

ART FORM

Visual Arts

LEARNING AREA

The Arts
The World Around us

SUBJECT

Art & Design

TARGET GROUP

Key Stages 1 & 2

MATERIALS

Pencils
Hand Rollers (hard rubber coated ones not sponge, Edco)
Masking tape
Oil paint
Block printing medium (Edco)
Painting shirts for children
Covering for tables
Paint / Wallpaper scrapers (Hardware shop)
Paper for drawing on (not too thin, A4 photocopy paper or slightly thicker)
Paper for printing onto (anything that isn't too porous or too shiny, photocopy paper, fax paper)
Printing blocks (anything with a smooth surface, bathroom tiles are ideal, OHP acetate sheets, perspex)
2 large pieces of smooth, heavy card or anything with a smooth surface for mixing the oil paint & block printing medium
Baby Wipes
Card for frames
Scissors (optional)

ARTIST'S INTRODUCTION

Children make individual monoprints from their own original abstract line drawing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Language
- Listening skills; following step by step instructions
- Creative skills; composition, learning about art processes & artists technique
- Working independently & in a group

SPACE REQUIRED

Classroom with space for a 'dirty table' to mix oil paints, block printing medium and set down finished with inked up rollers. Space to leave the prints overnight to dry will also be needed.

A blackboard / whiteboard is handy for writing up some new words and doing an example drawing.

PREPARATION

You may want to do some research before you start the practical preparation even if it's purely for your own interest and confidence about this area of visual art. For a good historical overview of printmaking from cave art to Japanese woodcuts, with easy to follow definitions of the different types of printing, try this website:

<http://www.eyeconart.net/history/printmaking.htm>

(A quick note, there are many different techniques with monoprinting and the two that are mentioned on this site are both different to the one that is detailed in this workshop plan). I used Paul Klee as the artistic basis for my workshops (see Artist's Introduction for more details). For information about Paul Klee relevant to this workshop visit:

<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/RefArticle.aspx?refid=761572833>

DURATION

1hr 30mins

ARTIST'S INTRODUCTION

This workshop toured to twelve primary schools as part of Young at Art's outreach programme 'School Friends'. I used Paul Klee as a basis for the technique of both drawing and the type of monoprinting, which is a line drawing oil transfer. I enjoy working in this way as the children get to learn about an artist in a specific context and then work in that artist's technique or adapted style, which I think brings them a greater understanding across a lot of areas and offers a type of knowledge you can only get through experience. Printmaking is the type of art form that is quite easy to do once you have seen how the process works but quite difficult to explain 'cold'. So my advice is to read over the instructions carefully, then tell the children it's an experiment (because it is) and just do it. There are ideas for further developments and once you put the initial effort in you and your class will be churning out prints like there's no tomorrow!

Monoprinting has lots of different forms and is a wonderfully experimental and creative form. The type of monoprinting detailed in this workshop, line drawing oil transfer, can be really beautiful and will give the children's pencil drawings a new life transforming them into colour oil prints.

PRACTICAL PREPARATION (30-45 mins)

- Whatever you are using as a printing block you will need to cut it down to a uniform size if it isn't already. The children will need one printing block each. For reasons of time and space when working with classes of 20-30 who haven't done a printing activity before, a printing block roughly the size of a bathroom tile is ideal. (Approx 15cmx15cm). You can use a bigger surface area such as an A4 OHP acetate sheet without cutting it down, perfectly well also, but you will need to stress to the children that they mustn't lean on it when they are working as the imprint of their hands and arms may obscure their final print.
- You will need to cut the printing paper to fit the size of the printing blocks, I would

advise making it slightly bigger than the printing blocks to leave to a border around the print, which is both aesthetically pleasing and allows for an easy 'peel off' of the print once finished.

Each child will need a piece of printing paper.

- You can either cut the paper for drawing so it is slightly bigger than the paper for printing (about 3-5cm bigger length & breadth) or hand out scissors and let the children do it.
Again each child will need a piece of drawing paper.
- Card frames for registration (see instructions) this is simply so that the children know which part of their drawing they are going to trace over. (Nb.If you are using A4 sizes or bigger skip this part and just keep everything the same size - printing paper, drawing paper and printing block). Cut out a card square about 5cm bigger length and breadth than the size of your printing block and then cut out a square from the middle of this which is the same size as your printing block. If you use a metal ruler and a Stanley knife this is much quicker and less fiddly than it sounds. You don't need to do one for every child, just do as many as time will allow and get the children to pass them around.
- Cover the classroom desks with preferably large sheets of scrap paper secured to the desks with masking tape, if you use newspapers to cover the desks you will need to tape them down to stop them moving about. (When the children start the printing process it is important that their printing blocks can be secured as it will be difficult for them to work successfully if everything is moving about).

INSTRUCTIONS

Stage 1

Ask the children what they know about printing and what different kinds of printing they've done

or know about. All answers are valid; hand, sponge, potato, rubber stamp, within reason, including using a computer printer. Basically get them to identify printing as the process of using something to make a mark on another thing, (usually paper), then ask if anybody knows what monoprinting is (a unique print of one which cannot be repeated with exactly the same results). If no one knows, then break down the word and deal with mono first. If no one knows then ask them if they have seen the episode of The Simpsons with Homer and the monorail (they will have) and get them to extrapolate the meaning of mono – one, and then combine it with print.

Then introduce Paul Klee (usually pronounced Clay but some people pronounce his name as rhyming with glee) as an artist famous for his monoprints. (I showed the children the picture "Twittering Machine" 1922, Paul Klee, as although the monoprint is printed onto a pre painted watercolour and partially hand coloured it was made using exactly the same technique as in our workshop artchive.com/.../twittering_machine.jpg.html)

Then write up the phrase 'taking a line for a walk' and ask the children what they think it means and who they think might have said it. Paul Klee said his work was like taking a line for a walk. Explain that shortly they are going to start by making a drawing in this style. Do an example on the board for them. (As I was delivering workshops for Young At Art's School Friends programme I asked the children to do a drawing of a friend, including imaginary friends, friends in or outside school or animal friends). Show them that they must draw without lifting their pencil from the page but if they should forget and lift their pencil, then all they need to do is put it back down on an existing line and keep going. The only rule is that their drawing must not be too small (if all their lines are really close together it won't come out very clearly in the printing stage). Stress that it is an experiment and that there is no wrong or right way to do it, don't encourage rubbers or too many "new" pieces of paper, tell them to incorporate or

ignore their mistakes, draw on the other side of the paper if they don't like what they've done or they are finished early. Try and find something to complement in each child's drawing.

Stage 2 - Drawing

Pencils, drawing paper as above.

Stage 3 – Composition

Give out the card frames and explain to them about composition and registration if you like or skip it and just give the instructions. Composition in art is like composition in English or Music. When you compose, you make something up, so you choose what goes in your picture just like in a photograph. Once they've finished their drawing, they then have to compose their monoprint. If their drawing is bigger than the card frame then they have to decide which part will be in the final print by placing the frame on top of their drawing and choosing a part to draw around (they draw around the inside square and when they get to the printing process they will trace the part of their drawing that is inside the square). If their drawing is smaller than the frame they still draw around the inside square for registration.

Registration is just a printing word for lining things up. So their printing block will be lined up with the printing paper and lined up with their drawing so that when they are tracing over their drawing everything will come in more or less the right place.

NB. If the drawing paper is much bigger than the printing block and printing paper then you need to get the children to draw around both the inside and outside of the card frames. They will have a small square and big square on their drawings, they then cut out around the outside of the big square.

You could at this point explain to them while they are working about prints being a mirror image, how letters and numbers come on backwards and have a chat about how they think their prints will look.

Stage 4 – Choosing colours

Choose volunteers for picking colours. When working with a group of around thirty I would advise either picking 1 colour or 2 different colours (the monoprints will be a single block colour on the white background of the paper). Then choose volunteers to mix up the oil paints and medium. Get the rest of the class to hand out the printing blocks, whilst you get the mixers started. If you are using ceramic tiles you will not need to secure them to the table as they are heavy enough not to move about too much, but if you are using anything lighter than a tile you will need to secure them to the covered table using masking tape. A couple of double sided loops on the backside will do it and not interfere with spreading the printing ink. Make sure they leave plenty of room around their printing block otherwise when it comes to spreading the ink they will be inking themselves and the people around them.

Squeeze out 1 and half times the amount of printing block medium to the amount of oil paint on to your large piece of strong card. All told, you won't need anymore than the size of a segment of a large orange (a bit more if you are only using one colour for the whole class). Get the mixers to use the paint scrapers to mix up the two ingredients until the block-printing medium (beige type colour) can't be seen and the mixture is really smooth. You can get the rest of the class to come up in stages and watch.

Stage 5 - Spreading the printing ink

The children can share rollers if you don't have enough for the whole class. They get dry rollers and you go around and roll a little ink on their printing blocks, which they spread out. Tell them to lean hard and spread out the ink evenly. Less is definitely more here as if they have too much ink on their printing block their prints will be very hard to make out as the paper will suck up too much ink. As a rule, if the surface of the printing block is smooth you're fine, but if you can see tiny little peaks of ink on the block you've got too much on there and you can take some off by

rolling it off onto scrap paper. They won't all have exactly the same shade either, tell them, a lighter colour on their printing block will give them a print with thinner lines and a softer colour whilst a darker colour on their printing block will give them a print with thicker lines and a deeper colour. Collect the rollers and put them out of the way.

Stage 6 – Creating the print

Next go round and carefully place the printing paper on top of each pupil's printing block making sure that they know not to lean on, or touch the paper yet. Tell them to carefully and gently place their drawings on top of the printing block making sure that their registration box is lined up (should be roughly in the middle). You then go round and put a piece of masking tape on either side of the outside of the registration box on their drawing so that it is secure.

They then trace over their drawings leaning normally, not too heavy, not too light, making sure that the only pressure they are making is with their pencil and that they go over all their lines and they don't leave any out.

When they are finished get them to carefully peel off the tape, lift off their drawing and peel their print off the printing block, just pull off from a corner and they will have their finished colour monoprint.

Stage 7 – Tidy up

Place the prints somewhere to dry overnight. The easiest way to clean up is there and then. Get the children to wipe their printing blocks clean with a baby wipe and themselves if needs be. Rollers and scrapers are better cleaned by an adult, baby wipes are fine, you only need to use white spirit with oil paints if the paint has dried.

TEACHERS' TIPS

This workshop is quite heavy on listening carefully to instructions, but it's worth it at the end so keep the pupils focused by chatting to them about the process and what's happening and be

very clear about the instructions so they know and understand what they are doing. It is much easier for them to understand by going through the process, so even if it doesn't work out exactly for everybody as planned the first time, they will have learnt a lot just by doing it. Keep stressing it is an experiment, maybe for you too, so that nobody feels they their work "hasn't come out right".

LINKS TO OTHER LEARNING AREAS

- Science & technology; properties of materials & how they react with one another, process of transfer from medium to another
- Language & literacy; new words & their application inside & outside a specialist field
- Personal & Social Development; developing confidence working independently and in a group
- History; origins of printing from primitive cave art to sophisticated oriental wood block printing

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Relief printing

Ask the children to save up and bring in the polystyrene bases from frozen pizzas and use them to make relief prints from drawings. Just place the drawing on top of the polystyrene and trace over them leaning reasonably heavily. You will be left with an indented polystyrene base which you ink up and then place a sheet of paper over and roller over with a dry roller to lift an impression.

Monoprinting used water-based inks

For the transfer drawing method described in the workshop it is easiest to use oils. For other types of monoprinting, such as direct paint transfer, which is similar to folding over paper with poster

paint inside and making a butterfly, water-based inks are preferable.

Direct paint transfer

Get the children to paint with water-based printing inks with a limited palette (too many colours = grey/brown sludge) onto a printing block. A larger format than used for the transfer drawing method works better and then place a piece of paper on top and dry roller over it. This is easy and produces a quick learning curve as results will differ with the direction of the roller, amount of paint, mix of colours etc. You can encourage them to do more figurative experiments such as a long stroke of brown paint with some dotted splodges of green at the top and a roller going over the paper in one direction horizontally (a tree on a windy day).

Reductive method

Get the children to roller water-based ink onto their printing block and then using a tool such as a scraper, or the end of a pencil to remove parts, wiping off excess ink as they go. They then put paper over the top and dry roller to get their prints. Again, good for abstract experimental work and they can use different coloured rollers on the same printing block to get different colours.

Don't forget to send feedback to toolbox@youngart.co.uk

www.youngart.co.uk/toolbox