Filling this 27-panel faux stained-glass window are representations of metamorphosis. How many can you find?

Artist, performer, and musician Raúl de Nieves (born Morelia, Mexico 1983) is interested in transformation and the natural cycles we experience throughout our lives. In No Need for Vistas We Are Seen, cicadas, butterflies, dragonflies and frogs are in various phases of metamorphosis. From left to right, the window transitions from predominantly blue hues to reds and oranges and back to blue. This color transition, along with images of the moon, illustrates the daily pattern of the sun and moon and reminds us of the role lunar phases play in the life cycles of many animals.

At the center of Raúl’s window is a Crested Caracara falcon representing his father, who passed away when the artist was a child. Raúl dreamed that he was visited by his father in the form of the falcon. The falcon told him that it was okay to move past the sadness and grief of loss and into a new phase of life.

This window appears to be stained glass, but Raúl made the designs with colored acetate (plastic film used in theater lighting), paper, and foil tape—materials that were readily available to him. He wanted the acetate-covered window to look like those he saw regularly in the churches and cathedrals he visited as a child. Raúl said that creating this way is “something like a fantasy...this idea of make believe has always been an aspect of how I create.”

Classroom Activities

- Assign each student an animal that goes through complete metamorphosis to research. Then ask students to illustrate their animal’s life cycle.

- Invite students to create one part of their animal’s life cycle in faux stained-glass, using contact paper, black paper, and tissue paper. Here is a website with instructions:

  How To Make Faux Stained Glass From Tissue Paper
  (instructables.com/How-To-Make-Faux-Stained-Glass-From-Tissue-Paper-A)

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No Need for Vistas We Are Seen, Raúl de Nieves

Raúl de Nieves. *No Need for Vistas We Are Seen*. 2023. Glue, paper, tape, acetate, wood. 27 panes, 47 1/2 x 45 in. (120.65 x 114.3 cm) each.

Courtesy of the artist and Company Gallery, New York. © Raúl de Nieves
Installation view of *No Need for Vistas We Are Seen*, Raúl de Nieves

Installation view of *No Need for Vistas We Are Seen*. Photo by Mitro Hood