

Real and Pretend Dreams

EXHIBIT NAME: Geometric Mouse: Variation I, Scale A, Claes Oldenburg, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
<http://hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/record.asp?Artist=Oldenburg&OnView=1&hasImage=1&ViewMode=&Record=1>

CONCEPT: This lesson introduces the concept of dreams and explores what dreams are. We will also think about shadow and light and whether shadows are real or pretend. The lesson was written for preschool children ages 3 – 6.

OBJECTIVES: After participating in this activity the children will be able to:

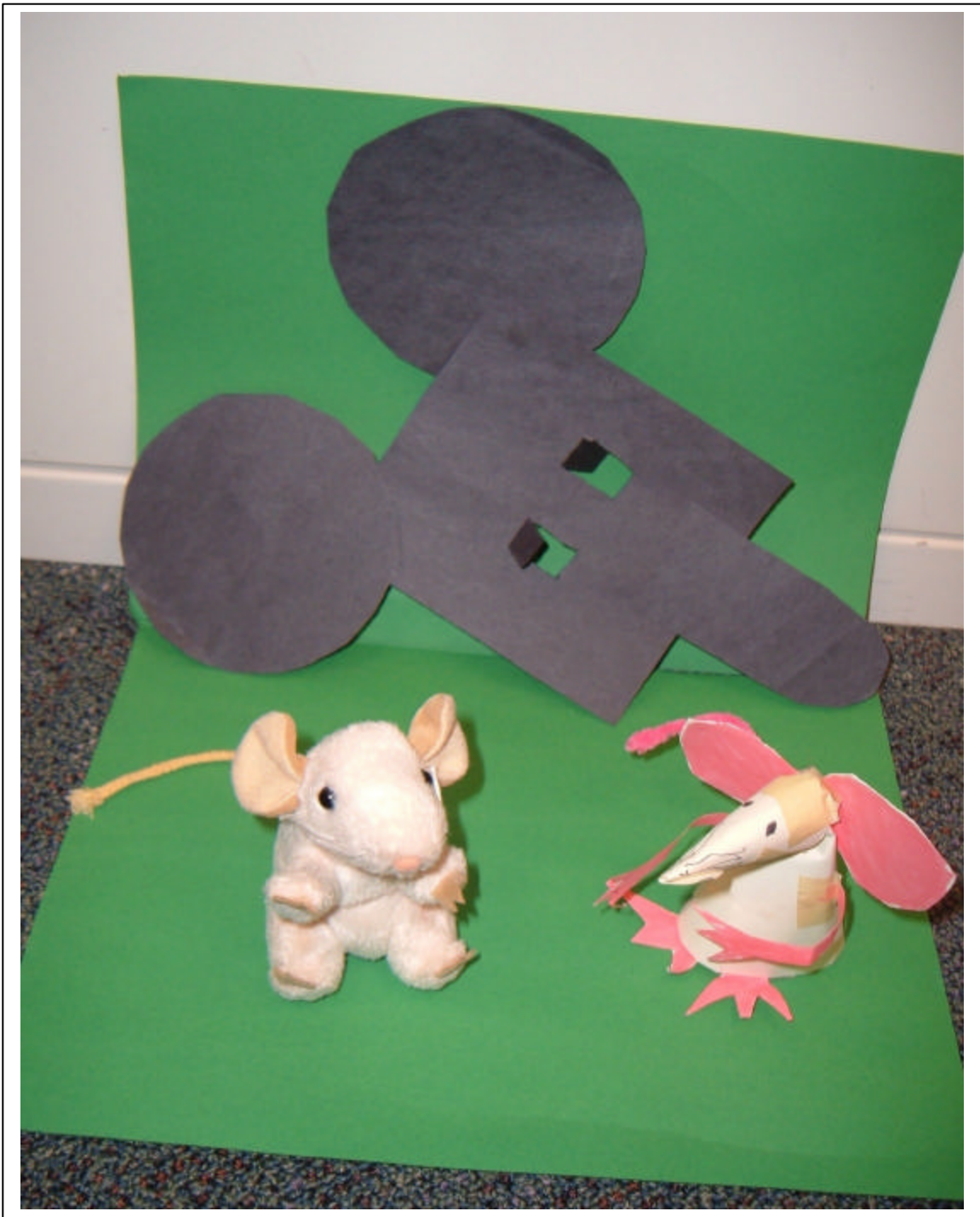
1. Talk about dreams
2. Broaden their understanding of light and shadow
3. Identify geometric shapes – circle, triangle, rectangle, square
4. Create a dream-like art work

PRE-MUSEUM ACTIVITY: The museum educator will begin by asking the children, “What is a dream? Do you ever dream?” Then she will tell the children that we will read a story that features a paper mouse. The museum educator will show the students a realistic puppet mouse. In what way does the puppet seem real? She will show them a paper mouse and compare the two pretend mice. Then she will ask them to pay attention to what happens with the mouse in the story. We will read Ezra Jack Keats’ story, *Dreams* about a boy Roberto and his night-time adventures while everyone is dreaming. After the story she will ask the children, “What happened to the mouse in the story? Who do you think was dreaming in the story? Was Roberto having a dream?”

MUSEUM ACTIVITY: At the Hirshhorn Museum the class will gather at the Geometric Mouse and ask the children for their first ideas about the art work. Does it look like a mouse? Maybe it is a big shadow of a mouse, like in the book. We will take out our paper mouse and see what its shadow looks like, and look for other shadows. We will take out a small paper model of the geometric mouse and ask the children if the sculpture seems like the shadow of the model. We will then take a look behind the artwork and see if it casts a shadow. As we walk away we will also look for our own shadows.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: Each child will create dreamy backgrounds like those in Keats’ book by swirling different colored paint together on paper. Then they will add black geometric shapes to create dream shadows. The dream shadows might be mice, or cats or dogs. What do they dream about?

VOCABULARY: dream, geometric shape, circle, square, rectangle, triangle, shadow, light



(front) mouse puppet, paper mouse
(back) paper model of Geometric Mouse: Variation I, Scale A