

CREATIVE ARTS

How does the film convey the *feel* of the Arctic? How does it give us a sense of how Ada felt? Art gives us more than just the facts and how things look. It can make us see and think differently and it sometimes makes us feel things that we can't always explain with words.

Michelle Williams Gamaker used objects from more than one culture, but brought them together in the film, demonstrating that ideas and stories from different cultures can overlap and relate to one another. These can sometimes be in unexpected ways or make us see new connections. People's experiences in different cultures and historical periods also overlap. Michelle uses her imagination to link different cultures into Ada's dream world.

Art Activity

Dream Figure

Ask the children to shut their eyes and imagine a helpful animal, person or magical being that might visit them in a dream. This could be done with music playing or spoken prompts to encourage them to take time and use their imaginations.

Give each child a piece of modelling material. This could range from plasticine, playdough, salt-dough or anything similar to pottery clay, depending on what is available. Self-hardening clay such as Newclay is ideal and will be assumed as the medium. Use playdough for a shorter activity with no drying time.

Show the children how to shape and join pieces. Keep the figure small (easily held in one hand) and simple and then add on extra details. The children will discover the limits and abilities of the clay. Newclay can start to dry out with overworking but can be softened again with water.

- Paint the figures when the clay is dry
- When the first layer of paint is dry, features and small details can be added with pen or a fine brush, sequins or ribbons can be glued on. Encourage the children to be creative and imaginative in their finishing of the figures.
- Figures can also be coated with diluted PVA which will act as a layer of varnish, but this is optional.
- Write a label for each figure and what 'gift' it brings to them in the dream. Arrange the figures carefully in a display.



The 'Academic Octopus' and the 'Magic Duck' created by Christine Johns as examples of possible dream figures.

Encourage the children to handle the clay figures with care, as in the film.

Do you think the way we see the objects in the film being handled so carefully, by a conservator with white gloves, helps to create the same sense of care and attention to Ada's story?

We don't all need to wear white gloves like the curators in the film, but we can all take care of our own creations, those of other people and in the same way we can take care of the stories people share with us.

Art Activity

Figure in an Arctic Landscape

The figure in a landscape a common theme in art. Ask the children to paint or collage an imagined arctic scene, focusing on a sense of scale.

- What proportion of the scene will be land or water or sky?
- What colours and textures can be used to convey the sense of the Arctic environment?
- Is it summer or winter? Light, dark or twilight?
- Are there any birds or animals visible? Would these look large or small in the environment?
- When the picture is finished, draw or paint a small figure and carefully cut it out. Try putting the figure in different places on the landscape to create the sense of being small and isolated in a big landscape. Glue the figure on when you have chosen a spot you are happy with.



Example of a figure in the landscape collage created by Christine Johns

This activity can be done individually or in small groups. The whole class could work on a big picture for display.

Group activity

Make a film or PowerPoint

Provide a selection of objects and small figures for the children to choose from. Or ask them to bring a small figure or toy in from home.

- Work in small groups to create a story using these figures and draw a story board with about 6 frames.
- Make a backdrop or environment, or use a sand tray, and photograph or film the objects to capture the story.
- Use the photographs to make a PowerPoint presentation, or join and edit the film clips to make a sequence.
- Write a script or story which can be recorded and layered over the film or PP, or it could be narrated by the children while showing the PP.
- Maybe add music.
- Don't show the slides or film stills too quickly, think about the pace!



Examples of 'environments' that could be used for film sequences created by Christine Johns

Be as creative as possible within the limitations of digital and technical abilities and the skills and software available. Smartphones can produce great films but may not be available in school. Remember that simple can be just as effective. Six PowerPoint slides shown for 10 seconds each could be a very atmospheric minute! Refer back to *The Silver Wave* film for inspiration.