

AT-HOME ART PROJECT: Whimsical Castle Creation **INSTRUCTIONS**



INSPIRATION ARTIST:

Mary Blair (1911-1978)

Mary Blair was an American artist, animator, and designer. She joined the Walt Disney Studios in 1940 and worked on and off for the Disney Company for most of her career. Blair was one of Walt Disney's favorite artists; he personally responded to her use of color, naïve graphics, and the storytelling aspect in her pictures. She saw the world in a fresh, new way and brought a childlike cheerfulness to the works of print, theme parks and movies. Blair's use of flat graphic color and style using complimentary colors and different shades in her art greatly influenced such Disney postwar productions as *Make Mine Music*, *Melody Time*, *So Dear to My Heart*, *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*, *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Peter Pan*.

During a break from Disney, Mary found a successful career as a freelance graphic designer and illustrator. Among her works were the illustrations for several Little Golden Books, some of which, including *I Can Fly*, are still in print today.

In 1963 Walt Disney asked Mary to assist in the design of the *It's a Small World* attraction for the 1964-65 New York World's Fair, as a salute to the children of the world. The result was an attraction that is purely Mary Blair in its whimsical style and concept. In 1966, the beloved attraction debuted at Disneyland in Anaheim, California.

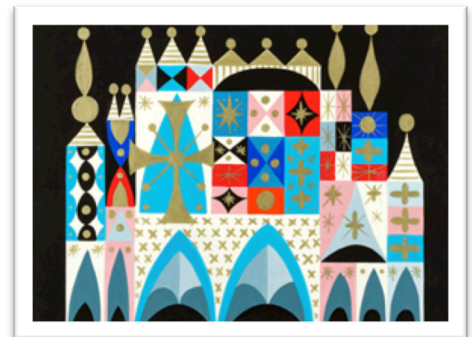
Fun fact: Inside the "It's a Small World" attraction, there is a little blonde doll standing on the Eiffel Tower. That doll is dedicated to the artist who inspired the attraction's overall look, Mary Blair. Gazing at her red balloon, the Mary Blair doll has short cropped hair, blue eyes and is dressed in a yellow poncho and boots, as Blair was known for her quirky personal fashions.



Dancing Women, 1940



Cinderella, 1950
Concept Art



It's a Small World, 1964
Disney Original Concept Painting

MATERIALS NEEDED FROM HOME:

- Colored Paper (for the background)
- White Paper
- Scissors
- Glue Stick or Glue Bottle
- Colored Pencils, Markers or Crayons

ART PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Participants will create a fanciful castle abstract work of art inspired by Mary Blair's *It's a Small World* concept art. In Mary Blair's style, artists will consider their use of color, geometric shapes and patterning while investigating how to create intentional emotion in their design.

PROMPT QUESTIONS: When looking at Mary's Blair's *It's a Small World* (on page 1):

1. What details do you notice? What colors and shapes do you see?
2. What captures and holds your attention in this style of art?
3. How does it make you feel? Why is that?

ART MAKING PROCESS:

Step 1:

Imagine you are standing in front of the *It's a Small World* attraction at Disneyland (see photo below if you would like). What does it look like? What do you hear? How does it make you feel? Consider if you were designing a whimsical castle in Mary Blair's art style, what would it look like? What colors and shapes would you use? What feeling you would want viewers to have? How would you achieve that?

Step 2:

Begin with your white paper and scissors and cut out shapes that you want to represent the separate building sections of your castle. Think of your castle as distinct rectangles, squares, and any other shapes you like. Consider specific details like archways, bridges, domes, skinny lines, and towers. How do the shapes and details reflect the overall feeling you intend your design to have? As you cut out your shapes, place them on your colored piece of paper, like a puzzle, building your castle one piece at a time (FIG. 1). It is OK if your design changes as you create.

Step 3:

When you are happy with your building composition, or layout, use your glue stick or glue to secure your white shapes in place on your colored paper, making sure the corners and edges of each piece are glued down well. Consider leaving a little space between each shape, so some background color shows through (FIG. 2).

Step 4:

Once the glue is dry, use your colored pencils (or any coloring tools you have on hand) to add design details to the sections of your building; hearts, semi-circles, triangles, diamonds, geometric shapes etc. When adding these details, think about patterning and how to control the balance of color throughout your design. Consider drawing elements of your building on the colored background paper as well (FIG. 3). When you are pleased with the layout and details of your castle composition, your artwork is complete!

POST PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. What do you like best about your castle creation?

LESSON PLAN

2. What do you think others will feel when they look at your work of art?
3. What did you learn from creating this work of art?

EXAMPLES:



FIG. 1

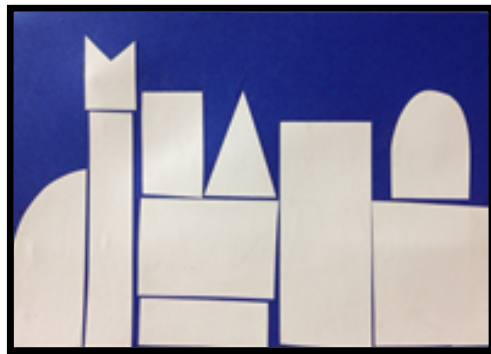


FIG. 2



FIG. 3

PHOTO EXAMPLE: *It's a Small World* Disneyland Attraction



SOURCES:

- <https://www.hilbertmuseum.com/mary-blair>
- <https://ohmy.disney.com/insider/2016/06/11/mary-blair-history/>
- <https://d23.com/walt-disney-legend/mary-blair/>