

# Ray School

## ANIMAL ARTS



**Grade:** 4th

**Teacher:**

Marie Schilling

**Artist(s):**

Nambi Kelley- dancer and theater artist

Treasure Smith - visual artist

Christina Stockwell- musician

**Academic Content and Learning Skills:**

Science, Language Arts, Social Studies and Understanding Pluralism

**Arts Content:**

Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama and Literary Arts

### Overview

Inspired by the idea that in many cultures animals symbolize human values, and that in these cultures animals are imitated through mask-making, dance and music, the students explored an animal of their choice through research and a variety of art forms, culminating in a public performance and a student publication.

### Research and Inquiry

Students selected their own animal, and researched its appearance, behavior, and habitat.

### A Variety of Hands-on Approaches to Generating and Representing New Knowledge

Introduced to the idea that humans identify attributes with specific animals, the students explored their animals by making masks, by creating music, and through improvisational dance and drama.

### Connecting Hands-on Activities to Applied Analytical Thinking

Students studied myths and stories in which animals acquired some physical characteristic as a result of some human-like behavior, and abstracted the structure of these myths. They then wrote their own "pourquoi" stories.

### Field Research from Sources Outside the School

Natural History Museums are a valuable resource, since they contain both specimens of animals as well as animal masks.

### Assessing, Presenting, Teaching Others, and Engaging Parents and Community

The unit concluded with a celebration in which students performed their animals for their parents.

- Students also published a book of the stories, artwork and music they had developed.
- Students created their own written evaluation of the unit.

### Time Frame

Four weeks.