

# *Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland*

Education and Programming Resource

## **Lesson Idea 3**

### **See Yourself at the Seashore**

(pop-out activity developed by the Wadsworth Atheneum)

#### **Grade levels 3 and up**

#### **Summary**

Using inspiration from images of the beach at Coney Island and the template included in the education outreach kit and sample cardstock, invite students to use their imaginations to sketch themselves at the seashore.

#### **Objectives**

- Students will understand the concepts of foreground, middle ground, and background.
- Students will use their imaginations to explore going to the beach
- Students will understand the concept of perspective, two-dimensional, and three-dimensional
- Students will understand the elements of landscape
- Students will understand the concepts of proportion and scale
- Students will understand the difference between realism and abstraction
- Students will include details learned about the Coney Island beach to place in their crafted two-dimensional version

## Materials Needed:

- Cardstock
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencils
- Color pencils, markers, or crayons

## Lesson Time

- One class period to spend time in the exhibition *Coney Island: Visions of An American Dreamland* and to study the imagery of the Coney Island seashore and other beaches.
- One class period to introduce the drawing activity and demonstrate the pop-out technique.
- One class period to display and discuss each student's drawing

## Lesson Procedures

### Step One

Following time spent in the exhibition *Coney Island: Visions of An American Dreamland*, discuss the Brooklyn seashore at Coney Island in the past and present using images online, from the exhibition, and/or included as Coney Island postcards in the education outreach kit. Ask students "What details do you notice in this image? How is this beach scene similar and/or different from beaches or shorelines you have experienced? What do you like about a beach? What do you dislike?"

### Step Two

Introduce the drawing activity and invite students to place themselves in an imagined seashore that they will design. Ask them to think about the following questions before beginning: "What do you see in front of you? Behind you? What sounds do

you hear? What smells fill the air? What is happening? How does it feel to be here?"

### **Step Three**

Demonstrate how to use the template to create a scene that “pops” back to suggest a three-dimensional perspective. Point out the potential foreground, middleground, and background areas on the template. Invite students to fold the paper in half (the short way) then measure, mark, and carefully cut two four-inch long slits in the cardstock. Show them how to bend the fold back the other way to get the inside space to “retreat.” Have students fold back the edges of the card at the top and bottom of the cuts so there is a foreground area (the area around edges closest to you that suggests a frame) and a middleground and background area (the inside square area formed by the cuts).

### **Step Four**

Have students shade in a beach area, sky, water, etc. and add details to best describe the environment. Invite students to sketch themselves (to scale) in the environment (perhaps in the background, or in the foreground, or middleground). Discuss that items appearing in the background or furthest away are the smallest to scale—to create a realistic perspective and give the image depth. Students can use a variety of drawing media to execute the drawing.

### **Step Five**

When completed, invite students to share their stories about each beach environment in which they placed themselves. Ask the students if their beach environments are real or imagined, and what stories or memories the drawing evokes.

## **Connections to National Visual Arts Standards (grade 4 example)**

### **Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.**

*Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.*

VA:Cr1.1.4a Brainstorm multiple approaches to a creative art or design problem.

VA:Cr1.2.4a Collaboratively set goals and create artwork that is meaningful and has purpose to the makers.

*Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.*

VA:Cr2.1.4a Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches.

VA:Cr2.2.4a When making works of art, utilize and care for materials, tools, and equipment in a manner that prevents danger to oneself and others.

*Refine and complete artistic work.*

VA:Cr3.1.4a Revise artwork in progress on the basis of insights gained through peer discussion.

### **Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.**

*Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.*

VA:Re8.1.4a Interpret art by referring to contextual information, and analyzing relevant subject matter, characteristics of form, and use of media.

VA:Reg.1.4a Apply one set of criteria to evaluate more than one work of art.

## **Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.**

*Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.*

VA:Cn10.1.4a Through observation, infer information about the time, place, and culture in which a work of art was created.