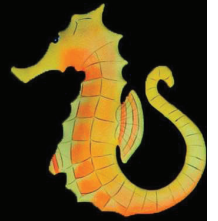




THE REIF

STUDY GUIDE

THE RAINBOW FISH



Mermaid
Theatre
of Nova Scotia



ABOUT THE REIF

The Reif Center is more than a building.

With two auditoriums, four studio classrooms, an art gallery, and multiple practice rooms, it provides access for people of all ages to explore and exhibit their artistic talents.

The Reif Arts Council proudly produces Reif Education programming including Reif Dance and Theatre Education.

The Reif Center is home to the Grand Rapids Players and the Itasca Orchestra and Strings program. It is the venue for concerts of school bands and choirs.

The lobby gallery is curated by MacRostie Art Center and exhibits professional artists' work as well as multiple student showcases from area schools each year.

In addition to supporting all of these regional programs, the Reif presents a series of events each year, bringing theatre, dance, and music from around the world to our community.



GOING TO THE THEATER

Please encourage your children to visit the rest rooms before the show begins. It is disruptive to visit the rest rooms during a live performance.

We recommend that you provide your children with some guidelines of things to look at and listen for during the performance.

“Going to the Theatre Watching a live performance is very different than watching television or going to the movies. When you see a live performance you play a part too! Your role is an audience member. As an audience member you should obey the following instructions. . . (You may also want to encourage your children to add to this list.)”

Children should be encouraged to:

- A. Watch the performers.
- B. Listen to the music.
- C. Look at the costumes and set designs.
- D. Laugh when they see the performers do something funny.
- E. Clap to show the performers that they are enjoying the performance when the performance has finished. It is customary to applaud when the performers take a bow.

Children should be encouraged NOT to:

- A. Talk or make noise because they might miss something important.
- B. Chew gum or eat because it is disruptive to others and makes a mess at the theater.
- C. Leave their seats before the lights go on because this is very distracting to their neighbors.
- D. Bring phones in the theater because this is disruptive to the dancers and other members of the audience.

WHOSE PORTRAIT IS HANGING IN THE LOBBY?



MYLES REIF

Myles Reif, for whom the center is named, was a former president of Blandin Paper Company who believed in investing in the arts and education. Thanks to his contributions, there is a place for generations of artists to develop and share their craft.



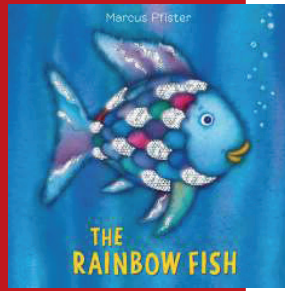
LOIS GILDEMEISTER

The first director of the Reif Center was Lois Gildemeister, who was the greatest champion for the creation of a performing arts center in Grand Rapids. It was Lois' determination and vision that lead the community to come together and realize this dream.

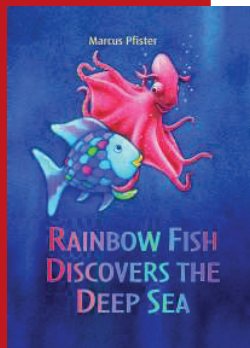
ABOUT THE SHOW

THE STORIES

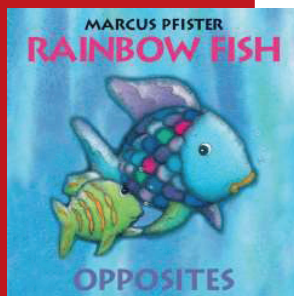
The Rainbow Fish tells the story of the most beautiful fish in the sea, whose scales shimmer in all the colors of the rainbow. He is admired by all the underwater creatures, who invite him to come play with them. But he is not interested in joining them. One day, a small blue fish asks for one of his scales, but the Rainbow Fish refuses to share. When he is ostracized by all the other fish, his scales begin to mean less to him with no one to admire them. Taking the advice of a clever octopus, the Rainbow Fish gives all his scales away, one by one, until he is left with only one. The more he shares, the happier he becomes. Surrounded by many fish, each with one iridescent scale, the Rainbow Fish now no longer looked different, and he at last feels at home among the other fish.



In Rainbow Fish Discovers the Deep Sea, Rainbow Fish's glittering scale falls off and sinks down into the deep sea. He overcomes his fear and finds the courage to go looking for the scale in the great unknown. He discovers a whole new world, filled with wonderful sights and friendly creatures of all shapes, sizes, and colors, who are eager to get to know him.



Opposites uses striking images from Rainbow Fish's underwater wonderland to introduce the concept of opposites, such as up/down, in/out, over/under, big/little, long/short. As a fitting finale, and story ends with the most satisfying opposite of all—give and take—as Rainbow Fish shares one of his glittering scales with a friend.



THE PRODUCTION

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia's creative, visually striking production makes it seem as if the pages of the storybooks have come to life right on the stage! To accomplish this, they used a variety of the theater techniques; keep an eye out for them during the show.

PUPPETRY

The show employs a variety of puppetry styles—including rod, full-body, and hand puppets—to tell the three stories.



Amazingly, all of the puppets and scenic elements are manipulated by just three puppeteers. The puppeteers are dressed completely in black, including a black covering over their faces that makes them look like puppet ninjas!

BLACK LIGHT

Part of the visual magic of this production comes from the use of black light, which allows only certain elements onstage to be seen by the audience.



The puppets and scenery are painted with fluorescent paint, which glows in the dark under ultraviolet light (also called black light). Under black light, anything black becomes invisible. During the show, the puppeteers will be on stage as they work with the puppets. They wear black clothing and black masks and perform in front of a black wall. This makes them almost invisible to the audience and allows them to execute all kinds of visual illusions with the puppets; they can make them seem to float, swim, disappear, shrink, grow, and more.

NARRATION & MUSIC

Along with the visual storytelling, the show employs pre-recorded narration (by Laura Benanti and Linda Wonneberger) of the text of the stories, as well as a pre-recorded musical score by Steven Naylor created especially for this production.

MEET MARCUS PFISTER



Marcus Pfister was born July 30, 1960, in Bern, Switzerland. After attending the Bern School of Art, he became a graphic designer, first at a publicity agency, and then as a freelance artist. He published his first picture book, *The Sleepy Owl*, in 1986. He dedicated himself exclusively to children's books, with 49 books currently to his credit. Published in 1992, *The Rainbow Fish* spawned a series of books recounting the adventures of this colorful character. Since then, the *Rainbow Fish* books have been translated from the original German into more than 50 languages and have sold 30 million copies worldwide.

Marcus talks about his development as a children's book author and illustrator. "I started to write stories before I had kids, but when I had my own kids, the stories and their content started changing," he says. "Before, I always cared about the characters and illustrations and then about the story, but when I had my kids, the story became more important. The kids came home and told me stories about their day and their little problems and these are the kind of stories you read in the *Rainbow Fish* books."

CREATING THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Marcus Pfister's books are known for their vibrant illustrations. Most of the time, he works in watercolor. Like most illustrators, he starts by making rough sketches. Then he stretches a the watercolor paper over a wooden board so it won't shrink as the watercolor dries. From there, he copies the rough sketches onto the paper in pencil. Now the surface is ready for painting. For his backgrounds and blended contours he uses wet paint on wet paper to create a softer effect. For the finer details, he first lets the painting dry, then paints the final picture, layer by layer. When the illustration is complete he cuts the paper from the wooden board.

With the *Rainbow Fish* books, Marcus wanted to find a way to make *Rainbow Fish* stand out from the other fish. If colorful scales were the only thing special about *Rainbow Fish*, then all of the other fish would have to be made to look very drab. So he looked for something that would clearly set *Rainbow Fish* apart from the other fish in the sea—a feature that underlined how special his glittering scales were. That's when he remembered a technique he worked with when he was a graphic artist, called hot foil stamping. This process is done as the final step of an illustration. Marcus traces one part of the picture with a black marker and covers it with a transparent film. This part of the picture is then stamped with the holographic foil after the pages are printed and before they are bound together.



DO & DISCUSS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

THE RAINBOW FISH

- How was Rainbow Fish different from the other fish?
- What did Rainbow Fish do when the blue fish asked him to give him one of his scales? Do you think he did the right thing? How did it make the other fish feel?
- Was it selfish for the other fish to ask Rainbow Fish to share all of his shiny scales?
- Octopus told Rainbow Fish that having friends is more important than being beautiful. Do you agree? Why?
- Did you ever have something that someone else wanted? What was it? Did you share it? Why or why not? If you were forced to share it, how did it make you feel? Happier? Sadder? Angry?
- Who are some of your friends? What do you like to do together?
- What does it mean to be a good friend?
- Everybody is different and special in some way. What would you say is most special about you?

RAINBOW FISH DISCOVERS THE DEEP SEA

- How did Rainbow Fish and Octopus feel about going down into the deep, dark ocean?
- When Rainbow Fish went down into the deep sea to find the scale he dropped, what did he see and whom did he meet? Was the deep sea at all like Octopus said it would be?
- Rainbow Fish saw a lot of animals in the deep sea that were different from any of the animals he'd ever seen before. How did he feel when he saw these new creatures? Scared? Surprised? Curious?
- How did the deep sea animals treat Rainbow Fish?
- Did you ever do something you were afraid to do? What was it? How did you feel after you did it? Were you less scared?

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Did you like the show? Why?
- What were some things you noticed during the show?
- What were some things that surprised you about the show?
- How was seeing the stories in the show different from reading the stories in books? How was it the same?

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:

- Have students share their favorite moments from the performance and draw pictures of these scenes.
- Gather together students' artwork, comments, and other responses to the performance and share them with The Reef. We'd love to see them!

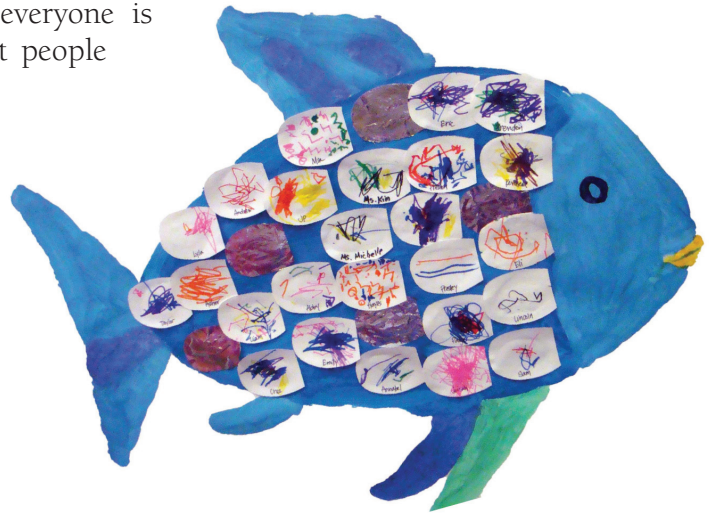


RAINBOW FISH GROUP ART PROJECT

This activity will help students understand how everyone is different, that everyone is special, and that different people working together can create something beautiful.

MATERIALS

- The Rainbow Fish book
- paper fish scale for each student (template below)
- craft materials for decorating the scales, such as markers, crayons, glitter, foil paper, sequins, construction paper, felt, and glue
- a large sheet of butcher paper with the outline of a fish



LESSON PLAN

1. Read The Rainbow Fish to the class, discussing the ideas of difference, uniqueness, and sharing.
2. Give each student a paper fish scale.
3. Have each student decorate their scale with information about themselves using pictures and/or words. (You can even have students bring in pictures of themselves, family and friends, special places, etc. to use to decorate their scales.)
4. Paste everyone's scales on the large fish. Display the decorated fish throughout the year to reinforce with your students the idea that they are a community with lots of wonderful differences.

