

Ideas to Inspire and Invigorate the Art Classroom

Printmaking with Found Objects



Kick start your students' creativity with new ideas, approaches, and materials designed to challenge participants and take their work to a new level. Each art activity provides detailed instructions and connections to works of art at the MFAH as well as a list of accessible, affordable supplies and where you can purchase them.

This idea is geared for all instructors wanting to explore printmaking in a contemporary way.

Connection to the MFAH Collection

Printmaking is an age-old art tradition. There are a variety of printmaking methods such as intaglio, lithography, wood-block printing, soft-ground etching, sugar aquatint, photo etching, and digital printmaking technologies. Many of these techniques are inaccessible in a classroom because of the cost of materials. Luckily, there are simple, cost-effective methods to create beautiful prints.

Printmaking with found objects is an excellent way to learn the basic principal of printmaking, in a creative and accessible way, by collecting objects and using them to create print patterns with shape and color. The types of found objects you collect, whether they are from your neighborhood, classroom, or home, can tell a story or represent a message you would like to convey as an artist. As you collect objects, pay attention to their shapes and how they will create a printed composition.

Four Types of Printmaking and Examples from the MFAH Collection



Intaglio (etching and engraving)

Intaglio is the printmaking technique in which the image is carved into a surface and the carved line or sunken area holds the ink. It is the direct opposite of a relief print.

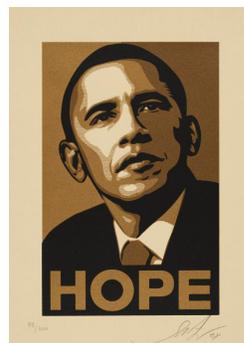
Antonio Cattani, published by Antonio Cattani, *Teschio Umano (Human Skull)*, plate 6a from *Osteografia e miografia*, 1780, etching with engraving on laid paper, Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston, BF.2009.4.



Lithograph

Lithography is a printing process that uses a flat stone or metal plate on which the image areas are worked using a greasy substance so that the ink will adhere to it, while the non-image areas are made ink-repellent.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Moulin Rouge*, 1891, lithograph in colors on wove paper, state I/II, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, John A. and Audrey Jones Beck Collection, gift of Audrey Jones Beck, 98.304.



Screenprint (serigraphy)

Screenprinting is a printing technique where a mesh is used to transfer ink, except in areas made resistant to the ink by a blocking stencil. A blade or squeegee is moved across the screen to fill the open mesh apertures with ink, one color at a time.

Shepard Fairey, printed by Modern Multiples, published by Obey Giant Art, *Obama Hope Gold*, 2008, printed 2009, screenprint on wove paper, edition 88/100, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of Grace Phillips and Eugene Nosal, 2017.19.14.



Relief

Relief printmaking is one of the simplest types of printmaking, in which a printing block or plate is carved or taken away. What is left protruding is where the ink is applied and the design is to be printed.

Kermit Oliver, *Annunciation*, 1973, woodcut on wove paper, artist's proof, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of Eleanor Freed Stern, 91.1856. © Kermit Oliver

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Gather These Art Materials

- Recycled yogurt container or plastic cup filled halfway with water
- Several pieces of paper
- A palette for your paint (this can be an old paper plate, a recycled aluminum pie pan, etc.)
- Paper towels
- A variety of objects for printmaking
 - Objects collected from your classroom
 - Objects collected from students' neighborhoods
 - Objects collected from home

Instructions for Project Setup

1. Pour about a tablespoon of one color of acrylic paint onto the palette.
2. Add about a tablespoon of water to the palette and mix it with the paint to dilute it.
3. Dip the toy or object selected into the paint solution on the palette and then stamp/print the shape onto the paper.
4. Continue to print with this object until the whole paper is filled, adding additional paint as needed. The shapes can overlap, or not.
5. Once the page is filled, repeat the process with a different color paint and a different shaped toy or object, creating another layer.
6. Try repeating the process at least three times.
7. Once finished with your first print media project, set it to the side to dry and make a second one on a different color of construction paper. On the second artwork, try using different objects and different colors.



Project Examples



Additional Information and Resources

To view hi-res images of these works, visit:

- mfah.org/art/96.3.11
- mfah.org/art/BF.2009.4
- mfah.org/art/98.304
- mfah.org/art/2017.19.14
- mfah.org/art/91.1856

To learn more about the artist Jonathan Borofsky, whose work is shown on the left of the first page, visit the artist's website at borofsky.com/.

Front: Jonathan Borofsky, *2740396 [11]*, from the portfolio *2740475*, 1982, screenprint on gray wove paper, edition 38/50, The Peter Blum Edition Archive, 1980-1994, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by the Alice Pratt Brown Museum Fund, 96.3.11. © Jonathan Borofsky

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