

# Family Art from Home

## Letting Loose

by Ophelia Cornet

*"Every child is an artist; the problem is how to remain a child once we grow up!"*

-Pablo Picasso

One of my favorite lesson plans that I facilitate at Albuquerque Museum is this Marc Chagall inspired drawing exercise. You can search for examples of his work online.

I often ask adults to use their non-dominant hand to drive the point home that we are drawing in an ethereal, dreamlike way. The goal is not to draw realistically but rather explore our feelings and develop a narrative of a moment in our personal life through a dream-like lens.

This is also a good exercise in watching our self judgement, accepting it but also being kind to ourselves and enjoying the moment. See what comes out of your pen or paintbrush and view it with curiosity.

### Supplies Needed

- Black waterproof ink but any kind of dark marker, ink, or pen will work as well
- Chalk pastel to fill in areas with color
- Oil pastel to add detail
- Sturdy paper to draw on

### How to Do It

#### Prompts

1. Imagine a gathering such as a birthday, holiday, picnic etc.
2. Choose two or more characters including yourself (real or imagined)
3. Think of each person's qualities and which animal best reflects those qualities. Turn that person into an animal or part animal. For example, a chicken upper half and normal human legs. A person with a lion's mane and tail. Have fun with this. Don't overthink it!

#### Elements to Consider

- Skewed dimension; changing the size of things in usual ways
- Non-representational colors (ex. purple grass, blue horse). Think about what certain colors evoke for you personally.
- Transformation or metamorphosis such as from a caterpillar to butterfly
- Floating characters
- Drawings going off the page
- Patterns
- Dreamlike imagery

#### Steps

1. Take some deep breaths. Make sure you are in a comfortable position. Sometimes standing can help us draw bolder and larger lines. If you want to, use your non-dominant hand to draw your lines. While you draw your scene, keep in



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mind what is in the foreground and draw that first, especially if there are overlapping objects. If you like, practice on another piece of paper first.

2. Fill in areas with chalk pastel using the side of the pastel to create an even surface texture. Avoid covering your black drawing lines. Using clean fingers, blend the chalk pastel into the paper. The coloring steps can be done with the dominant hand.

3. Add finishing details with oil pastels. Voila!

### Parent's Note

As adults, making art can seem like a skill to be learned by remembering rules and stiff techniques, but a child begins making art without knowing the rules, and so they are not afraid to break them. They simply enjoy drawing the idea that's in their head, and so they are more connected to the senses and feelings they put into the art rather than the perfection of a finished product. Hopefully this exercise helps all ages connect to that same place within themselves.

