

More Mythical Madness

On your next visit to the museum, keep your eyes peeled for tons more artworks highlighting mythical creatures that couldn't fit into this booklet: unicorns, mermaids, wyvern, centaurs. . . and creatures yet to be dreamed up!

Detail of a griffin on the frieze of the main building, 2005, photo by Graydon Wood © Philadelphia Museum of Art. **Phoenix-Shaped Architectural Brackets**, 1500s–1600s, made in China (Gift of John T. Morris, 1902-91). **Heluo with Self-Portrait**, 2023, by Ai Weiwei (Courtesy of Ai Weiwei Studio) © Ai Weiwei. **Krishna and His Wife Carried by Mythical Man-Eagle Garuda as Krishna Receives Oblations**, around 1525–40, made in India (125th Anniversary

Acquisition. Alvin O. Bellak Collection, 2004-149-8). **New Classic of Mountains and Seas: Ha Lei (Harley Davidson)**, 2018, by Qiu Anxiong (Collection of Susan L. Benningson and Steve Arons). **Jar with a Mythical Qilin, Lion, and Elephant**, late 1600s, made in China (The Alfred and Margaret Caspary Memorial Gift, 1955-50-75a,b).

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Old Meets New

This living artist is taking mixed-up creatures to a new level by adding modern technologies to their bodies!

WAIT, WHAT?



Maybe we find these paintings so surprising because the artist is using an old, traditional Chinese art style—in fact, he's inspired by a 2,500-year-old book called *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, which described mythical creatures. (Sort of like this booklet you're holding!)

Invent your own hybrid machine/beast.

How does it move?

Is It a Bird?

If you could fly on Garuda's back, where would you go? Why?



Garuda is a "man-eagle" who appears in myths of two major world religions: Hinduism and Buddhism. In some stories, his body is shaped like a kite, he's big enough to block out the sun, and he can eat a thousand snakes. In some images, he even wears snakes as jewelry. Garuda can travel really fast, especially when someone is in need of protection.



Mythical Mash-Up

A true hybrid creature, the shape-shifting *qilin* is thought to have body parts from lots of different animals. Can you spy:

- ☐ head of a dragon
- ☐ hooves of a deer
- ☐ wings of a bird



These creatures are also connected with ideas of peace and sensible leadership. What questions would you ask a wise *qilin* if you had the chance?



Art kids

MAPPING MYTHICAL BEASTS



Use this booklet to take a closer look, make connections, and sketch your own ideas.

Lots of mythological creatures have important jobs to do. In Chinese culture, dragons are in charge of rain and water. Some imaginary beasts guide souls safely into the afterlife. Griffins are guardians of treasures.



If you're outside the art museum and look up at the roof, you'll see some griffins perching there, helping the museum keep its treasures safe.



Fun fact: These griffins are pulling double-duty with a second important task: they're also lightning rods!

If you combined your face with an animal, what animal would it be?



With one head and ten bodies, this magical fish, called a *heluo*, can swim or fly, and makes the sound of a barking dog. Mythical creatures are constantly being re-imagined, so this artist decided to give the head of his *heluo* his own face in an especially inventive self-portrait.

Open to reveal a map with more fun things to do!

In Asian mythologies, dragons split their time between the sky and the deep sea.

Where does your creature live? Design a home for your imaginary beast.

What different animal parts do they have?

How does it interact with the other creatures it meets?

Imagine a mixed-up creature of your own and sketch it here.

What does it eat?

The heluo barks like a dog. What sound does your creature make?

Does your creature have any special powers? Does it need any tools?

Garuda wear snakes as jewelry — does your creature have any dazzling accessories?

