

IN THE WILD



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TREX Northwest would like to credit the Alberta Foundation for the Arts for the Travelling Exhibition Program. We would like to thank the Art Gallery of Grande Prairie for supporting this region, as well as the following individuals who contributed to the preparation of this travelling exhibition:

Curator & Art Projects: Jamie-Lee Cormier
Preparation & Framing: Robert Swanston & Jordie Isaac
Catalogue Design: Lily Lierman
Published 2025

We acknowledge that we are located on Treaty 8 territory—the ancestral Land of the sovereign Dane–zaa, Nehiyawak, Dene, and Otipemisiwak Nations. We acknowledge the many Indigenous Peoples who have lived and cared for these lands for generations. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude.

The Art Gallery of Grande Prairie also recognizes that Land Acknowledgments are not enough. Through our actions we commit to truth, reconciliation, decolonization, and allyship in support of Indigenous lifeways and wellbeing.

Funded by:



Program Sponsor:



Alberta Foundation for the Arts

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 600,000 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 9,000 artworks showcasing the creative talents of more than 1700 artists. The AFA art collection reflects the development of the vibrant visual arts community in the province and has become an important cultural legacy for all Albertans.



The AFA and TREX partners respectfully acknowledge that the artistic activity we support takes place on the territories of Treaty 6, 7 and 8: lands of First Nations and Métis peoples.





Region 1: Northwest Alberta

In the Wild

Animals and humans have always shared a strong bond, rooted in biology, psychology, history and emotional response. People are attracted to the unconditional love offered to them by animals, and even though we don't speak the same language, animals communicate with us through body language, energy and sound. When we share emotions with animals, it strengthens this connection.

The artwork in *In the Wild* connects viewers with the animals and are draws them in to their calm and quiet space of living. In Shelli Nixon's paintings you are taken into the wild, to the Rocky Mountains, where eagles soars overhead and bear graze. Her pieces connect us to nature, bringing us back to our roots, settling the soul. In Shelli's statement she writes, "I was once told to create what was inside me. As I explored, I realized the soft and quiet things that lived there, that through the curtain of my chaotic, anxious thoughts there rested calm. Where mist and stars cradle mountain peaks, a golden field glows under lazy prairie clouds, or animals cast glances in whirls of acrylic from my brushes."

Then there are Alex Friesen and Mimi Zhang-Mackie who both created delicate watercolour paintings of familiar household and farm animals we can all relate to. A splash of vibrancy and pattern from Katerine Moes folk-art style of paintings give a whimsical addition to the exhibition. As humans we know that animals give off shared emotions whether it is fear, joy, pain or affection. When we witness these emotions, or when they comfort us in ours, it creates a sense of empathy and shared experience with us and the animal.

Curated by Jamie-Lee Cormier © 2025 Art Gallery of Grande Prairie

Thank you to our Program Sponsor:



Lawyers for the journey ahead

Table Of Contents

□	Artist Statements		
	□ Shelli Nixon	- - - - -	1
	□ Katherine Moe	- - - - -	2
	□ Mimi Zhang-Mackie	- - - - -	3
	□ Alex Frisen	- - - - -	4
□	Artwork	- - - - -	5-15
□	How To Look At Art	- - - - -	16-17
□	What is Visual Learning?	- - - - -	18-22
□	Activities		
	□ Tea-Stained watercolour	- - - - -	23-26
	□ Anamalito Paper Sculpture	- - - - -	27-31
	□ Colouring Sheet	- - - - -	32

SHELLI NIXON



' I WAS ONCE TOLD TO CREATE WHAT WAS INSIDE ME. AS I EXPLORED I REALIZED THE SOFT AND QUIET THINGS THAT LIVED THERE, THAT THROUGH THE CURTAIN OF MY CHAOTIC, ANXIOUS THOUGHTS THERE RESTED CALM. WHERE MIST AND STARS CRADLE MOUNTAIN PEAKS, A GOLDEN FIELD GLOWS UNDER LAZY PRAIRIE CLOUDS, OR ANIMALS CAST GLANCES IN WHORLS OF ACRYLIC FROM MY BRUSHES. A TACTILE NEED FOR YARN FIBRES TUFTED IN THE FLORAL FORMS OF MY GRANDMOTHER'S BEADING. MY MIND THINKS IN SHARP POINTS AND EDGES, BUT MY HEART CREATES IN SOFTNESS AND MEMORIES OF THINGS BOTH REAL AND IMAGINED, I WAS TOLD TO CREATE WHAT IS INSIDE ME AND IT TURNS OUT, PEACE LIVES THERE. '

—SHELLI NIXON

Katherine Moe

This collection of artworks is a display of vibrant colours and whimsical patterned animals on canvas. The work involves a collection of freehand and stencilled designs on a black canvas using Posca Pens. These pens in a variety of colours are excellent for mark making and layering hues. The canvas has deep edges and lends the design to be carried from the front to the top and bottom and sides of the support. The small size of the canvas creates an intimacy with the viewer and provides a portable artwork that may be hung on the wall or placed on a table or shelf.

I was inspired to create these artworks following a recent trip to a Mexican Market. I was drawn to the intricate, colourful patterns of the Mexican artwork on their pottery and textiles. Upon returning home I researched the Alebrijes. They are brightly coloured Mexican folk art sculptures, depicting animals, people and objects and imaginary creatures. I liked how the patterns were part of the animal's bodies and began to do my own 2D versions.

My intention with these pieces was to bring a smile or create feeling of friendship when I gifted them to my friends. After making a few pieces, I found it to be a relaxing form of doodling and went on to make several more. Now I try to portray the characteristics of a personal pet, as in fur colour or number of toes, length of tail or ears. Next, I may stretch my imagination and combine animals to make fantastical creatures as done in the original alebrijes.

Mimi Zhang-Mackie

Mimi Zhang-Mackie is a Watercolourist in the Peace country area. She grew up in Jinan, Shandong province of China.

Mimi's creative journey began at a young age with pencil drawing and gouache painting through private lessons and tutors, which she mastered to meet the requirements of art school.

She continued to refine her skills in these mediums throughout Her academic years, while also exploring acrylic, oil, watercolour and Chinese artwork calligraphy.

After moving to Canadian 1999, Mimi focused primarily on Watercolour and became an active member of the art community, join the Federation of Canadian Artists, Peace Watercolour Society and the Beaverlodge Art Club.

Mimi has had her work featured in Federation Art Gallery in Vancouver. SDAG Art Gallery (Gallery 1710) in Delta BC.

Dawson

Creek Gallery in BC. Peace Gallery North in FSJ, Fairview

Fine Art

Gallery and Beaverlodge Cultural Centre.



ALEX FRISEN

Familiar scenes, personalities or memories emerge from black scribbled sketches set loose with puddles of water or whimsical sweeps of watercolor. I primarily work on paper dyed with tea. This creates a feeling of "memory". It also helps me not be too precious about messing up a blank piece of paper.

Working from photos of grandparents homesteads, abandoned buildings that tell a story in their weathered architecture, sentimental childhood homes or even just scenes from the glorious mundane of motherhood and everyday life, my goal is to extract the nostalgia and capture and preserve it.

Creating heals me,
and I want that extended
to those that view my work
as well.



*Bears in
The
Mountain*
Shelli Nixon
Acrylic on
canvas
2025



Strength
Shelli Nixon
Acrylic on canvas
2025



The Pine Marten
 Shelli Nixon
 Acrylic on
 canvas
 2025



The Sunlit Fox
 Shelli Nixon
 Acrylic on
 canvas
 2025



The Owl

Shelli Nixon
Acrylic on canvas
2025



Maximus

Katherine Moe
Acrylic Paint Pen
on Canvas
2024

Rosa Lea

Katherine Moe
Acrylic Paint Pen on
Canvas
2024



Orange, Blue Fish

Katherine Moe
Acrylic Paint
Pen on Canvas
2024

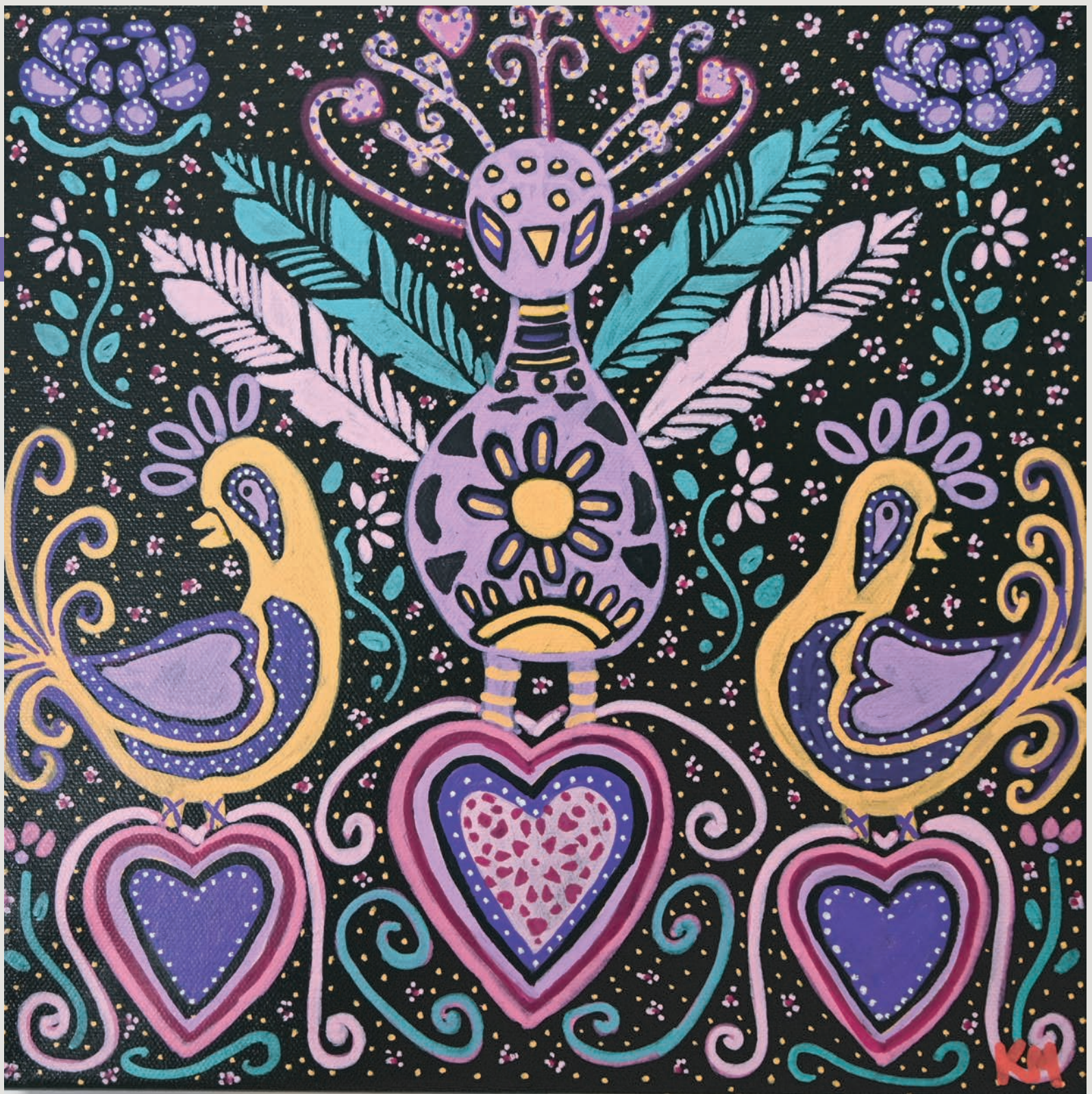


Pink, Yellow Fish

Katherine Moe
Acrylic Paint
Pen on Canvas
2024



Chihuahua
Katherine Moe
Acrylic Paint Pen
on Canvas
2024



Tweedle Lee Dee
Kathrine Moe
Acrylic Paint Pen on Canvas
2025



Koi

Mimi Zhang-Mackie
Watercolour
2024



*Spirit Of
The Peace*

Mimi Zhang-Mackie
Watercolour
2024

Birds of A Feather

Mimi
Zhang-Mackie
Watercolour
2024





Hanging Around
Mimi Zhang-Mackie
Watercolour
2024



A Lazy Afternoon
Mimi Zhang-Mackie
Watercolour
2024



Not Peter Yabbit
 Alex Frisen
 Black tea, ink,
 watercolor and gouache
 February 1st, '25



Four Bags Full
 Alex Frisen
 Black tea, ink,
 watercolor and gouache
 January 22, '25



St Marie, the Buff
Alex Frisen
Black tea, ink,
watercolor and gouache
January 23rd, '25

The Girl with Kaleidoscope Eyes

Alex Frisen
Black tea,
watercolor
and gouache
January 7th,
'25



*Whipporwill,
Whipporwont*

Alex Frisen
Black tea, ink,
watercolor and gouache
December 30th, '24

HOW TO LOOK AT ARTWORK

Based on the Four Stages of Criticism

Age Levels:

K-Grade 3: Do stage 1 and possibly stage 2

Grades 4-6: Do stage 1, 2 and possibly 3

Grades 7-12: Do all four stages

Stage 1: Description

What do we see when we look at a work of art?

- List or describe all that you see. Hint: Start with what you know.
- Describe the subject. What is this a picture of? Landscape, nature, people, animals, flowers, still life, etc.
- Describe the materials used to make this art (medium/materials): Is it an acrylic or watercolor painting? Drawing? Photograph?
- Describe the type of lines. What kind of shapes are used? Natural or geometric? Is there any texture to the surface of the artwork (rough/smooth//dry/wet). Does the work have areas (values) of dark and light?

For Grades 10-12: Describe the style of work. Is it realistic or abstract? Does it have a theme or subject? Can you describe a style that it resembles? For example, Impressionism, Expressionism, Surrealist.

Stage 2: Analysis - Observing Relationships

How is this artwork (composition) arranged?

- List and describe the principles of design (movement, contrast, unity, balance, emphasis, rhythm, scale and space).
- Are there contrasts of light and dark colors?
- Are colors or shapes repeated to create unity or rhythm? Is there a sense of motion?
- Do the objects seem to be close up and in a shallow space or move far back to create deep space and distance?
- Is there one object that stands out and is more emphasized than other objects?

For Grades 10-12:

- Does the artist use complimentary colors against each other to create balance?
- What type of balance is it (symmetrical or asymmetrical)?

Stage 3: Interpretation

What meaning or reasons did the artist have in making this artwork?

This stage is a statement to help make sense of all the observations made in previous stages. It is the most difficult, yet most creative stage. It is the process that makes connections between the artwork and the viewer's personal experiences.

- What do you think this work is about?
- What mood or feeling do you get from this work?
- Why did the artist create this work?
- What do you think the artist thinks or feels about their world?
- Give an explanation of the work or describe the problem the artist is trying to solve. Remember there are no right or wrong answers in the interpretation. Each viewer will bring their own ideas and life experience into their explanations.

Stage 4: Final Conclusion About the Work

What do I think or feel about this work?

Decide what you like or dislike about the work. This is purely subjective, however the decision should be backed with valid explanations and possible ideas as to how the artist could have changed it to make it better.

- Do you like the work? Why or why not?
- What are the strengths about this work?
- What are the weaknesses and how would you change them?
- Has your impression of the work changed after observing and analyzing the piece?

What is Visual Learning?

All art has many sides to it. The artist makes the works for people to experience. They in turn can make discoveries about both the work and the artist that help them learn and give them pleasure for a long time. How we look at an object determines what we come to know about it. We remember information about an object far better when we are able to see (and handle) objects rather than by only reading about them. This investigation through observation (looking) is very important to understanding how objects fit into our world in the past and in the present and will help viewers reach a considered response to what they see. The following is a six-step method to looking at, and understanding, a work of art.

STEP 1: INITIAL, INTUITIVE RESPONSE

The first 'gut level' response to a visual presentation.

What do you see and what do you think of it?

STEP 2: DESCRIPTION

Naming facts - a visual inventory of the elements of design.

Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- What colours do you see?
- What shapes are most noticeable?
- What objects are most apparent?
- Describe the lines in the work.

STEP 3: ANALYSIS

Exploring how the parts relate to each other.

Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- What proportions can you see? eg. What percentage of the work is background? Foreground? Land? Sky?
- Why are there these differences? What effect do these differences create?
- What parts seem closest to you? Farthest away? How does the artist give this impression?

STEP 4: INTERPRETATION

Exploring what the work might mean or be about.

Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- How does this work make you feel? Why?
- What word would best describe the mood of this work?
- What is this painting/ photograph/ sculpture about?
- Is the artist trying to tell a story? What might be the story in this work?

STEP 5: INFORMATION

Looking beyond the work for information that may further understanding.

Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- What is the artist's name? When did he/she live?
- What art style and medium does the artist use?
- What artist's work is this artist interested in?
- What art was being made at the same time as this artist was working?
- What was happening in history at the time this artist was working?
- What social/political/economic/cultural issues is this artist interested in?

STEP 6: PERSONALIZATION

Reaching a considered response.

- What do I think about this work?

Elements of Composition Tour

LINE: An element of art that is used to define shape, contours and outlines. It is also used to suggest mass and volume.

Width: thick, thin, tapering, uneven

Length: long, short, continuous, broken

Feeling: sharp, jagged, graceful, smooth

Focus: sharp, blurry, fuzzy, choppy

Direction: horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curving, perpendicular, oblique, parallel, radial, zigzag

Questions to Ask:

What types of line are there?

How can you describe line?

What are some of the characteristics of a line?



SPACE:

Space is the relative position of one three-dimensional object to another. It is the area between and around objects. It can also refer to the feeling of depth in a two-dimensional work.

Questions to ask:

What is space?

What dimensions does it have?

What do you see in this work?

What is closest to you?

Farthest away?

How do you know this?

In what way has the artist created a sense of space?



SHAPE: When a line crosses itself or intersects with other lines to enclose a space it creates a shape. A two dimensional shape is one that is drawn on a flat surface such as paper. A three-dimensional shape is one that takes up real space.



Questions to Ask:

- What kinds of shapes can you think of?
- What shapes do you see in this image?
- How do the shapes operate in this image?

What quality do the shapes have? Does the quality of the shapes contribute to the meaning or story suggested in the work?

TEXTURE: The surface quality of an object that can be seen or felt. Texture can also be implied on a two-dimensional surface through mark making and media handling.

Questions to Ask:

- What is texture?
- How do you describe how something feels?
- What are the two kinds of texture you can think of in artwork?



Allow your eyes to ‘feel’ the different areas within the work and explain the textures. What kind of texture do you think the artist uses in this work? Real or implied?

COLOUR: Colour comes from light that is reflected off objects. Colour has three main characteristics: Hue, or its name (red, blue, etc.) Value: (how light or dark the colour is) and Intensity (how bright or dull the colour is)



Questions to Ask:

What are primary colours?

Do you see any?

Point to them in the drawing. What secondary colours do you see?

Where is your eye directed to first?

Why? Are there any colours that stand out more than others?

What are complementary colours?

How have they been used to draw attention?

Tea-Stained Watercolor

Inspired by Alex Friesen's paintings you will create a layered watercolour choosing an animal that you love. Whether it's a bunny, dog, horse, or cat, you choose what animal means something to you. Animals and humans have always shared a strong bond, rooted in biology, psychology, history and emotional response.



Materials:

- Watercolour Paper
- Pencil
- Water
- Paper Towel
- Black fine tip pen
- Watercolours
- Brush

Instructions:



Step 1: Steep tea in a container large enough to hold paper. You can put multiple pieces in one container just put one sheet in the liquid at a time to insure full water coverage. Let the paper soak for 1 hour or overnight.



Step 2 : Remove paper and let dry





Step 3 : Once the paper is dry. Choose an animal that you are connected to and start sketching it on your paper. You can use one of Alex's pieces for inspiration or find something online.



Step 4 : When your done sketching the animal, start adding watercolours to your pieces. Try and be loose with your brush strokes. If you want a softer tone add more water to your brush, if you want a more vibrant tone take the water off the brush using the paper towel then add paint to it, this will give you some great colour values.



Step 5: Let the watercolour and paper dry before the final step.



Step 6: Take your black fin tip marker or pen and create some movement and detail in the piece. You can see with Alex's work she uses the pen to outline, mark make and just scribble to give movement and an added layer to her work.

Animalito Paper Sculpture

Inspired by Katherine Moes paintings you will create a 3-Dimensional animal. Katherine created her paintings following a recent trip to Mexico, she was drawn to the intricate, colourful patterns of the Mexican artwork on their pottery and textiles. Upon returning home she researched the Alebrijes. They are brightly coloured Mexican folk art sculptures, depicting animals, people, objects and imaginary creatures.



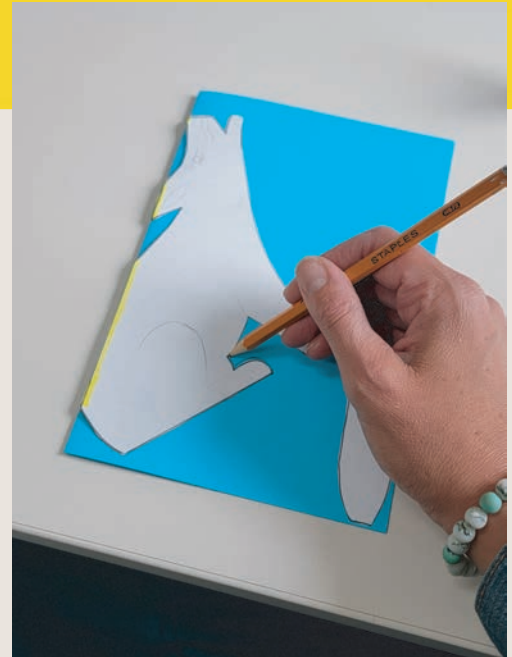
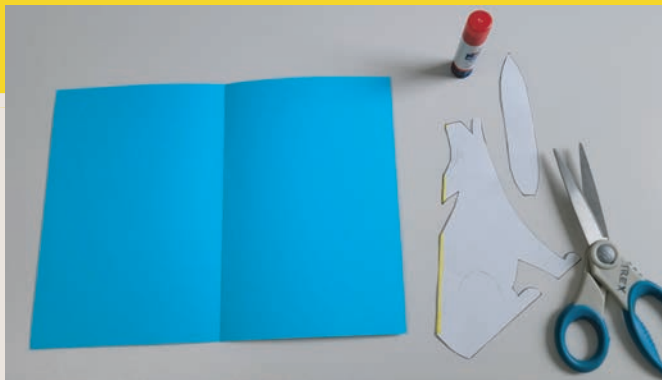
★ Materials: ★

- Pencil
- Gel Pens
- Coloured Cardstock

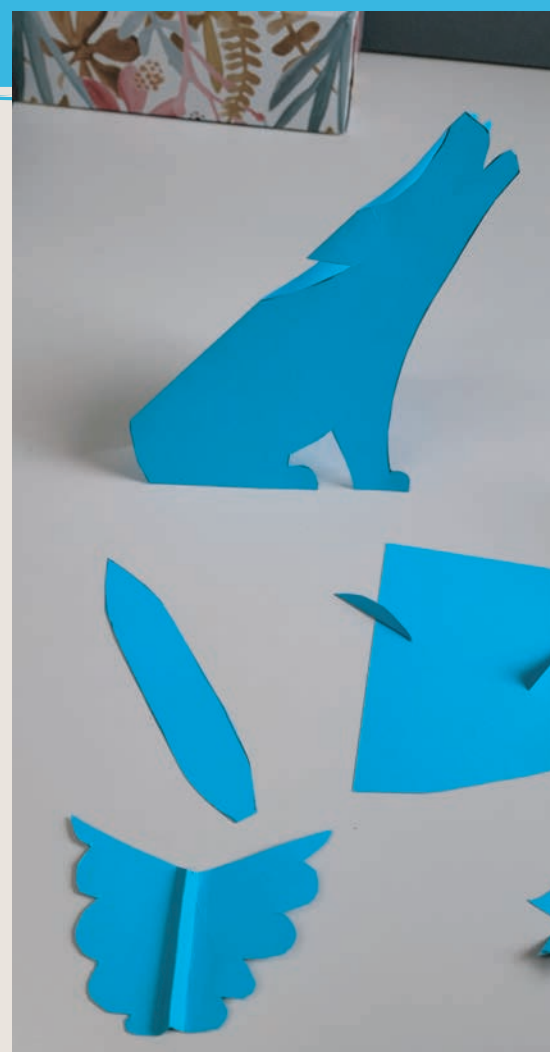
- Glue
- Scissors
- Glitter optional

Instructions:

- Step 1: Take your coloured cardstock and use the stencils provided to trace the horse or wolf. Keep the excess paper to make wings or a horn to add to your animal later.



- Step 2 : Have the students draw the details onto their animal using their pencil such as eyes, mane, mouth etc.. Cut out the animal out.



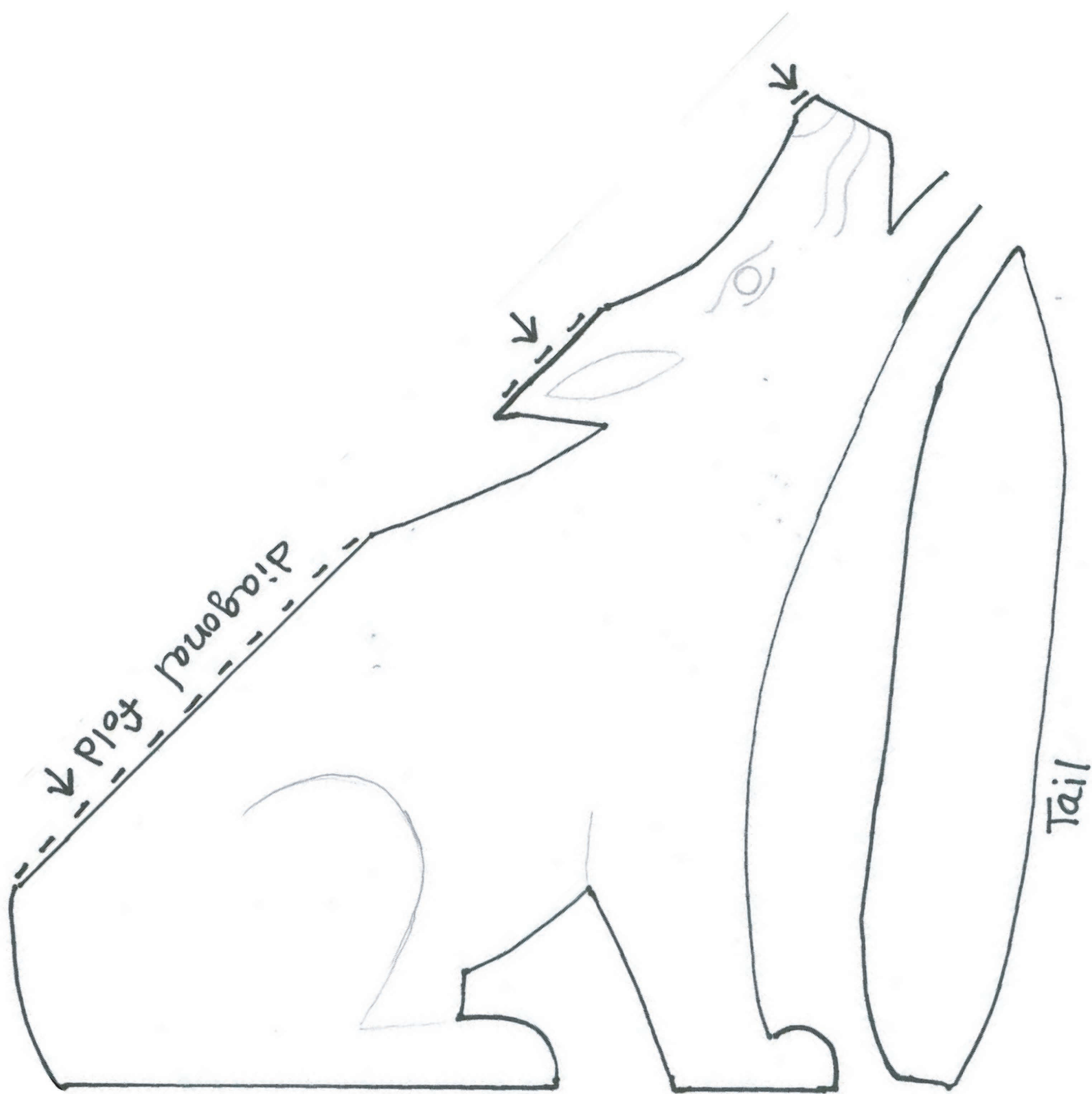
Step 3 : For the horse: you may have

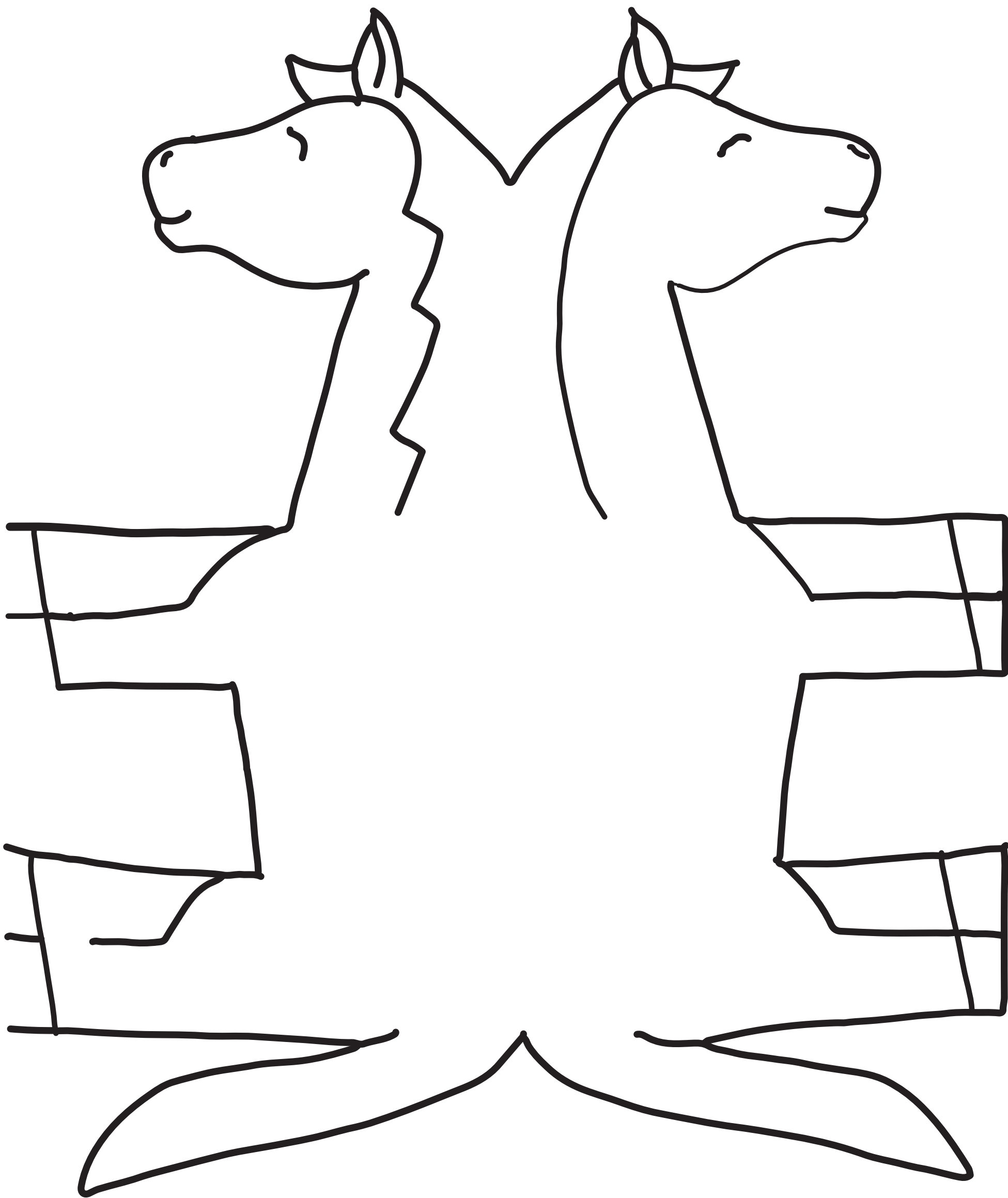
- to help them fold and glue the neck area so the head pops up properly. Fold the neck towards the body. Fold the two angles dotted lines towards the body. Push the neck towards the back fold and then fold the horse in half. Put a little glue on the inside of the head and tail. For the wolf : Fold the tail in half and glue the tail to the back of the wolf. If they wanted to add wings or hore, they can do that now.



Step 4 : Use the gel pens to draw details and add colour to your animal.







Alebrije

Alebrijes are brightly painted carved wooden sculptures found all over Mexico. This cool alebrije coyote forgot his paint. Color him in your way!

