

The Art of Toys

Zaks and the art of Kenneth Lochhead

©Monique Martin www.moniqueart.com



All images by Grade 1 and 2 students

Objectives:

Expose the children to the art of Kenneth Lochhead

Encourage creation and drawing from life through the use of Lego still life pieces.

Encourage the attention to detail that drawing these objects requires

Teach the children how to draw a cube in three dimensions

Encourage the children to use colour so that it is balanced and interesting for the viewer

Work on the fine motor skills of the young children by using very small brushes to paint the very small square on the lego creations.

I chose to use the art of Kenneth Lochhead for this unit as his work utilizes bold line and dynamic composition and he creates work in various forms. I focused on his abstract work but also on his whimsical work where interesting creatures were invented and painted by him. I had the children create things using Zaks and using Lego. Both the Lego and the Zaks were incorporated into the final pieces focusing on toys. The children were very excited about using their own creation as inspiration and worked very hard to draw each detail on the piece they created.

I did this unit with grade 1-3 but it would be very successful up to grade.

When viewing the art of Kenneth Lochhead be sure to point out his use of colour and his use of creation in his later work. Some of his later work appears as childrens imaginations would when playing with their toys on the floor.

Ken Lochhead was born in Ottawa in 1926. His major art training came from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia (1945-1949). At the same time, Lochhead studied at the Barnes Foundation, Merlon, Pa., from 1946 to 1948. Several scholarships allowed him to study in England, Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland and western Canada. After several short assignments, Lochhead was hired by the University of Saskatchewan, Regina College, in 1950 to direct the School of Art. He was also charged by Dean Riddell to develop what became the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery.

Under Lochhead's guidance, both the School and the Gallery flourished, attracting vibrant personalities and generating excitement. At this time Lochhead developed a distinctive style, producing such notable works as "The Kite" (1952), "The Dignitary" and "The Bonspiel" (1954). As well, he began to win major commissions, completing an enormous wall mural at Gander Airport in Newfoundland in 1957-58.

It was Lochhead's creation of the Emma Lake Artists' Workshops, however, that attracted the most attention to the prairie region. With the summer series led by such New York artists as Herman Cherry, Barnett Newman, Kenneth Noland, and Jules Olitski, international attention was suddenly focused to the north. The results were tremendous: a veritable burst of excited experimentation and innovation. Lochhead himself produced such abstract works as "Blue Extension" and "Dark Green Centre" (1963).

With [Art McKay](#), [Ron Bloore](#), Ted Godwin, and [Doug Morton](#), Lochhead displayed his paintings at the National Gallery of Canada in 1961 in the show "*Five Painters from Regina*". In 1964, however, he was the first to leave Regina, accepting a teaching position with the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. He did not stay there, but went to York University in Toronto and finally to the University of Ottawa where he remains today.



Zaks were invented by James Zeiglar. I was unable to find much information on the invention which was disappointing. The children were very curious as to why he called them Zaks.

Resources

The Canadian Inventions Book - Janis Nostbakken and Jack Humphrey

Canada Invents - Susan Hughes

Inventors and Inventions - Lorraine Hopping Egan

Canadian Women Invent - Annie Wood

Materials

Zaks and Lego creations that the children made at home (I sent a note home for them to bring these in Ziploc bags and it was very successful)

Watercolour paint- I purchased the Prang and Crayola pans colours with 6 per set

Small paintbrushes (I used synthetic # 00, 1 and 2 H.J. Series)

Blank newsprint 11x17

Cartridge drawing paper 11x17

Fine tip markers

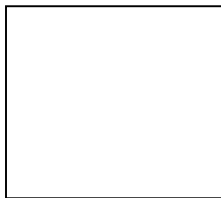


Procedure

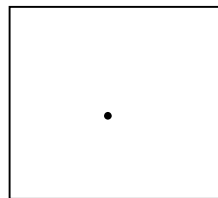
Have the children create a Zaks piece that is a cube. Place the cube in the center of the table.

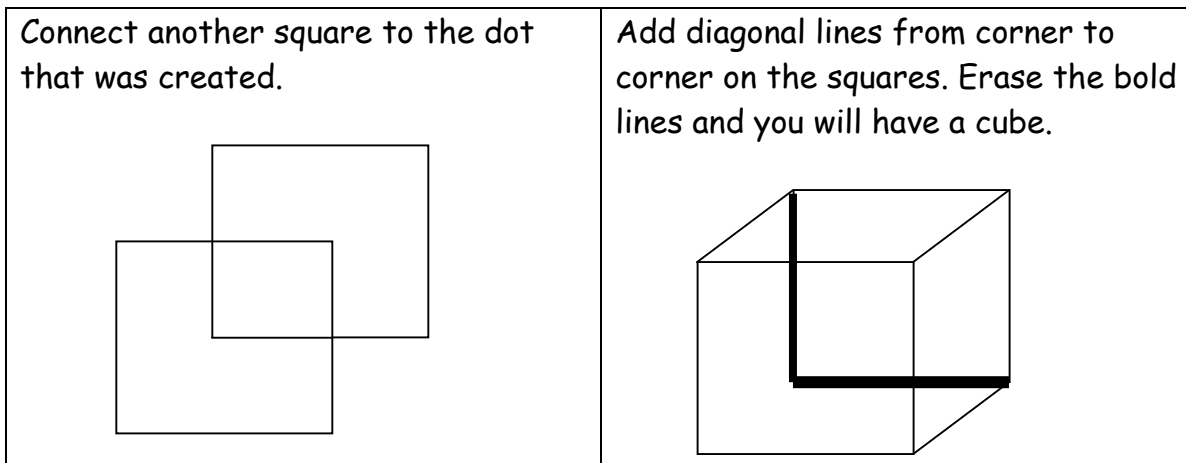
Take them through step by step on how to draw a cube.

Draw a square in the center of the page.



Make a dot in the center of the square.





The second time I had them draw cubes using isometric dot paper.

Draw more than one cube on top of each other using isometric dot paper.

(Scan and insert)

Create other Zaks objects and try to draw them showing all details.

The second week I put the call out for the children to bring Zaks and Lego. I asked that the creations not be overly large.

The children began a rough sketch on 11x17 newsprint. I use newsprint because they will be tracing the rough draft to the good copy.

Draw in detail what they see. We had a small discussion about what numbers of objects are the most favorable in a work of art. We focused on 1, 3, 5 and 7. I discouraged them from placing one Lego creation on the left of the piece and one on the right. With the older children I also encouraged them to overlap objects to create a sense of depth.

Many of the children even drew the little dots on the top of the Lego, which allows the cubes of Lego to stick together. They drew the little square pieces on the Zaks, which allow them to stay together and rotate. Encourage the students to use as much detail as possible.

When they are done their rough draft they can begin tracing their good copy. The children used paper clips to hold the papers together and trace on a window.

When done they used very small brushes to paint the pieces. I taught them how to use very little water so that the paint doesn't run where they don't want it to be. The children can use a piece of paper towel to blot the brush in between changing colours. The step between washing out one colour and getting another is when most children end up with too much water in their brush and then accidentally get too much water on their paper. Emphasize that the background is as important to a painting as the image that is drawn. Some of the student made carpet like background, others made grass and others flooring like images.

When the pieces are dry they can trace over the lines of the image with a fine tip marker.

Title the pieces.

