

LESSON PLAN



INK. PRINT. REPEAT.

DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students will explore how artists use printmaking to create multiple variations of a singular image. They will create their own edition of small prints focusing on line quality.

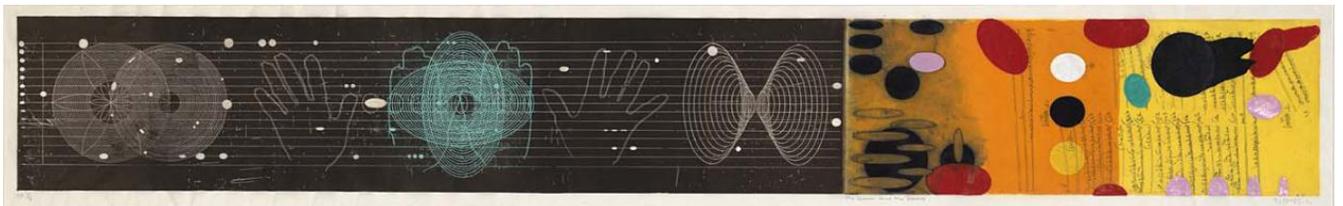
STUDENT AGE/GRADE LEVEL

Grades 5-9

OBJECTIVE

Upon completing the lesson, students will understand and be able use a variety of printmaking techniques and materials. They will understand how to manipulate these tools and techniques to achieve desired results in their work.

Multiplicity: Contemporary Prints from the Smithsonian American Art Museum



Judy Pfaff, *The Drum and the Dance*, 1996

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RELATED WORKS



Sol LeWitt *Wavy Brushstrokes Superimposed* #1, #2, #3, #4, 1994

Hand drawn photo transfer with aquatint on paper (4)

NOTES: LeWitt is primarily known for his Minimalist and Conceptualist mathematical and geometric sculptures. This set of prints is a departure from both the three dimensional and geometric aspects of his typical work, yet retains his focus on basic elements of art and design free from emotion or spiritual effect. In these works, LeWitt photographically transferred a drawing of brushstrokes to multiple metal plates with a technique called "aquatint". Then using different colored inks, multiple layers were printed on top of one another to create the varied colors and compositions from a single original drawing.

Discussion questions:

- How are the four works similar? How is each one different?
- Describe the type of line(s) you see. What could they represent?
- Is it important that all four variations be shown together? Why or why not?

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Brice Marden, *Untitled #1-6*, 1972.

Lithographs on paper.

NOTES: Marden works in a variety of media including painting, drawing, and of course printmaking. These lithographs further reveal Marden's love of expressive and gestural line. This series of prints are from Marden's time spent at a print shop with fellow artist Robert Rauschenburg in Florida. To get to the shop each morning, Marden had to cut through a jungle-like path thick with vegetation. The abstract imagery of the prints is inspired by that daily passage.

Discussion questions:

- Is this artwork abstract or representational? How do you know?
- Do the lines the artist used remind you of anything you see in your daily life?
- Like the LeWitt artworks, these prints are shown as a group. How might it look different if it were shown as just one rather than a series? Why do you think the artist wanted these shown as a group?

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MATERIALS

Relief Printing

- E-Z cut rubber blocks (or linoleum blocks)
- Linoleum carving tools

Monoprinting

- Clean plexiglass or acetate/transparencies (about 8x10" or larger)
- Paintbrush
- Water cups
- Dull #2 pencil

General Tools & Supplies

- Newsprint (for sketching & transfer)
- Thicker paper with a rough surface (for printing)
- Water based relief printmaking ink
- Brayer
- Ebony pencil
- Ball Point Pen

DISCUSSION:

- To introduce the theme of line for the lesson, collect objects that have interesting linear qualities, or have students find objects with different types of line. Objects might include a scrap circuit board, a branch, yarn, scarves or fabric with linear patterns, wire, baskets, etc. Discuss what makes the quality of each line different. Compare man-made and organic, as well as geometric and curvilinear. Be sure to pass the objects around and allow students to feel the differences as well.
- Following the introduction, present students with the artwork of Sol LeWitt and Brice Marden. Discuss the different qualities of line in each work technically, and also why it is important that each work was presented in a series rather than

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alone. Talk about how the ideas of repetition, multiples and series are important and/or prevalent in the printmaking process. In both LeWitt and Marden's works, the source of the mark is important as well; try to have students guess what the lines are representing in each before telling them the background information. Also, encourage students to put themselves in the place of the exhibition's curator: How might they display multiple works like these? What order? Placement? Why?

STUDIO:

General Studio Notes

- The following techniques can and are meant to be layered on top of each other in various ways with multiple different prints. Each one can be used again and again with different colors and in multiple layers to create many prints in a series. The goal is for each student to create multiple prints with 2-3 layers each to show the many different things they can do with just one line drawing. In the end, they will have their own "edition" of prints like professional printmakers create.

Line Drawing

- Begin with a piece of newsprint marked with the size of the block of linoleum. Students should create a continuous line drawing using pen that is inspired by one of the objects they saw or by the artworks presented. Students can draw from observation or imagine their own intricate continuous line. For best results, encourage students to allow their line to go outside the boundaries of the box marked on their newsprint; this will produce more interesting interactions in the following step.

Relief Carving & Printing

- When completed, color the back of the drawing paper with ebony pencil to create a transfer. Place this paper, pencil side down, over the block of linoleum and trace over the drawing with pencil or a ball point pen so that the pencil transfers from the paper to the block.
- Using the line drawing as a guide, have each student use a linoleum carving tool to create carve their drawing into the block. Students will have to decide if they want their line to be positive or negative, or a mixture, and cut accordingly. It is important to remind

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to students to always cut away from themselves even when cutting out a curved line. It is much easier and safer to turn the block rather than the tool.

- When students have finished carving their blocks, it's time to print! Using a tube of ink, a brayer, and a piece of plexi glass, create a small "palette" of ink by rolling out a dollop with the brayer into a smooth even layer. When rolled out correctly, the brayer on the ink should make a sound that "sizzles" rather than sticks. Then, roll an even, consistent layer onto the block. It is okay, even encouraged, for students to get some ink on the low spots; this creates "static", a beautiful element of printing relief.
- Finally, to print the block, carefully place it face down onto the desired paper. Flip both over together gently and have students rub the print firmly with a wooden spoon to transfer, or use another type of burnishing tool. Rub until the ink has completely transferred and remove. Remember to clean brayer, plexi, and block with water.

Monotype Technique #1—Pencil Lift

- This is the technique pictured in the final artwork prints 1 and 2 below (orange line). It creates a single line that mimics the quality of a pencil line. For this process, students will not need to use their blocks but rather need a brayer, ink, clean plexiglass, their original line drawing, a dull pencil and a piece of paper to print on. Remember, once dry, any and all of these techniques can be layered on top of one another
- To create a pencil lift monotype, first create a thin, even palette on the plexiglass like when relief printing. Try to keep this palette as close to the size of the print as possible. Then, very lightly lay a blank piece of printing paper directly on top of the palette. Do not press down, smooth out, or touch the area where the ink is touching the paper. Then, carefully lay down the students' original newsprint drawing on top of the printing paper. Trace the newsprint drawing with a dull pencil or ballpoint pen again on the newsprint. Be sure to press down on the pencil firmly so

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the ink from the palette transfers to the printing paper; hold paper steady in an area that is not touching the ink palette.

- When finished tracing, carefully remove each layer to reveal your monotype. Allow to dry before further layering.

Monotype Technique #2—Watercolor Lines

- This monotype technique created the blue lines in the final artwork print 3 below. Again for this process, students will not need their block to print. They will need a cup of clean water, a soft watercolor brush, paper towels, ink, clean plexiglass, their original line drawing, and paper to print on. For this process, it is important to work quickly as the watered down ink dries quickly.
- To begin, place the line drawing underneath the plexiglass so it is completely visible. This will be the guide for the next step. Then, wet the brush and mix with a small dollop of ink on the plexi to create a thin, watery ink. It should be just enough water to loosen the consistency and make it easier to paint with. Using the ink on the brush, quickly paint over the line drawing placed under the glass. It is better to make the line a little thicker to prevent it from drying too quickly.
- Before the ink dries, gently place the printing paper over the ink painting on the plexiglass. Holding the paper in place, rub firmly over the painted area to transfer and print. Carefully remove from the plexiglass and allow to dry.

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STANDARDS

	Perceiving/Knowing	Producing/Performing	Responding/Reflecting
Grade 6	1PE	1PR, 2PR	2RE,4RE
Grade 7	4PE, 5PE	2PR	3RE
Grade 8	1PE	1 PR, 2PR	1RE, 2RE

Finished Artwork



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FOLLOW-UP LESSON SUGGESTIONS

To follow up this lesson, consider cutting up extra or mistake prints into a collage to further reinvent the singular image. Discuss how each variation is different and examine the different effects it produces both aesthetically and conceptually. Also, continue to explore more printmaking mediums, such as lithography! (Link to tutorial below)

Resources

More Art!

Akron Art Museum Collection <http://akronartmuseum.org/collection/>
-Explore more artworks and browse the museum's collection here.

[University of Akron Printmaking](#)

-University of Akron's Printmaking blog; see what printmaking mischief they are up to!

[Printeresting](#)

-A collection of contemporary printmaking works to browse and be inspired by at whim.

Nicola Lopez

-Discover the prints and collages of artist Nicola Lopez; let her works inspire the collage extension of this lesson plan.

More Information!

[Smithsonian's Multiplicity Exhibition Slideshow](#)

-Can't make it to see the exhibition? Check out each print virtually (with extra information!) on the Smithsonian's website.

Schmidt, C. (2010). *Print workshop: Hand-printing techniques and truly original projects.*

-A fantastic and easy to understand resource for at home printing techniques, specifically screen and relief printing.

More Fun!

[Kitchen Lithography Printing](#)

-Mesmerized by the world of lithography? Try it at home or in the classroom, no fifty- pound stone necessary!