong Albertan, I believe that examples of our own performativity seeps into the ways in which we represent and manipulate our landscape, which many of us consider an aspect of our collective identity.

How does the landscape react? How does it show its indifference to our wishes in this regard? What can it teach us about ourselves? The environment acts as a personified subject in this narrative, void of any representation of human figures. This encourages viewers to develop relationships with the material through their own experiences. The pursuit of perfection can be alienating, so through a visual in an inclusive, universal language, I hope the viewer can discard shame and make room for understanding, humour, levity and empathy.

List of Works



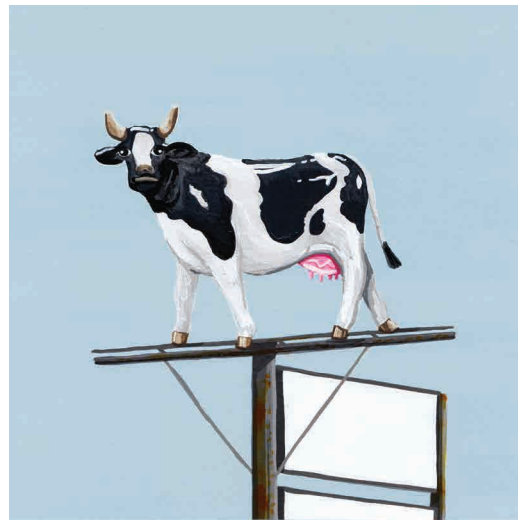
Left to Right/Top to Bottom

Campsite #5
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 10"
Collection of the artist

Everybody Wants In
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist

Everybody Wants Out
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist

House Plot
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 10"
Collection of the artist



Left to Right/Top to Bottom

Fiberglass Cow, Dirty
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist

Hare Burrow
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist

Storm Drain
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist

Fiberglass Cow, Clean
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist



Left to Right/Top to Bottom

Landscaping Garbage
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist

*Nitrogen Cycle,
Forest Fire (1 of 3)*
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 10"
Collection of the artist

*Nitrogen Cycle,
Marked Trees (2 of 3)*
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 10"
Collection of the artist

*Nitrogen Cycle,
Fireweed (3 of 3)*
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 10"
Collection of the artist



Playground at Night
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 10"
Collection of the artist

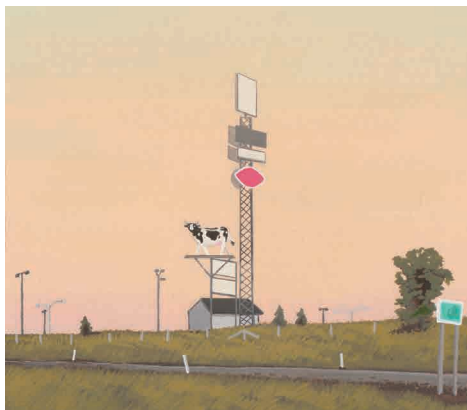


Puddle Dries Up
2016
Fluid acrylic and acrylic ink
on paper
17" x 8.5"
Collection of the artist



Roadside Grave
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist

Semi Truck Billboard
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 10"
Collection of the artist



Left to Right/Top to Bottom

Snow Trampoline
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist

Spray-paint Snowman
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist

Marked Sheep
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist

Forest Fire
2019
Fluid acrylic on paper
8" x 8"
Collection of the artist



Forest Fire, 2019, fluid acrylic on paper, 8" x 8", collection of the artist



Hare Burrow, 2019, fluid acrylic on paper, 8" x 8", collection of the artist

Introduction to Educator's Guide and Lesson Plans

The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program Southeast created this educators' guide based on the exhibition's themes and concepts. It is composed of lesson plans and informative material. We strive to create projects that will inspire individuals to experience our exhibitions beyond the decorative and to explore their own creativity. Educators, writers, curators and artists have all contributed content; we hope you create something amazing from it.



Lesson 1

ACCORDION BOOK

Grades 3–12

Overview

A graphic novel tells a story using sequential illustrations. Geneva Haley explores new ideas regarding what a graphic novel can be by following just one simple rule: all you need is a basic narrative. With this basic narrative, the possibilities are endless. Participants will create their own illustrated narrative in an accordion-style book. This project emphasizes the idea that illustrations create narrative even without accompanying text.

Objectives

Students will:

- Explore sequential narrative through imagery
- Create a book using two-dimensional-drawing materials
- Use creative critical thinking skills to develop a narrative and plan its composition

Materials

Paper for brainstorming and planning
Watercolour or Bristol paper (11 x 14)
Pencil
Eraser
Black artist pen
Colouring materials (pencil crayons, watercolours, etc.)
Tape
Ruler

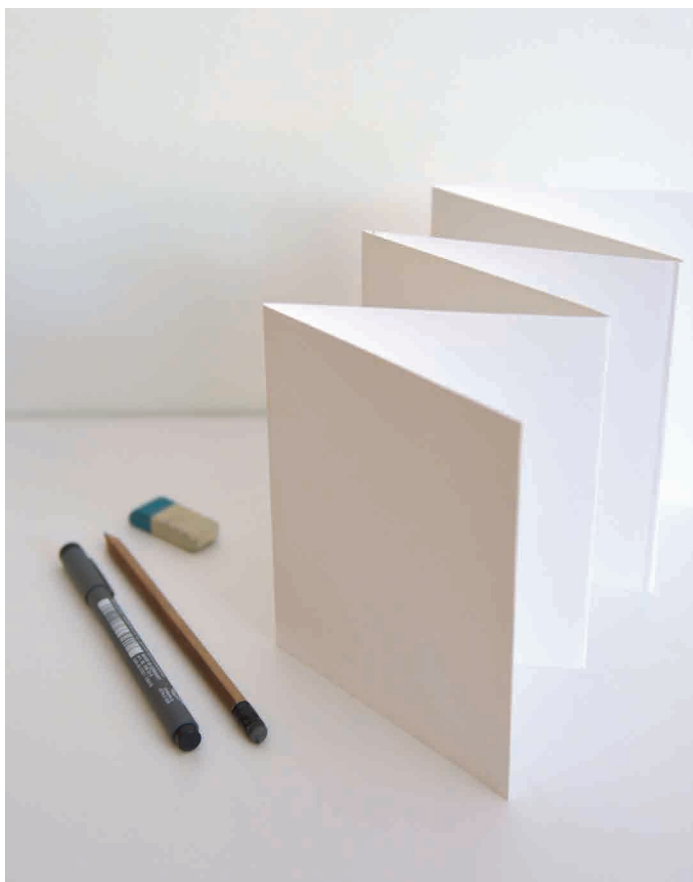
Instructions

Step One

Cut the sheet of watercolour/ Bristol paper in half lengthwise so that you have two pieces measuring 5.5 x 14 inches. Tape the two pieces together (along the back) so that you have one piece measuring 5.5 x 28 inches. Using a pencil and ruler, measure and mark every 4.7 inches along the length of the paper, dividing it evenly. Mark the top and bottom of the paper so you can make even folds. Following the marking guides, accordion-fold the paper into six sections.

Step Two

Brainstorm ideas for a simple story line. Select one and expand on it to generate a rough outline. Think about how your story will begin, what will happen in the middle and how it will end. Remember: you're using only illustrations to create your narrative—there will be no accompanying text.



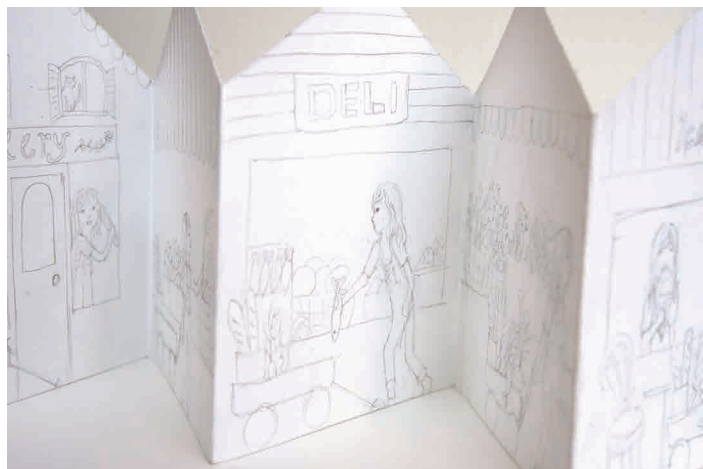
Step Three

Create a storyboard on the back of your brainstorming paper. A storyboard is a sequence of sketches that artists use to visually organize how a story will unfold from beginning to end. Divide the paper into six sections. These sections will correspond with the sections in your accordion book. You may briefly describe the scene under each section. Start roughly sketching the composition of each section.



Step Four

Using a pencil and following your storyboard as a guide, draw your narrative in your accordion book.



Step Five

Once your pencil sketches are complete, use the artist pen to outline them and add any other details. Erase your pencil lines.

Step Six

Add colour to your illustrations using materials of your choice.



Step Seven

Title your narrative and create a title page on the cover of your accordion book.

Variations

Depending on the age of the participants, the accordion book can be shorter or longer, to present a simpler or more complex narrative.





Lesson 2

PERSONIFIED OBJECT

Grades 3–12

Overview

Geneva Haley creates her graphic novels using personified objects. This project will familiarize participants with the concept of personified objects through class discussion and examples. Participants will then create their own illustrations based on a chosen personified object.

Objectives

Students will:

- Gain an understanding of the basic concept of illustration as it differs from other forms of two-dimensional imagery; illustrations are generally created to accompany a piece of writing or portray written content through creative interpretation
- Learn about the concept of the personified object
- Familiarize themselves with simple illustration techniques

Materials

Paper for brainstorming and planning
Watercolour paper or heavy drawing paper
Pencil
Eraser
Artist pen
Watercolours
Paint Brushes
Glass of water



Instructions

Step One

Through a group discussion, familiarize yourself with the definition of personification. Personification is when a thing, an idea or an animal is given human attributes, qualities or abilities. It is a type of metaphor and commonly used as a literary tool. Here are a few examples:

The wind whispered; the water shivered; the greedy weeds choked the flowers; the city never sleeps; the traffic noises argued.

Choose an example generated through the class discussion, or create your own that you'd like to work with.

Step Two

On a blank sheet of paper, roughly sketch out how you could create an illustration out of the example.



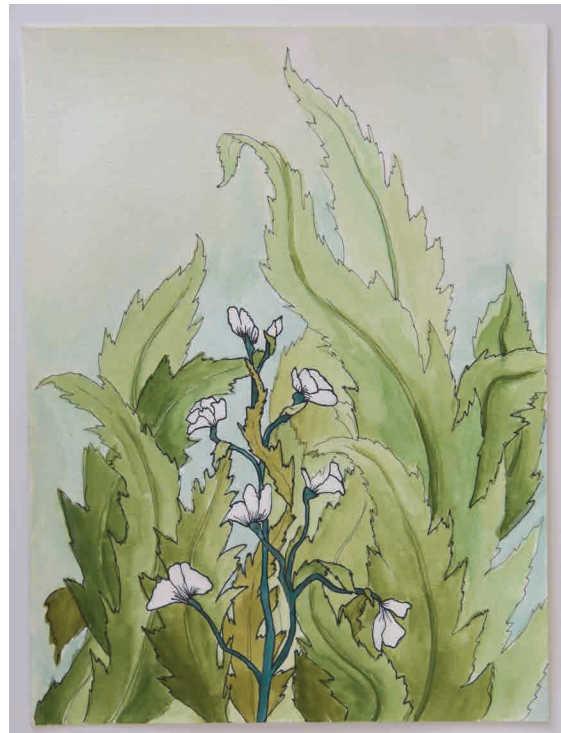
Step Three

Draw your example on your piece of watercolour paper using a pencil. Once the details are complete, use an artist pen to outline them. Finally, add colour.



Step Four

Once your illustration is complete, view and discuss all the illustrations as a class. Can you accurately interpret what the other participants were intending to portray through their illustrations?





Lesson 3

COLLABORATIVE STORYBOARD

Grades K–12

Overview

Artists are influenced by many things—their environments, childhoods and even other artists. When an artist is inspired or influenced by another artist, it can lead them to work together to create something new as a team. This is called collaboration.

Participants will begin their creative process for this project by working together. This project is a modified version of the exquisite corpse method, which was invented by Surrealists in the early 1920s. Each participant will add to the story, taking inspiration from the preceding participant's illustration. When the last image is completed, the whole visual narrative will be revealed.

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about the concept of creative collaboration
- Work creatively and intuitively within the constraints of a continuing narrative
- Create a two-dimensional narrative using various drawing/painting materials

Materials

Drawing paper roll
Pencil
Ruler
Markers
Pencil crayons

Instructions

Step One

Using a pencil, lightly mark out even sections (approximately twelve inches each) along the length of the paper roll. The number of divisions on the paper should correspond with the total number of participants—everyone will have their own section to work within.

You may decide to lay the paper on a flat table or to pin/tape it to a wall.

Step Two

Brainstorm as a group and come up with a simple phrase that will start your visual narrative. Instructors may also decide to lead the project by choosing the phrase themselves. The phrase can be as simple as “In the Forest,” leaving ample room for creative interpretation. Each participant’s contribution should be centred around this phrase.

Once the phrase has been selected, participants can independently brainstorm and think about how they might interpret it.

Step Three

This project could be completed over an extended period of time and simultaneously with another activity, as only one person will be drawing at one time. Give each participant an allotted amount of time in which to complete their section.

So that each frame is visually connected, ask each participant to include a horizon line in the piece, which will be continued by the next participant.

It is expected that participants will approach this activity differently. Some may look at the illustration before theirs and continue the narrative seamlessly, like a graphic novel. Others may be less literal and extend it through colours, shapes and patterns.



Step Four

Once a participant has completed their contribution, the next participant will begin drawing. Each participant will extend the horizon line from the preceding section and will gain inspiration from that section while still ensuring that their drawing is centred around the selected phrase.



Step Five

Once all collaborators have made their contributions, the full visual narrative will be revealed. As a group, participants will reflect on their experience working collaboratively and the impact it had on the narrative. Examine how people may have interpreted the rules differently.



Storm Drain, 2019, fluid acrylic on paper, 8" x 8"

Acknowledgements

This publication was produced in conjunction with the TREX exhibition *Geneva Haley: Scraps* by the AFA Travelling Exhibition Program (Trex) Southeast Region 4, at TREX Space, City of Medicine Hat. *Geneva Haley: Scraps* will tour throughout Alberta to non-traditional gallery spaces August 2019-February 2023. Visit www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca to find out more about the program and locations of each exhibition.

Curator and Editor: Xanthe Isbister, TREX Space, City of Medicine Hat

Education Lesson Plans: Jenn Demke-Lange

Copy Editor: Rachel Small, Faultless Finish Editing

Design: Flag Five

Images: Geneva Haley

Printing: Warwick Printing

A special thanks to:

Geneva Haley, Artist

Joanne Marion, Director of Galleries, Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre

Doug Haslam, Kodama Woodworking

TREX Space

#2 516 3 St. SE

Medicine Hat, AB Canada T1A 0H3

403-527-6682

www.trexprogramsoutheast.ca

ESPLANADE
Arts & Heritage Centre

 **Medicine Hat**
The Gas City

 **TREX**

 **Alberta**
Foundation
for the Arts

ESPLANADE

Arts & Heritage Centre



© 2019 by the Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre, Medicine Hat, Alberta. The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre retains sole copyright to its contributions to this book.

