

Papier Collé Printmaking

“Papier-collé” literally translates as pasted or “stuck” paper, a technique much like collage, except that flat shapes (such as paper, cloth or tissue) are precisely cut to form the objects within a painting. Cubist Georges Braque, inspired by Pablo Picasso’s collages, is credited with the first Papier-collé in his 1912 painting, “Fruit Dish and Glass.” Henri Matisse is also known for using this technique.

Printmakers also use the term “collé” for a process by which an image is transferred to a surface that is bonded to a heavier support during the printing process. One purpose for this is to allow the printmaker to print on a much more delicate surface, such as Japanese paper or linen, which pulls finer details off the plate (*known as chine-collé*). Another purpose is to provide a background color behind the image that is different from the surrounding backing sheet.

This lesson will combine the two techniques. Students will make a piece that is basically a printmaking “sandwich” — part painting, part lithograph, and part monoprint.

Grade Levels 5-12

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.



Above: Lithographic print on paper collé background

Left: Ink pen drawing on Z'Acryl Litho Plate

Materials

Z*Acryl D2P Polyester Lithographic Plates, package of ten 13" x 20" plates (47002-1010), cut in half to make 10" x 13" sheet; need one per student

Graphic Chemical™ Lithography Ink, Black (47200-2030); share one 1-lb can across classroom

Speedball® Hard Rubber Brayer 4" (40105-1004)

Faber-Castell® Pitt® Artist Pens, set of four Black (20759-2029); share six sets across classroom

Kozo Rice Paper, 11" x 60-ft roll (12952-1022); need one 9" x 12" piece per student

Golden® Fluid Acrylics assorted colors such as 10-color Watermedia Set (00638-1009); share across classroom

Yasutomo® Nori™ Art Paste (24000-1002); share two jars across classroom

Foam Brushes, 1" (05114-1001); one per student

Blick® 999 Model II Etching Press

Crescent® Matboard Blanks, any color, such as Arctic White (13015-1135), package of three, 11" x 14"; need one per student

Optional

Plastic Inking Plate, 8" x 10" (18973-1005)

Simple Green® non-toxic cleaner (04989-1009)

Process

1. Because Z'Acryl plates are translucent, they can be placed over a photo or preliminary sketch and traced. A light table or window is helpful.
Draw the image directly onto the plate on the textured side. Use any permanent, waterproof drawing media. In this example, Pitt® Artist Pens were used. Z'Acryl plates may also be used in a laser printer or copier (see instructions included in package for process).
When creating a drawing, keep in mind that this will be, in part, a collage of painted shapes that fit together. It's best to have foreground objects and a background. In this example, the shapes of the flowers and the hands will compose the foreground of the image.
2. When the drawing is complete, heat-set it to make sure the ink is completely bonded to the plate. Use a household iron on the low or silk setting to do this. Protect the drawing with a piece of tracing paper.
3. Make a photocopy and set the plate aside. Use the photocopy as a reference to create a cut paper collage.
4. Begin the collage by lightly painting textures and patterns on paper with acrylic paint. Determine colors and textures needed based on the drawing. NOTE: Lightweight paper will curl when painted, but will stick flat when glued down (see step 7). Allow to dry.
5. Cut foreground shapes from the photocopy and trace around them onto the painted paper to size them. IMPORTANT: collage will need to be created in reverse. Cut out shapes.
6. Background can be a single sheet or a collage of painted papers.
7. Glue the painted collage pieces together by brushing art paste onto the backs with a foam brush. Make sure to cover the entire surface, all the way to the edge. Center and glue the collage to the board. Burnish down well and continue to burnish as the glue dries.

8. Register the drawing on the plate precisely where you want it. Mark the exact position by lightly tracing the corners onto the poster board with a pencil line that can be erased later.
9. Remove any oils or unwanted dirt by cleaning the plate gently with a drop of dishwashing soap spread over the plate with your fingers. Rinse and let dry.
10. Place a small, quarter-sized dab of lithography ink on a piece of plastic and roll it out with the brayer. Sponge a thin, uniform film of water onto the plate.
11. Roll the plate in thin layers of ink. You will have to roll it several times with the first printing. Subsequent printings will require fewer applications. Roll the plate three to four times, charge the roller by rolling it over the ink slab, and repeat three to four times. Hold the plate with a piece of paper towel to avoid fingerprints. If fingerprints occur, clean them off with a wet wipe or a little more dish soap.
12. If you are using an etching press to print, run a test print on a piece of drawing paper and bristol board to determine the correct pressure. If the print looks light, increase the pressure. If the lines are thick and blurry, use less pressure. The first print should be a little light — it means the plate hasn't been over-inked.
13. Rewet and roll the plate again. Register the plate over the painted paper collage and print it on top of the collage. Set aside to dry. NOTE: anticipate imperfections in prints with this process.
14. To clean the roller and inking plate, use Simple Green® or D*Solve non-toxic cleaners. To clean the plate, print over and over again on newsprint until most of the ink is gone. Clean thoroughly with dish soap. NOTE: do not use D*Solve or Simple Green® on a plate to clean it.

OPTIONS

This lesson plan could be adjusted to use relief printmaking processes and watersoluble inks instead of lithographic inks. Handprinting, rather than using a press, is also an option.

National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

9-12 Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques and processes they use

Content Standard #2 —Using knowledge of structures and functions

5-8 Students employ organizational structures and analyze what makes them effective or not effective in the communication of ideas

9-12 Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems

Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

5-8 Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry

9-12 Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works

Content Standard #6 — Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

5-8 Students compare the characteristics of works in two or more art forms that share similar subject matter, historical periods or cultural context

9-12 Students compare characteristics of visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues or themes in the humanities or sciences