

Spencer Finch Inspired Thaumatrope

What is a Thaumatrope?

Thaumatropes are an example of “persistence of vision”, a phrase that describes how our brain combines multiple images together when they are rapidly flashed in front of our eyes. This same effect is how a film works since all movies are simply long strings of still images flashed in quick succession in front of the eyes. The first thaumatropes appeared in the 1800’s and are considered to be the antecedents to modern films. A famous example is a circular card with a cage printed on one side and a bird on the other—when they are flipped over and over in succession you “see” the bird inside of the cage.

Most movies, like *The Wizard of Oz* are played at 24 frames per second. This means there are 24 still images per second flashing in front of your eyes. Since the brain perceives anything from upwards of about 10 frames per second as motion, we see these still frames as moving images. 10 frames per second is about as fast as thumbing through a flipbook.



Spencer Finch's *Back to Kansas* was inspired by the movie, *The Wizard of Oz*. In this activity, learn a little about how movies work and create your own colorful image.

Materials:

- Printable template
- Cardstock or cardboard
- Wooden Dowel, Large Wooden Skewer, or Rigid Straw
- Scissors
- Glue or Glue Dots
- Decorating tools (optional)

Instructions (With Template)

1. Print out the Public Art Studio template on a color printer if you have access to one.
2. Cut out the shapes on your template where you see defined borders.
3. Fold your shapes in half.
4. For a more rigid Thaumatrope, trace shapes onto craft paper or cardboard to create a backing for your cut outs.
5. Use glue dots or glue your card stock or craft paper onto your folded cut outs.
6. Then, use glue dots or glue to adhere your shape to your dowel, skewer, or rigid straw.
7. Now give your Thaumatrope a try. Use your hands to quickly spin your wooden dowel while you look at the images. What do you see? What colors are created?

Watch the Video



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COLORFIELD

Public Art Studio Session Instruction Sheet

Spencer Finch Inspired Thaumatrope

Instructions (Without Template)

1. If you don't have access to a color printer you can still make your own Thaumatrope with cardstock and some decorating tools like markers, crayons, or pens.
2. Cut out a 3" x 6" rectangle from your cardstock and fold it in half.
3. Each side of the cardstock will be your Thaumatrope so have fun creating your own inspired by Spencer Finch's work. Maybe try drawing blocks of colors similar to the ones in Back to Kansas, rainbows, or even characters from the Wizard of Oz! You can look at the online template as a guide. Remember that what you draw on one side should relate to what you draw on the other because your brain will "see" them as one image. You can keep it abstract, make it realistic, or even use text to create a cool message!
4. Follow steps 5-7 as above to complete your personalized Thaumatrope.



Back to Kansas is comprised of 70 blocks of brilliant and subtle color. Each color corresponds to a color from The Wizard of Oz, such as "Yellow Brick Road" and "Ruby Slippers."

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More Videos about Spencer Finch's artwork



**Tour of Spencer Finch's artwork
led by Public Art UHS Curator,
Mike Guidry**



**Student tour guided by Ph.D.
student, University of Houston,
College of Optometry**

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