



# CLASS

Community Liaison for Art in Stanislaus Schools

**Central California Art Association**

1015 J Street  
Modesto, California 95354  
Email class.ccaa@gmail.com  
Coordinator, Linda Knoll  
Phone 209-247-2626

### Materials:

- Oil Pastel
- Watercolor paint
- Brush
- Watercolor Paper
- Water in shallow cups
- Paper Towels

### Resources:

- “Over in the Valley” book by Linda Knoll
- Photos of native animals and plants

### Vocabulary:

Line

Shape

Triangle

Circle

Oval

Texture

### Motivation:

- Visit a local wildlife refuge / park
- Ask: what animals (not pets) you see in your neighborhood?

### Follow Up With:

- Research / writing on the animal and habitat

## “Over in the Valley” Animal Painting

**Learning Objective:** Students will learn about animals and habitats in California’s Central Valley, as well as getting to know a Valley author/illustrator. They will understand how to use shapes, line and texture to analyze and create animal drawings.

**Grade(s):** 1-2

**Time:** 1.5 hours



### Procedure

- Read/sing “Over in the Valley” by Linda Knoll, Modesto author/ artist. (See Linda’s bio) Ask questions about our Valley: What part of California do we live in? What kinds of people and animals live here? Share information on native animals and their habitats, as illustrated in the book.
- Look at one of the illustrations from “Over in the Valley” and have students identify the shapes of various animal parts. Trace each with your finger. Using a photo of a mountain lion, or other valley animal, model how a drawing begins with basic shapes, put together. Pay attention to the size of the shapes and their placement relative to each other. Draw the outlines of the shapes with oil pastel, thinking out loud as you demonstrate.
- Let students choose (or distribute) from the photo set of native Valley animals. Have them analyze their picture by tracing the shapes in the animal with their finger. Then, they will draw the shape outlines on their paper using a light color of pastel. Encourage students to draw large...filling up most of the paper with their animal.
- Continue by discussing the textures of the fur, feathers or covering of the animal and the way that might be achieved with the pastels. For example, short straight lines for fur, solid color for smooth skin, patterns for feathers or scales. Then, students should use a combination of colors and textures to achieve textural detail.
- When the animal is completed, have students think about, and observe from the photo, what type of habitat the animal lives in. Students should complete the background of their picture with an appropriate habitat (not necessarily from the photo). They might add other animals or plants in the food chain (older students).
- When the pastel drawing is complete, the students may add watercolor to fill in animal shapes, and add background that reflects the creature’s habitat.
- Tips: Use only a small amount of water at one time to prevent puddling. Use the edge of the paper towel to wick water off the painting if needed. Pay attention to edges and paint around shapes for good definition.
- To close, gallery walk around the room. Encourage positive comments using shape/line/texture vocabulary.

### CA VAPA Standards:

1.VA:Cr2.2

Demonstrate safe and proper procedures for using materials, tools, and equipment while making art.

1.VA:Cr3

Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art.

1.VA:Cr2.1

Explore uses of materials and tools to create works of art or design.

### Career Connections:

Describe how artists (architects, book illustrators, muralists, industrial designers) have affected people’s lives.

### Common Core ELA Connections:

Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.

### Life Science Connections:

1. Plants and animals meet their needs in different ways. a. Students know different plants and animals inhabit different kinds of environments and have external features that help them thrive in different kinds of places.

## **About Linda Knoll, Author / Illustrator**

Linda Knoll, a lifelong resident of the San Joaquin Valley, strives to share the area's richness with people of all ages. She has a varied background in the arts, including a Bachelor of Fine Arts in graphic design from University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. From a young age, Linda has been involved in music, theater and the visual arts. She's been painting and showing work in Central California for many years. As illustrator and author, Linda self-published the children's picture book, "Over in the Valley," in 2010 and her second picture book, "Patient for Pumpkins," was released by North Atlantic Books in April, 2014. She also created a nature-themed coloring book, called "Nature Beauty" in 2015.

After a 25-year career as a graphic designer and business owner, Linda earned a teaching credential in 2003. Linda currently serves on the board of directors at Central California Art Association in Modesto, and coordinates a program of teaching artists that visit and teach in local elementary schools.

"My watercolor paintings began many years ago as recordings of observed places and people. More recently, I have delved deeper into the significance of detail, patterns and light. I want my audience to be intimate with my subjects. I have challenged myself to be more patient as I work so I can bring significant details to light. I love the vibrancy and transparency of watercolors, and strive to see the "inner" color of my subjects.

## **Q and A**

### **What made you decide to write this book?**

When I was small, my mother used to sing "Over in the Meadow," at bed time. Originally, I started creating the book as a way to pass on that tradition to my daughter and niece and nephews. The original song, by Olive Wendell, comes from the 1800s. I decided to update the words with animals from the Central Valley because I have lived here all my life, and I wanted to share positive things about the area.

### **What is the greatest influence on your writing?**

My greatest influence is my environment – the people I meet and the community I am a part of. I know and love the San Joaquin Valley and it has provided me with lots of great ideas.

### **What books have made a major impact in your life and writing? Who are some writers whose work you admire?**

I can't say one particular book inspired me, but growing up, Dr. Seuss was my favorite author/illustrator. Lois Ehlert is one of my favorite picture book authors. I can always relate to her subjects and I love the simplicity of her art. I admire illustrators Jon Muth and E.B. Lewis for their skill with watercolor. And I love the imagination and intricacy of David Weisner's books.

### **When did you think about becoming a writer?**

I was lucky to work as an elementary school librarian for several years, which really got me interested in picture books. Working in a library full of wonderful stories and beautiful art inspired me to actually try my hand at making picture books. I decided to enroll in a class to learn about the picture book business, and my instructor, Mira Reisberg, encouraged everyone to try their hand at both writing and illustrating. After that, I thought more about writing my own stories. But I still love illustrating the most.

### **How do you write? Do you have a daily routine? What's good about it? What do you hate about it?**

I haven't developed a rigid routine like I probably should. Making picture books is a part time pursuit at the moment. Between teaching art classes, volunteering and working on my own art, I try to make time each week to work on developing new story ideas and get better at my writing and illustrating.

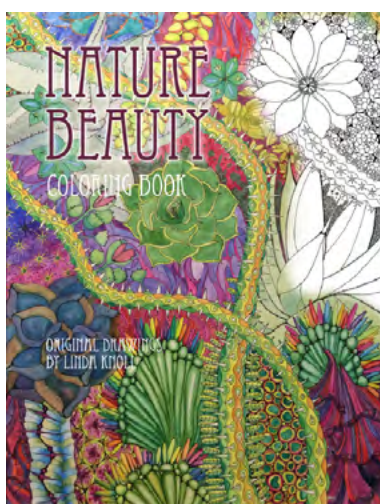
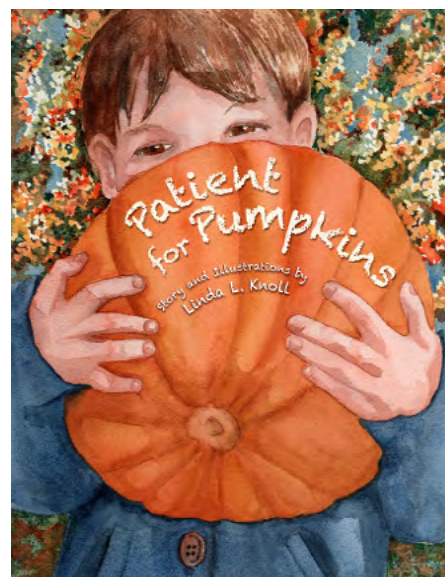
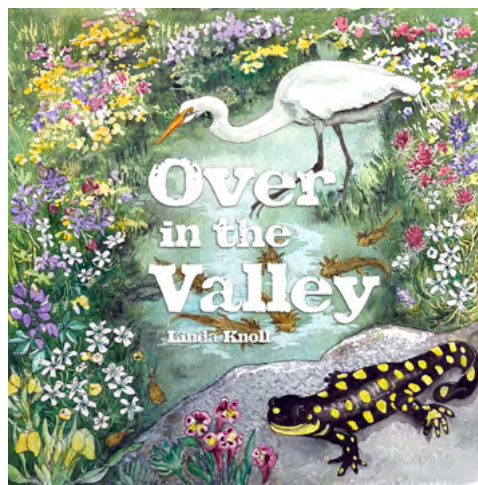
## What are you working on next?

I've been working on a story about the prehistory of the California coast... the paleolithic marine life, fossils and the geologic history of the west coast. I also have ideas for a series of picture books about the elements of art.

## What single thing might people be surprised to learn about you?

When I was young, I really didn't have that many picture books around, but we went to the library almost every week. I had a few Dr. Seuss books... my favorite was "Hop on Pop." I was in the hospital in 4th grade and I was really excited to get a 2-book anthology of the classic fairy tales. I still have them!

You can find Linda on Facebook at [LindaKnollArt](#), or on her website at [www.lindaknollart.blogspot.com](http://www.lindaknollart.blogspot.com) and Instagram @lindaknollart





Mountain Lion and 2nd grade student work in watercolor



Brush rabbit and tiger salamander, 1st grade student work



Left: Riparian brush rabbit, Valley quail, great blue heron. Right: California tiger salamander, coyote, beaver.