with the Art Gallery of New South Wales
Mythical creatures
Artists love to create.
In many Asian countries, artists use mythical creatures as symbols in their artwork. One of the most popular is the dragon, a symbol of luck and power, but there are many other creatures that also have special powers.

Do you love to draw, paint and make things?

above: Thailand, Buddha sheltered by the seven-headed serpent Muchalinda 1800s, bronze, gold leaf, crystal, Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased 1948.

left and cover (detail): Kate Beynon Self-portrait with guardian spirits 2009–10, synthetic polymer paint on linen, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Contemporary Collection Benefactors 2012 © Kate Beynon/ Copyright Agency, 2021. Photos: © AGNSW

We acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of the Country on which the Art Gallery of New South Wales stands.
Create a mythical creature by combining animals. What special powers will your creature possess?

Mythical creatures

You will need:
- Modelling clay
- Joggle eyes
- Chenille stems
- Wool
- Recycled card, fabric
- Your imagination!

opposite: China, Dish c1865–70, porcelain, Art Gallery of New South Wales, bequest of Amy Alfreda Vickery 1942.
below: Japan, Vase with a Chinese lion dog 1800s, enamelled porcelain, Art Gallery of New South Wales, gift of Charles Binnie 1924. Photos: © AGNSW
above: Meigyokuzan Jug with dragon-shaped spout and handle 1800s, enamelled porcelain, Art Gallery of New South Wales, gift of Charles Binnie 1924;
left: Masakazu, Figure of samurai fighting a two-headed dragon (ōkimonō) 1800s, carved ivory, Art Gallery of New South Wales, bequest of Henry Albert Nathan 1941. Photos: © AGNSW

Some of these imaginary creatures are made up of features of different animals, sometimes even humans.

This object is made from historically collected ivory. The Art Gallery of New South Wales does not support trade in materials from endangered species.