

Studio Saturdays: Crankie



Gift of Mrs. Ruth Funk, 2001.4.1

*Dante and Virgil with
a Vision of Beatrice*

Baccio Baldini
(Italian, 1436-1487)

ca. 1481-7

Engraving on paper

3 3/4 x 6 3/4 in.

MATERIALS

Art Kit Box or Cereal Box

2 Wooden Dowels

Tape & Glue Stick

3 Sheets of Paper

Colored Pencils

4 Small Rubber Bands

Baccio Baldini was an Italian goldsmith and engraver, born around 1436. A **goldsmith** is someone who uses fire and special tools to create things out of gold. Baldini's main job, however, was creating engravings from other artists' drawings in order to create many copies that could be printed in books or sold to the public. **Engravings** are prints made by rolling paper over a metal plate that has lines cut into it. The lines in the metal hold ink, so that when the paper is rolled and pressed over the plate, it picks up the ink from the lines and the image is transferred. This artwork, titled Dante and Virgil with a Vision of Beatrice, is an engraving Baldini made for *Inferno*, a famous book from the 14th century. The engraving shows an example of **continuous narrative**. This is a term in art that refers to when one picture shows multiple scenes from the same story with no dividing lines. For example, in this artwork, we see the two characters Dante and Virgil speaking to each other in the far left. Then, in the center, we see the same characters standing together looking at the vision of Beatrice. They're not clones—it's just a way of showing them moving through the story.

For our activity today, we'll be creating our own continuous narrative artwork by making a crankie. A crankie is a device that has a long strip of paper rolled around two sticks or tubes. When you turn the sticks one way together, the strip of paper unrolls from one and rolls up more into the other, making the paper move. This way, a long image or series of images can be seen through one device.

THINK LIKE AN ARTIST

1. What kind of story do you want to create? How can you use images to tell a story?
2. How will you break it up into three different scenes so that the viewer can understand the story?

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Take your art kit box and cut off the lid. On the top and bottom of the box, on the long sides, use a pencil and a ruler to mark about an inch and a half in from both outside edges. Using a pencil, poke a hole in the marked places. These will be the holes for your dowels to go through.
- 2) Tie a rubber band around each end of the dowel and slide it down until it reaches the cardboard box, this will keep the dowels in place while you turn your crankie.
- 3) Tape or glue your three sheets of paper together on the short sides, making one long sheet of paper. The three “pages” will have the scenes of your story.
- 4) Draw out your story with colored pencils. You can draw one long landscape on the three sheets like in the Baldini engraving to make a continuous narrative! Get creative with your story telling. Outline with a marker or use colored pencils or markers to really make your continuous narrative come to life.
- 5) Insert one of your dowels into the box through the holes on the left side. Use your rubber bands at the top and bottom, on the outside of the box, to make sure the dowel doesn't slide around.
- 6) Now, attach the left end of your first sheet to the middle of one of this dowel. You can use glue or tape, just make sure it's secure! Spin your dowel to roll up your paper tightly like a scroll until you reach the end. Then, insert the second dowel in the right side, and secure it with rubber bands like the first. Using glue or tape, secure the end of your continuous narrative to the right dowel.
- 7) Now that both ends are secure, you can spin the dowels in the same direction with your hands to move the story along. One dowel will unroll the paper, and the other one will roll it up, keeping the image in the middle moving. Now your crankie is complete and ready to put on a show!