

## The Secret Life of Your Pet!

Disguise your pet in a fantasy environment  
with easy photo manipulation

George Rodrigue (b. 1944) was born in Louisiana, in the heart of Cajun country. He is a prolific painter and is known worldwide for his creation of the Blue Dog series of paintings. This series features a blue-hued dog, a portrayal of his deceased dog named Tiffany, and is influenced by the “Loup Garou” legend. In this Cajun legend, a creature is said to prowl the swamps around Greater New Orleans and possibly the fields or forests of the regions. The loup garou most often is described as a creature with a human body and the head of a wolf or dog, similar to the werewolf legend.

Rodrigue’s ghostly spaniel/terrier is sometimes featured with a white nose and yellow eyes, is often portrayed in fantasy environments, and can be seen clad in various outfits sporting accessories like a hat, a tie, or a cape.

What do you think your pet does when you’re not home? This project helps students easily create a new environment for their pet or favorite animal using photo manipulation and collage techniques.

**GRADES K-12** Note: instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

### Preparation

1. Look at the work of George Rodrigue and his “Blue Dog” series.
2. Have each student choose a photograph of their pet or favorite animal. The image should be cropped so that the animal fills the frame. Print a photocopy of the image on regular copy paper. The copier should be set on the lightest setting (low contrast) so that only a faint image is produced.

### Process

1. Decide what environment the animal will be placed in and, using acrylic paints, paint it on the canvas panel. Will it be an interior room or an exterior scene? Will it be realistic or out of this world?
2. While the paint is drying, cut out the photocopy of the animal and decide where it will be placed on the canvas panel.



### Materials

Blick® Studio Canvas Panel, 8" x 10" (07008-0810); need one per student

Plaid® Mod Podge®, matte, pint (02916-1016); share among class

Blick® Studio Acrylics, 4-oz assorted colors (01637-); share at least six colors across class

Blick® Economy Golden Taklon Brushes, Flat size 4, (05168-1004); need one per student

Snippy® Scissors, pointed (57040-2005); need one per student  
Photograph of pet or favorite animal

### Optional Materials

Blick® Studio Markers, set of 12 (22148-1012)

Prismacolor® Colored Pencils, set of 12 (20508-1209)

Shizen® Handmade Paper by the Pound, assorted 8-1/2" x 11" (11298-1002)

Plaid® Mod Podge® Sparkle, pint (02916-1005)

Sakura® Metallic Pen Touch® Calligrapher (20817-)



## Process, continued

3. When the panel is completely dry, apply a thin layer of Mod Podge to the area of the panel where the photocopy will be placed and carefully place the image on the panel. Smooth out any air bubbles and allow to dry. Small air bubbles will disappear as drying occurs.
4. Brush a thin layer of Mod Podge over the photocopy, making sure to include the whole image.
5. Embellish the animal photocopy and the scene using additional paint, markers, or colored pencils. Give the pet a medal, or make him a super hero! How about a crown? Would your pet love to be an astronaut or live in a jungle? Would your goldfish prefer to be sparkly pink? Add sparkle with Mod Podge Sparkle. Cut a cape or a hat out of patterned papers, and use Mod Podge to apply.

## National Standards for Visual Arts Education

**Content Standard #1** — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

- K-4** Students describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses.
- 5-8** Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.
- 9-12** Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks.

**Content Standard #3** — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

- K-4** Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art.
- 5-8** Students integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks. Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks.
- 9-12** Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture.



**Step 1:** Paint a fantasy background on a canvas panel, using acrylic paints.



**Step 2:** Apply a photocopy of a pet or favorite animal to the canvas panel, and coat it with a thin layer of Mod Podge.



**Step 3:** Embellish the final composition using patterned papers, markers, colored pencils, metallic paints, and Mod Podge Sparkle, if desired.