Make an impression: Create a print

Gene Kloss, (1903–1996), one of America’s greatest print makers, loved living in the mountains of northern New Mexico. A master etcher, she portrayed in her work the enchanting landscape and the Native Americans, Hispanics, and Anglos who lived there. You will see many of her copper plate etchings in our exhibit, Perfect Impressions: The Southwest Prints of Gene Kloss, Aug. 6-Oct. 2, 2005.

The earliest printmaking technique was the woodcut, which appeared in China in the 9th century and in Europe around 1400. Other printmaking techniques include etching, lithography and screen print.

To learn about printmaking techniques, visit this interactive site: http://www.moma.org/exhibitions/2001/whatisaprint/flash.html

Materials

- Large baking potato
- Small kitchen knife (for adult to use)
- Paper towel
- Pen, pencil or marker
- Acrylic or tempera paints
- Paper plate, saucer or tin plate
- Paper

Instructions

Is there a favorite place you like to go? Is it inside or outside? Somewhere you’ve gone on vacation? A tree you like to climb or sit under? A place you like to walk? Or maybe a place you would like to visit?

Pick a place and think about what it is you like about it and picture it in your mind.

What could represent this place or feeling?

Draw this place or an object that reminds you of it on a piece of paper. (This will be your sample.)

Now you will need to ask an adult to help you.

1. Cut the potato in half with the sharp knife and pat it dry with the paper towel.
   Use the pointed pencil, pen or marker to draw your picture onto the smooth surface of the potato.

2. Have an adult help you carve around the lines of your drawing, cutting away the background. The cuts should be 1/4 to 1/2” deep.
   When you have finished, blot the potato again with the paper towel.

3. Pour a small amount of paint onto the paper plate. Dip the potato into the paint then gently press it onto your paper.

How many prints can you make before dipping it back into the paint?

When the paint is dry, try another color.

Try another color on top of your first print.

When you are ready, take a fresh piece of paper and make a print in the center. When your print is dry you may want to frame it!

A sampling of connections to IDOE Academic Standards:

Visual Art: Production, all grades, Standards 7, 9, 10. For integrated studies consider measuring the image area around the print space and creating an abstract image with identified types of triangles and geometric shapes (Mathematics), studying the geography of an area and then creating an artwork reflective of an actual space (Social Studies); discussing various types of print making and how prints have been made by different cultures and over time (Social Studies, Visual Art/Art History); writing or speaking about the image and the image meaning (English/Language Arts).

Activity by Linda Montag-Olson.