My Animal Spirit

Pinellas County Museum Partnership with James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art, Dixie M. Hollins High School and Arts4All Florida.
How do you inspire young artists to create a unique and personal piece of art? Well that was the mission of Teaching Artist, Audrey Short, as she led the students of Dixie M. Hollins High School to make art that was influenced by The James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art.

Inspired by the animal spirits that are common in the American Indian genre, the students chose their own animals to depict. They worked with paint and compound to create 3-D versions on canvas. Then the details were added to create the face, some had feathers, raffia, fringe, fur, gems and more. These colorful and playful images burst from the background with liveliness and dynamic personalities.

Not only did they create the images, but the students studied the concepts and meaning behind the animals as they were perceived by the American Indians. A reception was held to share their art with the public and was on display at the James Museum, followed by a tour of the museum with family and friends.
Museum partnerships allow students to tour and be inspired by the artwork. The teaching artist guides the students to create their own work which will then be on display at a reception. This is a win-win for both the students and the museums as the youth find art within themselves and the museum opens their collections to students who might be experiencing an exhibition for the first time. These partnerships, which Arts4All Florida coordinates throughout the state, have led to some wonderful artwork and built new skills and the self-esteem of hundreds of students.
Anna Vanlo

Fox Mask, 2019
Acrylic paint, canvas, joint compound, fabric

My spirit animal is a fox and it is made of newspaper and tape and plaster and I also painted it. What inspired me to make a fox was they have intelligence and wisdom. This art piece shows the moon phases symbolizing how animals feel and the balance between good and evil.
AJ Delgado

Hawk Mask, 2019
Acrylic paint, canvas, joint compound, fabric, feathers

My Native American spirit animal is a Hawk. Hawks are often seen as a symbol of power. They are also symbols of courage and strength. They are associated with protection from enemies. Seeing and dreaming about a hawk can be seen as a warning of danger.
Belinda Bampoe

*Wolf Mask, 2019*
Acrylic paint, canvas, joint compound, fabric

My mask is a rendition of a Native American wolf. Some tributes are that this animal represents power and positivity. Many Tribes held the wolf in such high esteem, movements were patterned after them.
Dale Willever

Antelope Mask, 2019
Acrylic paint, canvas, joint compound, fabric

This is an antelope. Antelopes symbolize grace, strength and intelligence. Antelopes are fast animals.
My piece is a peacock. It is a round shape and bright. The word “peacock” actually refers to the male of the species, while “peahen” is what the females are called. Both sexes display their plumage, and all peafowl can symbolize beauty, confidence and protection with their feathers’ iridescent “eyes.” Peacocks symbolize beauty, balance, wise vision, awakening, immortality, self-confidence, awareness, leadership, self-love and resurrection.
Dilmer Caballero

*Turtle Mask, 2019*
Acrylic paint, canvas, joint compound

The turtle is a sacred figure in Native American symbolism as it represents mother earth. The meaning of the turtle symbol, signifies good health and long life. The turtle has great longevity living up to 150 years.
My mask piece is an owl. The owl spirit animal represents a deep connection with wisdom, good judgement and knowledge. The owl is known for its sharp and keen vision. In Indian American traditions, the owl is called the night eagle. The owl totem represents wisdom and intuitive knowledge.
My piece represents a Native American buffalo. The American buffalo played an important role in Native American folk lore. The buffalo were a good source of food for them, but they were very difficult to hunt and very dangerous. Buffalo have a position of honor and respect as they willingly gave themselves up as food.
James Scholz

**Polar Bear Mask, 2019**
Acrylic paint, canvas, joint compound, fabric

The polar bear is well known and has great cultural importance to Eskimo culture. Polar bears are greatly respected for their strength, courage and spiritual power. Native American shamans frequently called on the spirit of the polar bear.
Joshua Gilly

American Eagle Mask, 2019
Acrylic paint, canvas, joint compound, fabric, feathers

My piece is about a Native American eagle. The eagle is by far the most honored creature. It is a symbol of love, friendship, honor, bravery, mystical powers, freedom and strength.
Kelly Batchelor

Painted Horse Mask, 2019
Acrylic paint, canvas, joint compound, fabric

My animal is a painted horse. It is different colors. Horses were painted by Native Americans with symbols before going into battle. The symbols had a magical or spiritual significance. I worked really hard on my painted horse.
Lee Struther

Crow Mask, 2019
Acrylic paint, canvas, joint compound, fabric, feathers

The crow is considered a totem animal since ancient times as it was usually believed that the crow was a symbol of bad luck and death, but it is not always the case. The Native Americans believed seeing a crow was good luck.

A crow may also be a symbol of life, magic or mystery. It also symbolized intelligence, flexibility and destiny. Crows are known as clan animals.
Emily and teaching artist, Audrey Short.
Student artists from Dixie M. Hollins High School at the James Museum.
Dixie M. Hollins High School students.