

Simple Silk Screen in the Round

Silk Screening is made simple with the use of an embroidery hoop and Mod Podge®

Andy Warhol's infamous silk screens of Campbell's soup cans and Marilyn Monroe are remembered by many. Warhol turned silk screens into avant-garde art as far back as the late 1960s and 1970s. Some professional artists prefer to use the term *serigraphy* to differentiate between artistic screen printing and that of commercial printing. Screen printing was also made popular by other American Pop artists like Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Rauschenberg. These artists chose the medium of screen printing because it allowed them to maintain bold, bright colors when reproducing their works. Vividly colorful and novel, screen printing has become one of the basic techniques of postmodernist art.

The history of silkscreen printing goes back to the Chinese Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE). China and other Asian countries were the first to use silk fabric as a mesh. Due to the scarcity and expense of silk in the rest of the world, however, screen printing did not become popular until the 1700s, when silk mesh became more readily available and Western Europe became interested in it. In the 1880s the technique of using waxed paper handwriting stencils revolutionized screen printing. These stencils were affixed to a wooden frame so that ink could then be forced through them with a rubber squeegee. This project uses Mod Podge to create the screen, and an embroidery hoop for the wooden frame, making this lesson easy and accessible for all ages.

GRADES 2-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.



Materials (required)

Multifilament Polyester Screen Fabric, 12XX Mesh, 66" wide x 1 yd (43404-1112); share one yard among 15 students

Wooden Embroidery Hoop, 10" Dia (66906-1010); need one per student

Blick® 50-55 Durometer Squeegee, standard 6" (37204-1006); share four across class

Speedball® Water-Based Fabric Screen Printing Inks, 8 oz (43230-); share five colors across class

Plaid® Mod Podge, matte, pint (02916-1016); share two across class

Blick® Scholastic Short Handle Golden Taklon Brushes, Flat Wash size 1/2" (05859-4012); need one per student and Round (05858-); share 10 for detail work

First Quality 50/50 T-Shirts, white (44959-); need one per student

Optional Materials

Blick® Scholastic White Bristle Stencil Brush (05691-)

Child's White Smock (04503-)

Robert Ware® Large Adult Apron (06964-1007)

Robert Ware® Children's Velcro Art Aprons (04991-)

Canvas Tote Bags (15732-)



Preparation

1. Provide each student with a 12" x 12" square of polyester fabric and a 10" diameter embroidery hoop.
2. Supply brushes of various sizes and containers of Mod Podge.

Process

1. Open the embroidery hoop, lay the fabric on the bottom hoop, and push the top hoop over the fabric. Pull the fabric as tight as possible from all sides, then tighten the top hoop. Trim the fabric, if desired.
2. Create a design for printing that will fit within the 10" circle. It is helpful to trace the inside of the hoop onto the paper for a guide. With the design placed under the fabric, trace it with a pencil onto the fabric.
3. Place the embroidery hoop on two stretcher bars or rulers to raise it above the table. Brush Mod Podge onto the polyester screen fabric all around the outside of the design. Use a small brush for detail. Allow to dry completely. Hold the hoop up to the light to check for any missed areas that might need a touch-up. Wherever the Mod Podge is placed, no ink will pass through the screen.
4. Position the hoop over the pre-washed fabric being printed. If printing a t-shirt or bag, place a piece of foamboard or cardboard between the front and back of the shirt or bag.
5. Apply a thick line of fabric printing ink at the top of the design, slightly wider than the image. Using a 6" squeegee, pull the ink down over the screen to the bottom. One pass is usually sufficient, but a second pass can be made if care is taken not to move the screen. The inks can be mixed to create custom colors.
6. Lift the screen from the fabric and allow the ink to dry. Iron with a household iron to heat-set.

Options

- Using a stencil brush rather than a squeegee allows multiple colors to be used in one step, and is easier for young students. Dab some printing ink onto the brush, and using a circular motion, apply the ink to the screen. Apply a second layer of ink to make sure coverage is complete.
- Use a brush to add hand-painted accents to the design.
- Use an apron, tote bag, or a pillow case to print on!
- Print on muslin, silk, or canvas to make a bag, a pillow cover, or even a scarf.



Step 1: Assemble the printing screen by securing the polyester fabric tightly into the embroidery hoop. Transfer a design to the fabric by tracing with a pencil.



Step 2: Brush Mod Podge around the outside of the design or on any areas that are not meant to be printed. Use a small brush for any detailed lines.



Step 3: Place item to be printed under the hoop. Apply a line of printing ink onto the screen. Hold the squeegee at a 45° angle and pull ink down to the bottom of the hoop.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

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

K-4 • Students know the differences between materials, 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 apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks.

Content Standard #3 — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

K-4 • Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art.

5-8 • Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks.

9-12 • Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture.