



CANADIAN ARTISTS

GEOFFREY FARMER

Supplies

- Crayola Washable Glue
- Crayola Glue Sticks
- Crayola Acrylic Paint
- Crayola Paintbrushes
- Crayola Scissors
- Recycled Magazines
- Embellishments
- Found Objects
- Masking Tape
- Paper Towels
- Water Containers



Vocabulary collage contrast expressive armature mixed media texture installation

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- interpret and respond to works of art;
- apply the creative process to create a mixed media artwork;
- take creative risks;
- demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity;
- support their ideas with evidence found in the artworks.

Success Criteria

As a class identify 'look fors' that will demonstrate what students have learned, e.g.,

I know I am successful when I have:

- expressed an informed opinion about Geoffrey Farmer's work;
- explained how my work connects to Geoffrey Farmer;
- recorded research notes, drawings and design plans in my sketchbook/journal;
- created an artwork that represents my own ideas;
- taken creative risks;
- created work that is sturdy and well constructed.

The Challenge

1. Describe and interpret Geoffrey Farmer's figures.
2. Create a mixed media artwork that explores identity and is influenced by Geoffrey Farmer.
3. Present your work to your peers.
4. Respond to feedback.
4. Explain how your work and process connect with what you learned about Geoffrey Farmer.
5. Demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Where do artists get their ideas?
- Why do people make art?
- How do artists influence each other?
- What can we learn about ourselves through art?



Mixed Media Techniques

PREPARE

1. Review information about Canadian artist Geoffrey Farmer in particular his installation called The Surgeon and the Photographer.
2. Download images of some of his figures from the Internet.
[The Surgeon and the Photographer, 2009s](#)
[Geoffrey Farmer - Figures](#)
3. Download and display the [Contrast](#) poster available on this website.
4. Review or introduce the principle of contrast.
5. Prior to this project teach and have students practise using the critical analysis process to respond to a variety of artworks.
 - Initial Reaction
 - Description
 - Analysis and Interpretation
 - Expression of an Informed Point of View
 - Cultural Context
6. Use **SEEK™** to help students organize their thinking.

ASSESSMENT

1. Observe students as they work – thoughtful focus, discriminating, seeking more information, elaborating, experimenting.
2. Observe students as they discuss their artworks – speaks with a clear voice, looks at audience while speaking, points to areas in the artwork, provides accurate information, answers questions from the audience effectively.
3. Observe students as they listen – looks at presenter, asks effective follow-up and clarifying questions, supports ideas with evidence found in the artwork.

INTRODUCTION

1. Display the image of [Figures](#) by Geoffrey Farmer that shows the tiny figures displayed with people looking at them.
2. Ask students to look at the image closely for 1 minute without speaking.
3. Invite students to share their first impressions of the scene, and ask probing questions to encourage more responses, for example,
 - They're pretty small. . . "What else?"
 - It looks like a group of mini people, but fantasy people. . . "What do you see that makes you say that?"
 - It looks like giants looking at people from another planet. . . "Could you explain that further?"
 - It's really cool. . . "What do you mean by cool?"
 - It makes me feel like I can hear some whispered conversations. . . "That's interesting, what makes you say that?"
 - They're arranged like they are looking at each other or at the viewer. . . "Why do you think they did that?"

SEEK™

SEE

What do you see?

EVIDENCE

Why do you say that?
What is the evidence?

EXPLAIN

What decisions did the artist make?
Why?

KNOW

What do you know?
What else do you want to know?

Describing and Responding

INTRODUCTION

4. Ask students to write down any questions they have on sticky notes and place them on a 'Wonder Wall', e.g.,
 - Why are there so many people?
 - Where did he get all the different stuff he used?
 - How much did it cost?
 - Why are they displayed like that?
 - Why are they mostly holding something?
 - How long did it take to make one figure?
 - How long did it take to set the whole thing up?
 - Why did he make people and not something else?
 - What is it supposed to mean?
7. Introduce the challenge.

ASKING BIGGER QUESTIONS

Have students sort the questions into several categories, e.g.,

APPEARANCE - 365 small figures
MATERIALS - found objects, cutout photographs
PROCESS - idea, cost, time,
MEANING - message

Guide students to form big questions such as:

- What can we learn about ourselves through art?
- Where do artists get their ideas?
- How does art connect our experiences to the experiences of others?

CREATE

1. Ask students to think about their name and share their stories with a partner.
2. Guide them to ask questions about their name.
3. Have students make a list of things they love or are passionate about, then choose 3 or 4 things to focus on.
4. Ask them to pose questions to explore, e.g.,
 - "What countries are most important to my family history?"
 - "Who was I named after?"
5. Provide each student with 3 shipping tags 6 cm x 12 cm.
5. Ask them to work on both sides of each card using mixed media techniques to explore their identity.
6. Ask them to pose identity questions for each card.
7. Ask them to make a symbolic portrait on one side and a visual response to their question on the other.



Guiding Questions

1. How did you get your name?
2. Are you named after anyone?
3. Do you like your name?
4. What would you call yourself if you changed your name? Why?
5. What does your name mean?
6. How will you decide which questions to use for each card?
7. How can you use paint and textured materials to make the surface of the card interesting?
8. What print materials can you find to symbolize key ideas, your country of origin for example?
9. How can you change something you don't like without starting all over?
10. How can you play with the materials to make something that is unique and shows some aspect of your identity?
11. How does what you are creating answer the questions that go with your card?
12. How can you borrow ideas from others to try in your own way?

Making Thinking Visible



CREATE

8. Have students share their identity cards in small groups explaining what each card tells them about the person who made it.
9. Guide students to think about how they can borrow some of the ideas they saw in Geoffrey Farmer's work and make it their own.
9. Have them **plan** their own identity project that incorporates their small identity cards in a larger sculpture.
10. Encourage them to use the creative process to **share** their preliminary work with peers to get feedback, and then **refine** their works in progress.
11. Observe students as they work.
12. Provide individual assistance and encouragement.



PRESENT

1. Divide students into small groups.
2. Have Group One place their figures on a display table.
3. Ask Group Two to add their figures to the display as if their figures have joined a gathering.
4. Explain that it is okay to move some figures to make room for theirs.
5. Remind them to treat each figure with care and respect.
6. Ask students to take their time and consider how the group of figures looks as a whole.
7. Continue in this way until all the figures have been added.
8. Ask students to walk around the display and choose a grouping that interests them to talk about.

Guiding Questions

- What is one thing you will remember about Geoffrey Farmer? Why?
- How does your identity sculpture remind you of Geoffrey Farmer?
- What was challenging for you?
- How did you deal with the challenge?
- What artmaking skills did you need in order to complete your project?
- What do you still want to learn about making mixed media artworks?
- What were you trying to achieve with your identity sculpture?
- How successful do you think it is? Why?
- What did you learn about yourself by doing this project?

Guiding Questions

- What interests you about this grouping?
- What do you think the figures might be saying to each other?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What surprises you about the figures?
- An art show like this is called an **installation**. How does an installation affect the way you relate to the artworks?

REFLECT and CONNECT

1. Guide students to describe their thinking in a way that allows them to make connections between what they know and what they still need to learn.
2. Conduct a think-aloud so students can hear your process, e.g.,
"I really like the way my sculpture uses materials in unique ways, like the dried grasses for the hair and the old paintbrush for my arm. I wanted to show that I am not afraid to be a bit different and that I love art."
It was a bit difficult making the armature and I was lucky to get help from Alexis. I'd like to try a different kind of armature next time so I can make the figure bend a little more.
3. Provide time for students to write their reflections in their sketchbook/journals.

Making Connections