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Introduction to Relief Printing

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Introduction to Relief Printmaking

Lesson Objective: Students will learn the basics of relief printmaking through making their own prints with foam plates. Lesson is designed for third grade standards but can be adjusted for grades first through eighth. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to identify traditional relief printing style versus traditional paintings and drawings.

Teachers: Powerpoint included and slides correspond with the lesson starting from the very beginning.

Standards:

1.4 Compare and contrast two works of art made by the use of different art tools and media: *Students will be able to identify traditional relief prints versus other forms of art.*

2.6 Create an original work of art emphasizing rhythm and movement, using a selected printing process.

Materials:

Styrofoam (Either sheets or recycled from plates/to-go boxes)

Dull pencils or tortillions for carving

Pencils for sketching

Scratch paper for sketching

Cardstock for printing

Tempera paint/ink

Brayers

Optional Materials:

Paint brushes for touch-ups

(For the teacher) Handheld mirror to show the students their reversed work

Art Vocabulary:

Printmaking - The process of printing multiple original images from one plate.

Relief Printmaking - Printmaking process where the ink sits on top of the plate as opposed to in the crevices made by your carving tool.

Plate - The surface in which your initial image for printing is created. Plates can be made out of a variety of materials, but in relief printing they are more traditionally made from wood or linoleum. In this lesson the plates are made from sheets of styrofoam.

Edition - The number of alike prints you have produced from a single plate.

1. What is printmaking?

- a. Briefly cover definition of printmaking and introduce terms
 - i. Relief Printmaking

- ii. Plate
- 2. Prints by the Masters...
 - a. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (Black/White Relief Print)
 - b. Edvard Munch (Black/White Relief Print)
- 3. Explain Plates
 - a. The surface in which your initial image for printing is created. Plates can be made out of a variety of materials, but in relief printing they are more traditionally made out of wood or linoleum.
 - i. Very similar in concept to a stamp!
- 4. Explain Relief Printmaking
 - a. In relief printmaking the ink sits on top of the plate instead of in the crevices made by your carving tool.
 - b. Show diagram of light space versus dark space.
 - i. Where you carve will be light space, where you do not carve will be dark space.
- 5. Important things to consider...
 - a. Print in Reverse
 - i. Prints will always be mirrored, so keep this in mind when making/carving your image.
 - ii. Sketch your images out before you carve
 - iii. Label areas "carve" and "do not carve" if you have difficulty remembering
 - iv. Show the teacher before you start carving
 - v. If you have a handheld mirror, it's a good idea to show your students what their sketches will look like mirrored.
- 6. Review
 - a. What is Relief Printmaking?
 - b. What is a Plate?
 - c. Have your students discuss the print of the owl
 - i. Which areas have been carved away and which have not?
- 7. What would you like to print?
 - a. Hold a short discussion on possible subject matter for prints.
 - i. What is your favorite animal?
 - ii. What is your favorite food?
 - iii. What does a beautiful day look like to you? (e.g. do you like it when it's cloudy or sunny?)
 - b. Collection of images for examples.
 - c. Give your students time to sketch their ideas and to decide on their image.
- 8. Transferring Image to the Plate
 - a. Check your student's images before they begin to transfer them to a plate

- b. Advise against them doing anything exceedingly small and detailed or having a large amount of light space, as these things will be more difficult to carve at a beginners level.
- c. Remember that any text or symbols should be reversed in the original image.

9. Inking the Plate

- a. Help your students with the ink/tempera and set up plates with squirts of paint/ink.
- b. Have a variety of colors to choose from, preferably dark as the print will show up better on the white paper.
- c. To conserve paint/ink, have students who are using the same color share the plate.

10. Printing the first Image

- a. The students will now hand print their images by pressing their paper on top of the plate. The plate should go on the bottom and the paper should be on top.
- b. Have the students apply even pressure all around the paper on top of the plate.
- c. Gently peel back the paper to reveal the print.

11. Refining your Prints

- a. Ask each student if they are happy with their piece, if not make suggestions on:
 - i. More areas to carve on the plate
 - ii. Ink consistency
 - iii. Using consistent pressure when inking the plate
 - iv. Have the student touch up their print with excess ink and a paintbrush.
- b. The student should have three prints (all in the same color) that they are satisfied with by the end of the lesson. If there is still time they can experiment with more prints and various colors.

12. Signing your Work

- a. Discuss term: Edition
 - i. An Edition is how many alike prints you have produced from a single plate. It is important to note that in order for prints to all be a part of the same edition, they all have to look alike. For example, if a student has made 3 red prints and 2 blue prints from the same plate, they have made two separate editions, and edition of 3 and an edition of 2.
- b. Have the students sign and date their work, a title is optional.

13. After project Discussion

- a. Hold a discussion about the process and how the students liked/disliked it.

- b. Now that they have made their own relief prints, see if they are able to identify relief prints amongst a series of other images.