
Printmaking Module

Introduction

Prints have changed the course of history. They have worked for peace or for war, for God and for the Devil. Tyrants and political bosses have feared their power. Prints have pleaded the cause of the Reformation against the Popes, of the republic against the monarch. They have fought slavery and corruptions as they now fight war and pollution. The history of man's aspirations can be revealed by leafing through a great print collection.¹

The history of printmaking is the history of innovation in communication. Before the age of mass literacy, pictorial images played a particularly significant role in conveying ideas and traditions. Prints were relatively inexpensive and many people could afford them. Artists found, through the print, a means of increasing both their output and their audience. Because the printed picture was the potent mass communications tool of the times, there was a continuing need to reproduce images more accurately and efficiently. The demand spurred innovation in materials and techniques.²

In printmaking today, the original plate can be used to create a single image as a unique piece or to produce multiple copies. Careful planning in printmaking is mandatory since original plates, screens, etc., are used in successive steps to print images and the intended final product itself must be kept in mind at all time.

Through the study of printmaking, students should gain both an understanding of the techniques involved in making different types of prints, and a sensitivity to the relation of techniques or medium to subject matter and expressive content.

As in other two-dimensional areas, elements of shape, line, texture, and colour, plus the principles of design - unity, balance, emphasis, etc. - should play an important role.

Processes

The Relief Printing Process

The print is made by pressing paper to a plate that has inked raise surfaces. These

¹Fritz Eichenberg, *The Art of the Print* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1976), p. 7.

²Thelma R. Newman, *Innovative Printmaking* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1977), p. 1

raised surfaces may be the residual areas in a plate that has had sections carved away as in a linocut or they may be the surfaces of objects glued to a plate (collograph). The lower surfaces do not print.

The Intaglio Printing Process

The image is incised into the plate. After the plate is inked, the upper surfaces are wiped clean, leaving ink behind in the incised lines. Paper is pressed over the plate and into the grooves, picking up the ink to produce the printed image on its surface.

The Planeographic (Lithographic) Printing Process

Lithography

The print design is made by drawing with a grease crayon or pencil on a surface that has an affinity for both grease and water. In this process there is no cutting of the surface. Pressing paper against the surface produces a print.

Monoprint

The print is made by pressing paper on an inked plate and drawing on the paper surface with a blunt instrument which picks up ink on the face-down side; or by inking only some areas of the plate in a design which is picked up by paper pressed down on the surface. Only one good print can be obtained.

1. **Lift-drawing.** Ink the surface of the plate evenly. Gently place a sheet of paper on the surface so that it does not pick up the ink. With a blunt instrument, draw the design on the paper surface, exerting enough pressure to pick up ink on the reverse side.

2. **Negative-line monoprint.** Ink the surface of the plate evenly. Draw into the ink with a tool having a broad enough tip to leave a fairly pronounced line. Place the paper over the surface and gently rub. Pull the print, which will show light lines against a dark surface (unless you are using colour paper that is darker than the ink).
3. **Positive monoprint.** Draw with ink, using a brush, sponge, spatula, etc., directly on the surface of the plate with line and/or areas of colour. Press paper on the plate. Pull the print.
4. **Negative/positive monoprint.** Ink the entire surface of the plate. Place shapes cut from paper here and there on the inked surface according to a prearranged design. Place print paper on the surface and rub. Pull the print. Those areas that were covered with cutout shapes will not be inked.

Serigraphy: Screen Printing Process

The print is made by forcing ink or paint through an opening in the stencil to the underlying paper or fabric surface.

Safety Hint: In relief printing a benchhook that catches on the edge of a table to hold the woodblock or linoleum block in place will prevent the block from moving during cutting. This item is easily constructed of found materials.

Printmaking Slides

PR 1, 2, 3, 4	Anne Meredith Barry/Wind from the Sea
PR 5	Patricia Holland/Spurt
PR 6	Gilbert Hay/Waiting and Expecting
PR 7	Bill Ritchie/Fox Woman
PR 8	David B. Milne/John Brown's Farm
PR 9	Emily Mussells/Red Rocks and Cotton Grass
PR 10	Miranda Jones/St. John's #3
PR 11	Scott Goudie/Abby of York Street
PR 12	Joe Carter/Chafe House, Petty Harbour
PR 13	Gilbert Hay/Rescue
PR 14	Don Wright/Frog
PR 15	Gerard Brander a Brandis/Bog with Pitcher Plant
PR 16	Toni Onley/Landscape
PR 17	Sid Butt/No Squid
PR 18	Jon Wilkinson/Meeting Place
PR 19	David Thauberger/Black Velvet Bunnies
PR 20	Jacob Kennedy/Winter Outport

Artist: Anne Meredith Barry
Title: Wind from the Sea
Medium: Woodcut
Size: 45.7 cm x 63.5 cm
Date: 1985
Location: Memorial University Art Gallery

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter **Slide #1:** A land/sea scape of a location on the southern shore of Newfoundland. The foreground consists of a grassy headland from which can be seen distant land masses, ocean, and sky. They are solid areas of colour. The foreground and the sky shapes have graduated colour in them. There are short, vigorous, fairly wide lines in the image. Most of them are grey, but some are white (the exposed paper). There are also some very fine scratchy white lines.

Design **Line:** Bold, vigorous, descriptive.
Shapes: Irregular but well defined.
Colour: Variety of intensity, but well separated, defined shapes.

Techniques **Slide #2:** The artist's preparatory sketch for Wind from the Sea. Notice how the hills, rocks, ocean, and sky are roughly indicated with vigorous strokes of colour pencils and ink.

Slide #3: The artist used two rectangular wood blocks to make her print. This is the first, and here it appears just as it was inked and about to be printed. The artist cut this first wood block in to seven pieces and took them apart. She made cuts in to the surfaces of the pieces. Look at the brown areas. These are the actual wood. Where the artist made the cuts, no ink was received. They are the white areas of the final print. When the artist inked all the pieces separately, she puts them together again, much like a jigsaw puzzle, and printed the whole block at once. Notice how the image is the reverse of the final print (slide #1).

Slide #4: This is the artist's second wood block for this print. Here, all of the brown is wood surface. It has been cut away and is therefore lower than the raised grey and red bits. That's why no ink was received there. The inked roller passed right over it. The grey and red lines were printed over the print with the solid colours on it. Notice how these are also reversed in the final image.

Mood

Slide #1: The artist is interested in the essential shapes and colour of the Newfoundland seascape. She captures the wind with her vigorous lines, and the freshness of nature with her colour.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

In Newfoundland, I am always aware of the beauty and power of the elementary force of air, sea, and land. There, they are constantly pushing, pulling, building up, tearing down, reshaping, creating and destroying each other. This is what Wind from the Sea is all about to me. And being a printmaker also means making marks on smooth wooden plates with sharp tools and releasing the marvellous wood smell with each cut, or mixing and rolling out the lush ink colours, of pulling the inking plates through the press to transfer the image onto beautiful and receptive rag paper ... there are all very exciting things to do. The "magic moment" when everything comes together to make an image is very real.

Notes:

Artist: Patricia Holland
Title: Spurt
Medium: Colour lithograph
Size: 58.5 cm x 44.5 cm
Date: 1984
Location: The Department of Public Works

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Subject Matter** Most of the pictorial space is occupied by blue-blacks and purples. It is a kind of bursting. This is even more clearly evident in the linear and spattered application of white over the undercoat of blue-blacks and purples. The lines all go in the same direction and therefore there is a wide sweeping movement from top to bottom.
- Design** **Texture:** Strong textures within all colours and areas.
Lines and Movement: Strong upward bursting thrust due to the direction of line.
- Techniques** This is a lithograph. It resembles a monoprint. To create a monoprint, paint is applied to a glass surface, paper is rubbed on the surface, and the print (one-mono) is pulled. This visual is due to the strong direct textural appearance of the work.
- Mood** Active, outward movement dominates the work. There seems to be an explosion, a burst of energy. Rather than trying to directly capture a spurt (presumably of rushing ocean), the artist captures its essence, its movement, the impression of a spurt.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

Spurt is as much about the process of lithography as it is about movement. Using lithographic ink, gravity, and a spontaneous movement, I was able to attain the free-flowing energy of this piece. This image is both abstract and real since it is representing nothing in particular yet it's a spurt; the actual traces of a real movement. A common thread to the different interpretations is always movement, i.e., an explosion, an oil spill, flowing seaweed, etc. The act of creating the piece will hopefully remain more effective than the finished product.

Notes:

Artist: Gilbert Hay
Title: Waiting and Expecting (Mythology Series)
Medium: Lithography
Size: 48.9 cm x 59 cm
Date: 1981
Location: Spurrell Gallery, St. John's

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter Two people are on a shore with their backs to the viewer; one standing, one sitting. One has binoculars, the other, a rifle. They are looking out to sea. A boat is moored beside them. In the distance there are two islands/land masses. What might the people be waiting for? White lines appear in some areas of black (notably on the clothing and the boat).

Design

Positive/Negative: The white space, far from being a negative space or unused space, is actually the ocean. No horizon line is defined, merely suggested.

Balance: This picture is heavily weighted to the left. Perhaps the role of the two stones on the right is to balance the picture's weighting to the left.

Volume: Modelling is suggested by the middle greys appearing in some white areas.

Techniques This is a lithograph, made by drawing with greasy ink on a flat stone surface. Printing ink was rolled onto the dampened surface. It stuck to the greasy drawing ink but stayed off the damp stone. Paper was placed on the stone and the whole thing run through a press. When the paper was peeled off, the drawing appeared.

Mood Tension, because of the subject matter and asymmetrical balance.

Notes:

Artist: Bill Ritchie
 Title: Fox Woman (Labrador Inuit Mythology Series)
 Medium: 1-colour lithograph on Arches Buff paper
 Size: Approximately 43 cm x 58.4 cm
 Date: Unknown
 Location: Collection of Michael Wotherspoon, St. John's

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter We see a fox (look closely at the face - an image within an image), whose nose and tail point to the centre area of the image. The space between the front legs is approximately the same shape as the head. The single object almost fills the whole frame (see also Greg Curnoe's Bicycle - PA 13).

Design **Line:** Very fine short lines are used to indicate texture and volume on the fox. **Composition:** The filling of the frame by the object emphasizes the positive and negative shapes. It also encloses or traps the fox in a box. This relates nicely to the myth which this work illustrates.

Technique This is a lithograph process which looks like a drawing. The artist drew the image with a greasy pencil on a large flat stone and then transferred the image to paper.

Mood One of enclosure, checked movement.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

The print was a highlight in many respects. It was the first drawn litho to look drawn and the hidden feature happened nicely. It suited the story.

Note: This print is based on an Inuit myth about a women who is hidden in the skin of a fox but who emerges from the skin each day and mend a greater hunter's clothes while he is away from his igloo. Later, when she is discovered, she marries the hunter but dons the skin and runs away when her strange odour is commented on by the people in the camp.

Notes:

Artist: David B. Milne
Title: John Brown's Farm
Medium: Colour drypoint on Fabriano and 1930 Whatman wove paper
Size: 17.4 cm x 22.7 cm
Date: November-December 1931
Location: National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
Milne-Duncan Bequest, 1970

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Subject Matter** The image consists of a landscape with rolling hills, farm buildings, and trees. It is winter. There is snow on the ground. The land occupies only the lower third of the image. The rest is overcast sky. The paper surface is smudgy. The lines are fuzzy and there are a few accents of colour.
- Design** **Composition:** Only the lower third of the picture is occupied (positive space), but the sky (unoccupied space) has been assigned great importance by its size.
Line: Quite fuzzy. There is evenly weighted delineation.
Colour: For the most part, the image is quite colourless (although it is textural). The accents of colour are strong enough to add interest but not to take over the image.
- Techniques** The fuzzy line is the result of lines being **scratched** into a metal surface. Little bits of the scratched metal formed burrs along the edge of the scratched line. This is common in the drypoint (intaglio) process.
- Mood** Cool, still, strongly atmospheric.
- Notes:**

Artist: Emily Mussells
Title: Red Rocks and Cotton Grass
Medium: Etching
Size: 19.2 cm x 43.8 cm printed on 56 cm x 76 cm Arches 200 paper - edition of 15
Date: 1983-84
Location: Contemporary Graphics, St. John's

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Subject Matter** Rocks, grass, cotton grass, sky, and clouds make up this composition.
- Design** **Texture:** Strong textures occur throughout the rocks, the cotton-ball shapes and the sky. The yellow-green stalks have a more linear textural quality to it.
Colour: The colour has a transparent quality.
- Techniques** The etching has a collographic kind of feeling: the cotton-ball shapes and rocks have an embossed quality as if the surface of the paper was raised (like embossed greeting cards). The colour was actually applied after the black and white print was made; thus making each print of every edition slightly different.
- Mood** Playful. We tend to think of rocks and grass as being grey and green objects without a great deal of variety. The artist focuses on the strong texture and colour of these objects.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

This etching was inspired by a watercolour sketch done at Spotted Islands, Labrador - August 1983. It is hand painted in water colour.

Notes:

Artist: Miranda Jones
Title: St. John's #3
Medium: Intaglio
Size: Approximately 66 cm x 96.5 cm
Date: 1981
Location: The Department of Public Works

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Subject Matter** This is a view of the city of St. John's, with a number of crowded overlapping buildings. The vantage point is from above. The viewer sees roofs and chimneys. There are many details. There is the slight addition of a violet colour along the bottom of the image. Otherwise the image is a mixture of linear drawing and solid irregular black areas. Some of the black areas have some white picked out of it.
- Design** **Composition:** This is a very active, crowded pictorial space with lots of detail but no major focal point. The artist fills the frame to all the edges.
Space: The artist has chosen a high point of view, overlapped objects, and changed the amount of detail and size of objects as they receded into the distance.
- Techniques** The etching process is used here. After the artist made her black and white print, she may have applied another colour on part of the image with a roller. She may have applied the ink directly on her plate by rolling it or rubbing it on.
- Mood** A doodle type record of a pleasant evening and sight; playful, light.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

I completed this print shortly after my arrival in St. John's, Newfoundland. I was struck by the uniquely "old world" feel of the city which was sadly being destroyed by unsympathetic development and ugly high rises. So I tried to preserve the old St. John's in this image.

Notes:

Artist: Scott Goudie
Title: Abby of York Street
Medium: Mezzotint
Size: 76.2 cm x 91.4 cm
Date: 1985
Location: Contemporary Graphics, St. John's

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter A black cat sits in profile on a window sill. The sun shines in and leaves bright puddles of light on the ledge. Beyond the window, houses, gardens and sky are vaguely represented. Because the light comes from behind, the cat is seen in silhouette. Its collar and right eye are the only exceptions.

Design **Value:** This is a good example of a value scale in an image. All the tones are evident from the darkest black to a clean white. On the whole though, one sees the image as being fairly dark.
Shape: Line is subordinate to the dominant large flat shapes of value placed next to each other.

Techniques This is a mezzotint technique, which is a form of etching where the artist works from the dark to the light.

Mood The strong horizontal, more or less centred, composition indicates a quiet sort of feeling. The absence of lively lines reinforces this mood.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

Abby was a very strange cat, who would sit for hours on the window ledge and stare at the window frame, not out the window. Scott felt he had to immortalize her. (Christina Parker - Contemporary Graphics)

Notes:

Artist: Joe Carter
Title: Chafe House, Petty Harbour
Medium: Linoleum print
Size: 34 cm x 39 cm
Date: 1979
Location: Collection of Michael Wotherspoon, St. John's

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Subject Matter** A house is set in a garden with a small shed nearby, a fence and gate, trees, path, scrubs, and sky. It is an overcast day.
- Design** **Texture:** The variety of cuts in the linoleum have given a strong textural quality to this print. Try to imagine what marks you would have to cut to represent a variety of qualities of sky, the grass, or the bushes.
Line: Look at the line used to show tree branches against the sky. The artist did not cut them away, rather he cut around them. Compare the branches against the distant mountains. The mountains were dark so the artist cut away the linoleum to form the branches there. There is an interesting interplay of positive and negative.
- Techniques** In relief printing, what the artist cuts away from the linoleum does not receive ink and therefore appears white in the final print. The surface of the linoleum that remains after the rest has been cut away prints black. Check the fence pickets and posts, the garden path, the clothesline, the clapboard, the glass, the letters, etc., closely to discover what was cut away and what was left.
- Mood** Quiet, still. The artist has constructed this image from separate isolated, but contained shapes, which vary in texture.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

I did the buildings and fences first. That part was easy for me. All the time I was thinking about how am I going to carve an overcast sky? For me it took courage to start jabbing the small points in the sky. After an inch or so I knew it was going to work. I had been afraid I was going to spoil it.

Notes:

Artist: Gilbert Hay
Title: Rescue (Mythology Series)
Medium: Lithography
Size: 39 cm x 51.4 cm
Date: 1981
Location: Spurrell Gallery, St. John's

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter An Inuit in an open boat reaches out to rescue two people in the water. He has one by the hand. The boat, harpoon, and oars provide a strong diagonal. There is a variety of shapes and lines. The work has every appearance of a relief print where white areas have been cut away. The image can be seen as one total organic shape placed in a frame.

Design **Line and Shape:** There is a variety of size, and shape, as well as positive/negative reversals.
Space: Shallow space is defined almost decoratively with the action taking place inside a roughly oval shape.
Movement: A diagonal thrust is evident in the overall appearance of the work.

Techniques The lithograph technique is used here.

Mood The artist is as interested in line and shape as he is in illustrating the event.

Notes:

Artist: Don Wright
Title: Frog
Medium: Woodcut
Size: 40 cm x 50 cm
Date: 1966
Location: Prince of Wales Collegiate, St. John's

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter A frog sits on a riverbank. The rock on which he sits curves downward below him and it appears as if water might be running over the rock. A large tree looms in the background. There are many irregular lines and shapes in the image. A pale green appears in some of the white areas.

Design **Texture:** This image is strongly textured. The surface appears to be quite busy although essentially the subject matter is quite simple and straightforward.
Colour: The image is essentially a black and white one. A pale green softens the harsh white in some areas.

Techniques This is a woodcut which uses two separate plates. The grain of the wood and the resulting lines and shapes typical of a woodcut are quite evident. See also Artist's Comments below.

Moo In spite of the detail and intricacy of the image, a very quiet settled sort of feeling predominates. This is partly due to the subject matter, the softness of the green, and the strong horizontal, almost centred composition.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

This print was made during a period when I was very enthusiastic about canoeing. I occasionally drew and painted sitting quietly in the canoe and one evening this frog posed for me for a long while, both of us sitting very still along the bank of the lake. As a two-block woodcut, the printing order of these blocks is somewhat unusual. The pale transparent green was printed on top of the black "key block". This was done to enhance the murky mood of the print.

Notes:

Artist: Gerard Brander a Brandis
Title: Bog with Pitcher Plant
Medium: Wood engraving
Size: 11 cm x 8.6 cm
Date: 1984
Location: Memorial University Art Gallery

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Subject Matter** A pitcher plant among many other plants is shown in a wet or boggy place. The surface is very busy. It is necessary to look closely to see individual plants. This image is very small and it is amazing to think of the detail found in such a small work.
- Design** **Lines:** Lines curve and flow through the image. They are graceful as opposed to dramatic or violent.
Shapes: The shapes echo the lovely curves and rhythms of the lines.
- Techniques** Compare Joe Carter's image (PR 12) with this one. The same principle of relief printing applies to both. Some of the cuts are much more delicate than in Chafe House.
- Mood** Quiet, rhythmic, harmonious. Nature flourishing and peaceful.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

The pitcher plant is no stranger to me, as it also grows in bog near my Ontario home. It was painted by J. J. Audubon in Newfoundland in 1833 (see Neary and O'Flahery, Part of the Main, p. 76) and has interested many artists since then. I was attracted not only to its profusion and luxuriance, but to its place in that fantastically integrated carpet of plants that forms the surface of so many wet places in Newfoundland.

Notes:

Artist: Toni Onley
Title: Landscape
Medium: Serigraph
Size: 28.6 cm x 38.7 cm (imprint) 30.5 cm x 50.8 cm (sheet)
Date: n.d.
Location: Art Gallery of Ontario
Gift of Simon Fraser University, 1969

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Subject Matter** Irregular shapes in blue, greys, greens, and white suggest a landscape. The edges of the shapes are well defined. Some of them overlap.
- Design** **Colour:** Cool colours suggest a cool land.
Abstraction: The landscape has been reduced to its simplest shapes. It is amazing to think that these few simple shapes have the power to suggest a landscape. The artist is concerned with only the essential; all extraneous detail has been removed.
- Techniques** The stencil process of silkscreening is strongly evident.
- Mood** Cool, still, quiet, largely as a result of the colours and repetition of similar shapes.
- Notes:**

Artist: Sid Butt
Title: No Squid
Medium: Silkscreen 24/50
Size: 30.5 cm x 41 cm
Date: 1981
Location: Memorial University Art Gallery

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Subject Matter** A fishing boat, anchored in the grey of early morning. There are some figures on the boat. The boat and figures are almost in silhouette. The water is calm and the reflection of the boat ripples towards the foreground of the image. The cloud shapes are irregular; the water shapes are simple and smoothly edged.
- Design** **Colour:** Monochromatic.
Shapes: Clearly defined, quite simple shapes are evident. The values placed next to each other. No line is added for definition or activity.
- Techniques** This silkscreen clearly illustrates the quality of flat colour areas evident in most silkscreen printing. Flat areas of one colour were printed first; subsequent screens produced new areas and new colours to be overprinted. The artist printed the lighter colours first, ending with the darkest colour and the smallest detail on the final overprint.
- Mood** Quiet and calm, because of the colour scheme and the simple flat shapes and gentle curves.
- Notes:**

Artist: Jon Wilkinson
Title: Meeting Place
Medium: Serigraph
Size: 45.7 cm x 68.6 cm
Date: 1980
Location: Spurrell Gallery, St. John's

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Subject Matter** This work presents us with the side of a blue clapboard building. A yellow door and yellow gable provide strong accents. Some orange flowers in a barrel are located in the centre of the lower edge of the picture.
- Design** **Colour:** Colours are strong and intense. A large area of blue with accents of yellow and a touch of blue's complimentary, orange make up the image. The colour scheme is simple and somewhat joyful.
Balance: Asymmetrical.
- Techniques** This serigraph is more complex than it looks. It took many screens to build up the subtleties of colour.
- Mood** Intensity, light, and bright colours. It is interesting to speculate on the significance of this meeting place to the artist. Somehow it seems a treasured place, filled with happy memories.
- Notes:**

Artist: David Thauberger
Title: Black Velvet Bunnies
Medium: Silkscreen, acrylic on black velvet
Size: 92.2 cm x 82.7 cm
Date: 1977
Location: National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Subject Matter There are fifteen identical rabbits on a black velvet background. They are placed in a regular pattern on the fabric. Their eyes are shiny like pebbles or gems. A single thin white line describes the back ends of the bunnies.

Design **Pattern:** Very regular.
Figure/Ground: In what space are these bunnies placed? They emerge from the black very quietly. The only thing that separates them from the black is a very thick white line which describes the tail end of the bunnies.
Texture: The texture of the velvet and the texture of the bunnies make an interesting comparison.

Techniques The artist used silkscreen stencils. It would be interesting to find out other novel surfaces upon which to print.

Mood The image is humorous because of the bunnies and the surface on which they are printed. This style of painting is not approved of by most visual artists. It is synonymous with paint-by-number types of painting and other form of mass production art.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

For as long as I have been painting there have been some consistent formal and technical aspects in my work. Figure/ground, positive/negative, black/white, day/night, front/behind - all have been ongoing issues. I have also been concerned with texture and feel in my paintings; the pictures should make [the viewer] want to rub the surfaces. Printing on velvet and the use of flocking in my prints are an extension of this concern. The result, it seems to me, is an immediacy and insistency that is successful pictorially and calls attention to the common aspects of community life, raising them to a symbolic meaning.

Notes:

Artist: Jacob Kennedy
Title: Winter Outport
Medium: Silkscreen
Size: Approximately 27.9 cm x 25.6 cm
Date: 1984
Location: Spurrell Gallery, St. John's

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Subject Matter** We see a fishing village with stages, a harbour, cliffs, rock faces, and reflections in the water. The surfaces seems to be composed of little dots of colour.
- Design** **Colour:** The primary colours, plus black and white are used. They are all pure, bright and intense.
Light: The artist is concerned with natural light. He has closely studied how it falls on geometric and natural forms. He has studied reflections in the water which are a result of light falling on objects.
- Techniques** See Artist's Comments below.
- Mood** Sparkling, bright, crisp because of the effects of the spots of colour, the intensity of the colour, and the clean, crisp subject matter itself.

ARTIST'S COMMENTS

This print is made by using three screens, a screen for each colour - blue, yellow, and red. The paint must be transparent. The images are built up by using small dots of paint. As far as I know I am the first person to apply this technique in silk screening.

Notes:

Printmaking Project #1: Multicolour Relief Printing

Key Learning

Colour

Colour adds interest and creates mood in a relief print. Colour is easy to achieve by using different coloured papers or grounds, and by painting or spattering the ground in one or more colours. Rimpling or otherwise texturing the ground before printing also adds interest to the image.

In printmaking it is possible to make many identical images. Ink or paint is usually applied to a textured surface (plate), paper is pressed onto the plate, and when it is lifted the image is seen on the paper. The printed image is the reverse of the image on the original plate in all but one method of printmaking.

Simple Relief Printmaking

To make a relief print, the printing plate must have at least two levels of surface. Only the top level receives ink or paint and therefore that is the only part of the plate that will be printed onto the paper. The lower levels will not receive ink and therefore they will not be printed.

Composition

Even the simplest printing methods, such as found object printing, can give exquisite sophisticated results. This depends entirely on the initial selection of found objects to print and upon the arrangement (composition) of the printed images. Printing found objects lends itself immediately to pattern making, whether regular or irregular. Variety and interest are achieved through such things as variations in colour or colour schemes, shapes, textures, overlap, and the ground upon which the image is printed.

Reduction Printing

Reduction printing is a complex method of multicolour printing. A block is cut and an edition is printed in a light colour such as yellow. The artist cleans the plate and cuts away more of the surface. The plate is inked in a new, darker colour (such as green) and printed on top of the first yellow print. This process may be repeated several times.

Materials

- ! the linoleum/wood block used in Project #4
- ! cutting tools
- ! benchhooks
- ! water-based ink
- ! brayers
- ! inking plates
- ! water and sponges
- ! paints

- !
- ! brushes
- ! variety of papers

Motivation

Visuals

PR1, PR2, PR3, PR4. Discuss in terms of multicolour printing. How has the artist produced the final point through individual yet connecting blocks?

Experimentation

In order to learn about simple multicolour printing, try the following:

- a) Use different papers or grounds.
- b) Paint or spatter the ground in one or more colours and rumple or otherwise texture the ground before painting.

Suggested Theme

Predetermined by Printmaking Project #4.

Studio

Make a small edition of multicolour prints.

Summary

Display all of the student work and discuss in terms of the objectives and the process (successes, problems, surprises).

Notes:

Printmaking Project #2: Monoprinting

Key Learning

Planeographic Printmaking

This type of printmaking does not require varying levels of surface. A flat surface is inked or painted, paper is pressed to the surface, and a print is pulled. In its more complex forms, this is known as lithography and many copies of a single image may be made. A much simpler example of planeographic printmaking is the monoprint. In this case however only a single (mono) image may be made. The print image is a reversal of the original image. Making monoprints is a very spontaneous and free-flowing experience. Monoprints tend to lack fine detail; instead, they are energetic, rough and loose. Monoprints can incorporate more than one colour.

Materials

- ! tempera or acrylic paint
- ! brushes and/or brayers
- ! a flat surface to ink or paint (plexiglas, plastic tray, table surface, etc.)
- ! blunt tools for drawing
- ! sponges and clean-up rags
- ! water
- ! papers

Motivation

Visuals

PR 5, PR 6, PR 7. After studying the images individually, compare the spontaneity of the monoprint to the other more calculated pieces. Consider the amount of time necessary to complete each work.

Experiment

In order to learn about monoprinting, try any of all of the suggested methods about monoprinting found at the end of the Printmaking Section. Try to discover others.

Suggested Theme

Impressions of people, objects, movements could provide interesting possibilities.

Studio

Make two or three monoprints on a theme. Make use of the spontaneous quality of monoprinting.

Summary

Display all of the student work and discuss in terms of the objectives and the process (successes, problems, surprises).

Notes:

Printmaking Project #3: Collographs

Key Learning

Collographs

A collographic printing plate is one that has been built up by gluing various three-dimensional materials to it. A collographic plate can have a variety of levels (heights). The base of the plate is often cardboard, and the final plate is usually shellacked or glued to make it water resistant. Ink may be painted on or rubbed into the crevices. If no printing press is available, it is best to keep the height of the plate fairly even, as in relief printmaking, and to apply ink to the top surface. A predominant characteristic of the collographic plate is that a tremendous variety of textures may be used for a single image.

Edition

An edition of prints is the total number of prints made from a single plate. In an edition of five prints, each successive print would be numbered centrally below the image as follows 1/5, 2/5, 3/5, 4/5, 5/5. The title of the print appears in the lower left corner, and the signature and date in the lower right corner.

Materials

- ! cardboard
- ! found materials of various textures and shapes
- ! glue
- ! white glue or shellac (use shellac only under well-ventilated conditions)
- ! water-based ink
- ! brushes and/or brayers
- ! cloths
- ! papers
- ! press (optional)

Motivation

Visuals

PR 8, PR 9, PR 10, PR11. After studying the slides individually, compare them in terms of texture. Compare also, the decorative qualities of line and shape in the pieces.

Experimentation

None necessary.

Suggested Theme

Abstract designs, views of mechanical workings, or stylized representations of actual things would invite interesting images.

Studio

Make a small edition (three to five) collographic prints. The prints should exhibit strong textural qualities.

Summary

Display all of the student work and discuss in terms of the objectives and the process (successes, problems, surprises).

Notes:

Printmaking Project #4: Lino/Woodcut

Key Learning

Relief Printing

Linoleum cuts and woodcuts are more sophisticated forms of relief printing requiring special cutting tools and more extensive opportunity to create a textured surface because a larger surface is provided. The difference between wood and linoleum is that wood has a grain which affects the surface and the cutting and therefore the appearance of the print. Positive and negative shapes and texture should be emphasized in the composition of the print. Any cutting is preceded by lots of sketching, and a planned drawing which indicates strong black areas and white areas. Once a final drawing is done to the size of the lino/wood plate, it is transferred to the block in full. When the plate has been cut, it is printed and the reversed image appears.

Materials

- ! linoleum or wood block
- ! cutting tools
- ! bench hooks
- ! water-based ink
- ! brayers
- ! inking plates
- ! water and sponges
- ! paper

Motivation

Visuals

PR 12, PR 13, PR 14, PR 15. After studying each slide individually, compare them in terms of shape and texture.

Experimentation

Not usually possible due to limited materials. Some helpful hints:

- a) Slightly heated linoleum blocks are easier to cut.
- b) Use benchhooks, and point cutting tools away from fingers.
- c) Avoid overusing single line in block cutting. Emphasize, instead, positive and negative shapes, and texture. Look at how the artist has cut into or left uncut the surface of the block to create positive and negative space.

Suggested Theme

Themes emphasizing humans or environments, interiors, and scapes, provide opportunity for interesting shapes or textures. Whatever the subject matter, extensive preparatory work pays off in the long run.

Studio

Make a small edition of lino-woodprints. The prints should emphasize positive and negative shapes, and texture.

Summary

Display all of the student work and discuss in terms of the objectives and the process (successes, problems, surprises).

Notes:

Printmaking Project #5: Stencils

Key Learning

Stencil Printing

Stencil printing is the only printmaking process in which the image is not reversed. Anything which allows paint or ink to pass through may be considered a stencil. Stencils may be found or they may be created. If a stencil is created, the parts which are cut away may also be used to create prints. The cut away parts are called templates. Planning before cutting is essential to keep the design intact. Interior parts will not fall away if ties or bridges are used in the design. X-acto knives rather than scissors are useful for cutting intricate designs.

Shape

Stencil printing is not usually suitable for intricate designs. Shapes are quite separate and colour is flatly applied. Therefore, interesting shapes and variety of colour should be emphasized.

Materials

- ! stencil materials (e.g., heavy-duty waste paper, thin shellacked cardboard, glossy magazines covers, acetate, discarded x-ray film, stencil board)
- ! stiff brushes and paint
- ! spray paint or chalk
- ! paper or print on.

Motivation

Visuals

PR 16, PR 17, PR 18, PR 19, PR 20. After studying each slide individually, compare them in terms of colour and shape.

Experimentation

To learn about arranging shape and colour in stencil printing, try the following:

- a) Make interesting prints by using a single found stencil and printing it in various positions and colours.
- b) Make a simple stencil using bold shapes and then printing both the positive and negative images as in part a).

Suggested Theme

Any theme emphasizing simple shapes would be suitable.

Studio

Make a stencil print incorporating an interesting composition of shapes and colour scheme.

Summary

Display all of the student work and discuss in terms of the objectives and the process (successes, problems, surprises).

Notes: