

LINOCUT PRINTING

ART TECHNIQUE

Linocut Printing

AGE GROUP

12 years to adult

CONCEPT

Creating a design appropriate for relief printmaking using bold lines and textures; becoming familiar with the multiple images of printmaking.

SESSIONS

4 sessions of 1½ hours each.

MATERIALS

- 4 newspapers for covering the desks for each session
- 1 roll of masking tape for securing the newspaper to the desks and A3 paper to the inking table.
- 1 15 cm x 15 cm square lino block per student.
- 1 6B soft drawing pencil per student
- 1 A4 piece of tracing paper for drawing the design per student
- 1 A5 piece of carbon paper per student
- 1 bullnose clip / clothes peg for clipping together the lino block, carbon paper and tracing paper per student
- 1 permanent, bullet-point black pen
- 4 pieces of coloured A3 paper for creating 4 inking stations
- 4 pieces of white A4 paper for printing on per student
- 8 ice cube trays (2 trays per group)
- 1 2 litre bottle of Chroma2 acrylic paint for each of the following colours: black, red, blue, yellow and white per class
- 1 medium paintbrush per student
- 1 cleaning rag per student
- 1 plastic bucket with soapy water for cleaning the equipment per class
- String / clothes drying rack and pegs for drying prepared printing paper and completed prints per class
- 8 plastic foam trays to roll up the paint per class. Food trays are ideal
- 4 foam rollers for applying the paint
- 4 old plastic rulers for mixing the paint on the trays
- 1 safety bench per student (1)
- 4 barrens / pieces of smooth-edged timber (2)
- 10 boxes of good student quality linocutting tools per class. (Japanese made are best)
- 1 A3 coloured card for framing a print per student.

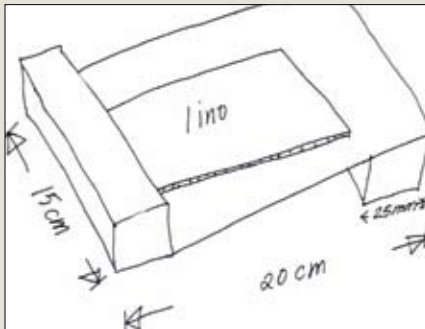


In contrast with the direct processes of drawing and painting, printmaking is an indirect process. To make a print, something is done to one surface, the block, in order to produce an image on another surface, the paper.

Linocutting and woodcutting are similar relief printmaking techniques. The difference is that lino (i.e. linoleum) is softer and easier to cut than wood. The uncut surface produces the image. Most artists draw the image directly onto the lino block and then cut away the space around and in between the image, leaving the drawn areas raised. Printmaking ink is then rolled on the surface of the lino block and the image is transferred onto the paper by using a relief printing press, an etching printing press or by rubbing the lino block with the barren / piece of timber.

Primary teachers might think that linocut printing is difficult and messy, but if it is well organised and presented in a simple step by step manner, it is easy for the teacher to implement and easy for students to understand the different concepts involved in a printmaking project.

This project has been design to suit normal classroom conditions and illustrates how the classroom can be adapted to create the working space required.



1. Safety bench



2. Baren—smooth piece of timber



3. Room arrangement



4. Inking area



5. Printing area

OBJECTIVES

This project offers students practical experience in printmaking; gives them an understanding of the creative processes involved in relief printmaking and fosters individual expression and creativity.

This project assists teachers in understanding printmaking as an art practice.

The project consists of a black and white linocut printed on either a hand-painted or a plain background. With its easy steps and basic equipment it can be implemented within a normal classroom.

ROOM SET-UP AND PREPARATION

An appropriate work area for printmaking in the classroom consists of four separate areas

PREPARATION AREA – desks arranged in groups of four or six where students design their image, transfer it onto the lino block, cut the background and, if you choose to offer this option, paint the printing paper (3).

INKING AREA – a table covered with newspaper or plastic for inking the block. Provide four sets of foam trays, each set comprising two trays: one for rolling up the paint and the other for holding the lino block while the paint is rolled onto it (4).

PRINTING AREA – a clean, dry table with 4 coloured A3 base papers taped to it to create 4 printing stations (5).

DRYING AREA – an area where a clothesline/string can be strung for pegging the prints for drying.

PREPARATORY SESSION

RESEARCH AND VISUAL REFERENCES

Many sources of printmaking inspiration exist. Artists like Picasso and Matisse produced excellent linocuts. Other Australian artist-printmakers include the indigenous artists (linocuts) like Jimmy Pike and Dennis Noonan, and female artists from 1930s (woodcuts) like Margaret Preston and Thea Proctor. Other artists include Shiko Munakata (woodcuts) from Japan and John Muafangejo (linocuts) from Namibia in Africa.

Find visual references in your school library, the local library or on the internet. With teacher guidance, older students can do this research in the school library.

This linocut printing project can be done in either black and white or black on a hand-painted background.

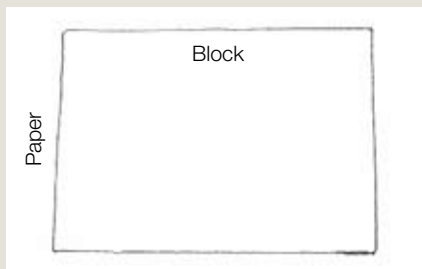
FIRST SESSION

DESIGN, DRAWING AND TRANSFER OF THE DESIGN TO THE LINO BLOCK

Refer to ROOM SET-UP AND PREPARATION before the session starts and make a preparation area. Place a lino block, tracing-paper, carbon paper, soft drawing pencil, a permanent marker. If you offer the option of a painted background, place 4 printing papers, 1 medium paint brush and a cleaning rag per student on each desk. Place 2 ice cube trays containing coloured paint on each group of tables. Have a plastic bucket of soapy water ready for cleaning the students' brushes.

MOTIVATION

Gather the students in a class group and introduce them to the chosen visual references. To help the students focus their idea, encourage them to discuss the linocut prints and pictures on display. Discuss themes and ideas suitable for linocut printing with them.



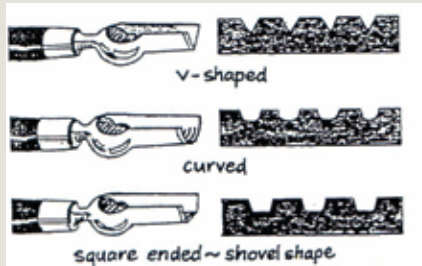
6. Area to develop the design is same size as lino block



7. Transferring the image from the tracing paper to the block



8. Redrawing design on lino block using a black pen



9. Examples of cutting tools



10. Positioning the lino block

Emphasise the desirability of a clean, bold design.

DEMONSTRATE AND EXPLAIN

Demonstrate how to draw around the lino block on the tracing-paper to outline the working area before starting the design (6); design a simple and bold image on the working area and cut out the working area along the pencil lines; clip together the lino block (facing up), the carbon paper (facing down) and the tracing-paper (facing down) with a bullnose clip / clothes peg; trace the design on the tracing-paper to transfer its image onto the block (7).

Next demonstrate how to use a thick black felt pen to redraw the image and to establish black areas, black lines, black textures and patterns on the lino block (8). This helps students see which areas are going to stay uncut – those coloured in black.

Finally demonstrate how to prepare the printing paper by tracing the outline of the lino block onto the centre of each piece of printing paper and then painting that central area in several colours randomly.

After the students have prepared their lino block and printing paper, place the lino blocks into a pre-selected storage area and peg up the prepared printing papers in the drying area ready for the next session. Instruct the students to clean the brushes, clear the tables of newspaper and reassemble the classroom as it normally is.

SECOND SESSION

CUTTING THE LINO BLOCK

Refer to ROOM SET-UP AND PREPARATION before the session starts and make a preparation area for the class.

DEMONSTRATE

Show the students the cutting tools and the safety bench (1) and explain how to use them. Emphasise safe usage of these tools.

Two cutting tools are used most often in schools: V tools and U tools (9). V tools cut lines, especially fine lines and outlines. U tools cut thicker lines and textures and are also used to scoop out the lino material in larger areas.

SAFETY PROCEDURES AND RULES

Hand positions are very important. When using a safety bench, the lino block is rotated so the cut is always directed towards the stop bar on the top of the safety bench (10). The cutting tool is held like a dining knife cutting food, with the elbow and cutting hand staying level. The hand holding the lino block is always kept behind the hand holding the cutting tool.

Once the demonstration is finished and you are sure the students know how to hold the tools safely, give each one a lino block, a safety bench and a cutting tool.

Cutting a lino block takes time. Encourage students to work slowly and safely.

A parent volunteer or a student teacher is helpful for supervising the students for this.

After the students have cut their lino blocks, place the lino blocks into the storage area ready for the next session. Instruct the students to clean up and reassemble the classroom.



11. Rolling the paint



12. Inked block ready to print



13. Placing paper on top of the block



14. Rubbing with the baren or smooth timber



15. Pulling the print



16. Placing lino block on top of painted paper

THIRD SESSION

PRINTING

Refer to ROOM SET-UP AND PREPARATION before the printing session starts to set up:

- the inking area as above with 4 foam rollers, 4 foam trays containing the paint and the 4 empty foam trays to hold the blocks (11).
- the clean, dry printing area as above with the baren / piece of smooth timber
- the drying area as above for drying the prints.

It is crucial to print in small groups – groups of four students at a time are ideal. A parent volunteer or a student teacher is helpful for supervising the students.

DEMONSTRATE

Demonstrate to each group coming to print how to roll the paint out, by picking up a bit of paint with the roller and rolling it up and down to extend the paint. With the lino block facing up on the empty tray cover it with paint using the same rolling up and down action once. Pick up more paint and repeat the action one more time to ensure the block is nicely covered with the extended paint. Excessive paint fills the cut lines and prevents a clear image being printed. (11)

When the block is inked and ready for printing take it to the printing table and place it facing up on the coloured base paper (12). Next, lay the paper over the block (13) and gently rub it with the baren or a piece of smooth timber. Pull the print and hang it up to dry (15). Repeat the inking process to make 4 prints per student.

If you have chosen the option of a hand painted background, place the paper onto the coloured base paper with its painted side facing up and place the lino block on top, trying to match the corners of both paper and the block (16).

Then turn the lino block and the painted paper together so that the block sits on the bottom and the painted paper on the top to print the image (14).

INSTRUCT THE STUDENTS TO CLEAN THE ROLLERS, CLEAR THE TABLES OF NEWSPAPER AND REASSEMBLE THE CLASSROOM AS IT NORMALLY IS.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Raquel Redmond has more than 20 years extensive experience in researching, developing and teaching art programs aimed at primary school students and also conducts in-service programs for primary school teachers. She directed the Visual Art activities, Children's Art exhibitions and Artists in Residence programs for the 'Out of the Box' children's festival from 1992 to 2000. Since 1998 Raquel has been working with students at Queensland University of Technology School of Early Childhood's art studio. She is an active practising visual artist exhibiting her lino and wood cuts throughout Australia.

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FOURTH SESSION

Set up a preparation area as before.

FINISHING THE PRINTS

Give the students their dried prints. To create an edition, instruct them to sign and date each one at the bottom outside the image area.

Instruct students to prepare one print for display by centring and gluing their chosen print on the coloured card (see gallery).

DISPLAYING THE PRINTS AND CRITIQUE/ EVALUATION

Display the selected prints flat on a board. Once this is done, gather the students for a critique/evaluation session to find out about their responses to what they have made.

CRITIQUE – What do you think of your print? Did you achieve what you intended? Are you pleased with the way you used colour, line, shape and texture?

EVALUATION – What have you learned about the procedures used, the art techniques used and the artist you researched?

STUDENT

gallery



Detail of a black and white lino print.



Black lino print, printed on to a hand coloured background.