The plasticity of clay is an excellent material for an artist like Mark Yasenchack to model physical features and explore how those features determine body shape and function. You can also create character traits and emotions by shaping the face. Students use their hands and common household utensils to create an animal from a lump of clay. As they create their own animals, they give them a personality and explore body form and function of other vertebrate animals within a species. Workshop can focus on either birds or fish. After crafting the animals the students can paint with underglaze or tempera paints. Drawings and stories can be written about the animals designed.

## Objectives

1. **Demonstrate** tool techniques and hand techniques.
2. **Represent and Abstract** the physical traits of birds and fish in clay.
3. **Identify** patterns and texture found on birds and fish.
4. **Understand** the ceramic process, plasticity, dried clay, bisque clay, kiln, glaze.
5. **Create** unique bird and fish.

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**Content Standards**

**Science**

Identify and discuss examples such as birds have wings for flying and beaks for eating.

The physical environment is identified as the source for what organisms need to survive.

Plants and animals have certain physical or behavioral characteristics that improve their chances of surviving in particular environments.

**Visual Art**

Demonstrate technical skill, craftsmanship and reasoning abilities in solving visual art problems using appropriate tools, media and technologies.

Produce artworks that express and represent their experiences, imagination and ideas using a range of media including new technologies.

Draw on a variety of sources to generate, select and evaluate ideas to create personally meaningful products.
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| Compare scales and feathers, swimming and flying.  
Review the bird and fish forms.  
Discuss the unique and extraordinary coloring and shapes of birds and fish. | Encourage the students to create hybrid animals, combining traits found in other animals to create a new animal. These new hybrid animals should be named in a manner that reflects the traits of the originating animals. |

### Vocabulary

**Morphology:** Branch of biology dealing with the form and structure of organisms  
**Clay:** A heavy, sticky material from the earth that is made into different shapes and that becomes hard when it is baked or dried  
**Zoology:** Branch of biology dealing with animals  
**Sculpt:** To carve, model, or make by using the techniques of sculpture  
**Design:** An outline, sketch, or plan, as of the form and structure of a work of art

### About Mark Yasenchack

While finding an interest in art during high school it wasn't until Mark Yasenchack's junior year in college that he took his first wheel throwing class and found a passion working in clay. Mark graduated with a B.S. Degree in Science from Baldwin-Wallace College but quickly found out how well it combined with a career in art. There is an analytical yet creative approach to scientific research that enhances his approach to teaching artistic processes by adding a depth to the content of lessons.

### Resources

Mark’s Website  
[markyasenchackteachingartist.wordpress.com/](markyasenchackteachingartist.wordpress.com/)

*National Geographic* Magazine

The Official Eric Carle Website  
[eric-carle.com](eric-carle.com)

The Official Wallace and Gromit Website  
[www.wallaceandgromit.com](www.wallaceandgromit.com)

### About the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning

Through a balance of demonstration and audience participation, the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning teaching artist performances and workshops introduce students to an art form, support various curricular areas, and inject excitement and wonder into the school day.