



MAKE YOUR OWN PLANIMALS BY KAREN WILLIAMS

PLANT, ANIMAL, MINERAL OR PLANIMAL?

We usually put nature into three groups; plant, animal or mineral. But what about *planimals*? Have you heard of these?

What is a planimal?

A *planimal* is a fun term for a life form that is both plant and animal. A scientific equivalent would be mixotrophs. Think of algae, plankton, fungi, sea anemone, green sea slugs or coral (also mineral!).

Planimals and mixotrophs are awesome as they defy simple plant / animal categorisation and highlight the amazing, magical, curious mysteries of our planet. We have so much yet to learn about the earth. Scientists are discovering new things all the time!

You are going to make your own fun planimals.



STEP 1

GATHER YOUR MATERIALS:

Glue, scissors, paper, thin, easy-to-cut cardboard (cereal box or other cardboard packaging), coloured pencils, felt pens, crayons, old magazines (optional), printer (optional).

COLLAGE AND COLOUR MATERIALS:

Improvise and experiment and use whatever you have available. Here are some ideas:

Pens, pencils, paint, crayons, magazines, junk mail, food packaging, gift wrap, wool, fabric, postage wrappers, leaves...

STEP 2

CREATE THE SHAPES:

Begin with simple, fun, lumpy organic shapes inspired by the natural world. Karen has drawn some you can use (print out the templates) or have fun drawing your own.



STEP 3

GLUE THE SHAPES ONTO CARDBOARD:

This makes them stronger so you can have fun playing around and assembling the planimals later. You can glue the whole sheets of paper onto the cardboard and then cut them out, or cut out your shapes first then glue those to cardboard. The second way is more fiddly but uses less cardboard.

STEP 4

COLOUR AND COLLAGE

This is the fun part! Try out different colouring, pattern and texture techniques onto spare paper using your pens, paints and/or crayons (There are some ideas for this below).

- Cut up some colours and textures and patterns from old magazines.
- Use some recycled materials from your kitchen.
- Try used gift wrap, fabric offcuts, yarn or leaves! See what you can find at home and get inventive.

Choose your favourites to collage onto your planimal shapes. It is fun to not have an end plan at this stage - just have fun colouring-in and decorating the abstract shapes.

MOUTHS: Use a few different shapes to function as mouths. Karen coloured hers pink or red as that is instantly recognisable as a mouth. But you could try other colours. You may choose not to have a mouth for your character. Eyes can sometimes be enough to bring a critter to life.



1. Print using foam fruit tray drawn into with pen.
2. Crayon dots over felt pen
3. Layered loose scumbling: “scribbling in circles” felt pen over pencil.
4. Oil crayon over felt pen, scratched back.
5. Paint stamp (using the top of a pen) over crayon
6. Print using fruit foam packaging and acrylic paint.
7. Multiple layers of oil pastel with different colours smoothed together.
8. Frottage: crayon rubbing over textured surfaces (like the net from a fruit bag) over pencil.
9. Felt pen dots over scribbly pencil.
10. Crosshatching using 2 colours: change direction of pen marks
11. Tight scumbling different coloured pencils.

That’s just a few simple ways to use fun textures and patterns for your planimals. You can keep playing around until you discover more.

STEP 5

ASSEMBLE YOUR PLANIMAL:

Now you should have a good assortment of coloured and interesting shapes, large and small. You can start trying out different combinations, moving pieces around until you like what you see.

If you want to fix the pieces permanently, glue the eyes and mouth in place. Then glue the shapes into place onto another piece of cardboard. By now your planimal will be a couple of layers of paper and a couple of layers of cardboard. They should be starting to feel quite sturdy and coming to life.

STEP 6



IDEAS:

- Leave the shapes loose and unglued to create a stop motion animation (as Karen did for the video).
- Collaborate with your friends and take turns to add pieces. See what you come up with together.
- Create a little diorama world for your planimal/s using an old box and your left over collage pieces.
- Make a background (use your left over collage pieces) for the planimals and display them in a frame (from a thrift store, or make a frame from cardboard).
- Make a few *Planimals* to display on a garland / banner.
- Paint or collage over an old gift card or use thin cardboard from food packaging to make a birthday or thank you card.
- Maybe you have other cool ideas for your planimal? Make up your own!
- Share your planimals on Instagram or Facebook with the hashtag #UmbrellaPlanimals