

Curtain of Leaves Monoprint

Make a “curtain” of leaf prints
to hang from a branch

(art + history; art + science)

Many artists have used the tree as inspiration for their artwork. Visual artists such as Gustav Klimt (Tree of Life), Van Gogh (The Mulberry Tree), Georgia O’Keeffe (Lawrence Tree), and Piet Mondrian (Gray Tree) all chose the noble tree as subject matter. Poets such as Robert Frost also revered trees in their works, as seen in Frost’s poem “Tree at my Window.”

Using pressed leaves to make monoprints on translucent paper, and a simple printing block as a plate, the many seasons of the leaf can be quickly captured. After making a frame made of sticks, the prints are hung chain-like from a branch. Both sides of the paper can be printed, resulting in a subtle layered affect. Beautiful when hung in a window, and a great classroom project, these are also perfect for a Mother’s Day or Father’s Day gift.

GRADES 3-12 Note:
Instructions and materials
are based upon a class size
of 24 students.
Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Cover tables to protect them.
2. Gather pressed leaves .
3. Cut pieces of translucent marker paper in half.

Process

1. Apply thin lines of paint to the top of the E-Z-Cut plate. Use one color or several colors. Roll a brayer multiple times across the plate to cover it evenly with paint. At this point, add texture to the painted surface using rubber combs, texture plates, or rollers. Lay a pressed leaf on the plate.



Materials (required)

- Bienfang® Graphics 360 Marker Paper, 50- sheet pad, 9” x 12” (10604-1003); share one pad across class
- Blick® E-Z-Cut Printing Blocks, Box of 2, 4”x 4-5/8” (40402-1001); share at least four boxes across class
- Blickrylic® Student Acrylics, Pint (00711-); share five colors across class
- Loew-Cornell® Woodsies™ Sticks, package of 75 (60466-1075); share two boxes across class
- Aleene’s® Original Tacky Glue, 4 oz (23884-1004); share five across class
- Blick® E-Z Grip Knife (57419-2980); share 10 across class
- Invoart® Soft Rubber Brayer, 4” (40121-1004); share at least eight across class
- Waxed Thread, 4 oz roll (63012-); share one roll across class
- Tree branches

Leather Stitching Needles, package of 10 (63017-1001); share one package across class

Optional Materials

- Rubber Combs (05648-)
- Roylco® Spring and Autumn Leaves, package of 300 (11755-1000)
- Richeson® Rubbing Plates (62108-); share two sets across class
- Amaco® Clay Texture Rollers (30704-)
- Strathmore® Greener Options Blank Cards and Envelopes (11986-)

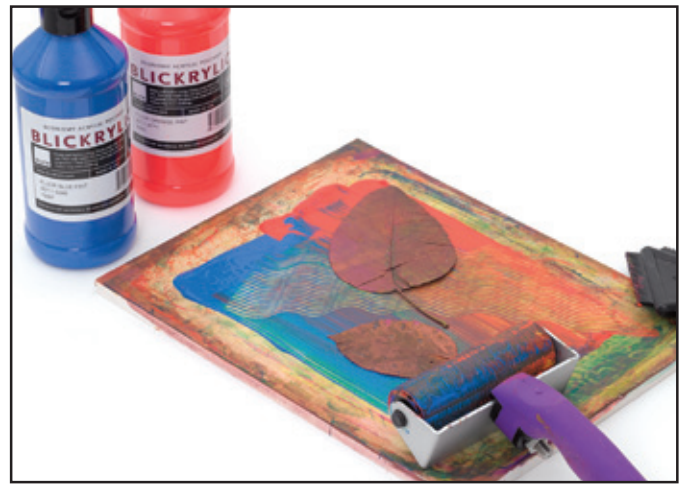


Process, continued

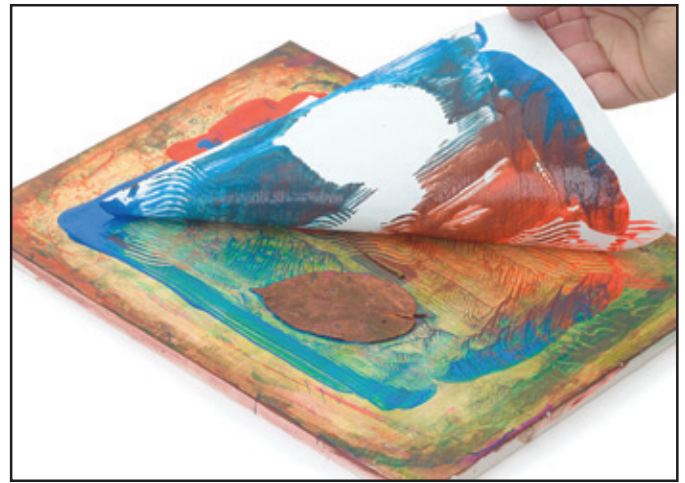
- Cover the plate with the translucent marker paper and use your hands to press down on all areas of the paper. Peel the paper away from the plate.
NOTE: A second print can be made by placing the leaf paint-side-up.
- Allow the print to dry. Print the other side of the paper in the same manner. Experiment with textures, layering, and colors.
- When both sides of the monoprint are dry, glue four Woodsies Sticks onto the paper to make a frame. Use a craft knife to trim away any excess paper. Younger students should cut the paper into a 4-1/2" square and then glue it onto the Woodsies Sticks to make a frame.
- Using a blunt needle, punch a center hole into the top and bottom of each framed print, just below the wooden stick. Thread waxed linen thread or yarn through the hole. Make a "chain" by tying one print to the next. Finally, hang the chains of leaves from a branch to make a "curtain."

Options

- Make a single print as a gift.
- Use the monoprint technique to make greeting cards.
- Use other flat objects to make textures. Experiment with open weave papers or fabrics. Try a feather, pieces of grass, or pine needles. Use cut-up fruit or vegetables to make stamps.



Step 1: Using a brayer, roll a thin layer of acrylic paint over an E-Z-Cut printing block. Lay down leaves and create textures using tools such as rollers, combs, or fingers.



Step 2: Lay a sheet of translucent marker paper over the printing plate and rub evenly with hands to pick up the print. Allow to dry and then print the other side of the paper, if desired, to create a layered effect.



Step 3: Frame with sticks. Hang and enjoy!

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

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

K-4 Students describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses.

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 explore and understand prospective content for works of art.

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