

Best of Summer Arts II: “Language & Symbols” (Printmaking)

Lesson Plan Objective:

This lesson plan is our second installment of the Best of Summer arts series, in collaboration with Rona Lesser inspired by the 2016 exhibition *Slavs and Tatars: Mirrors for Princes*, and the 2018 exhibition *The Future is Certain; It's the Past Which is Unpredictable*. While considering the history of written language and its revolution through time from pictographs, hieroglyphics, to script both cursive and print differing based on language, we are going to learn a printmaking technique. The printmaking technique can be used for making several copies of an image, and to communicate through your own symbolic language, by using a printing plate and pressure.

Approximate Time:

1 Hour

Skill Level:

Difficult

Parental

Supervision:

Required



Image: *Alphabet Abdal*, 2015, woolen yarn, 190 x 495 cm. Courtesy of Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler. Installation view *Slavs and Tatars: Mirrors for Princes* at Blaffer Art Museum.

Art Materials:

- Styrofoam plate or clean meat tray
- Scissors
- Tape
- Pencil
- Thin copy paper
- Back of a large spoon or small rolling pin (optional)
- New water based markers
- Alternative for printing: tempera paint in different colors, or water based printing ink
- Paper to print (must be larger than your printing table)
- Paper towels for clean up
- Newspapers or covering for work table

Instructions & Extension

1. Cut the edges off of your Styrofoam plate or tray, that will used as your printing plate. If possible cut into rectangle. If using a round plate you could choose to make a round print or cut into a square or rectangle.
2. Trace the size of your plate with a pencil on the copy paper.
3. Imagine how communication in print might look in the future. Additionally, consider our present world and how the use of computers and cellphones have shifted our communication dynamic by frequenting the use of symbols to express how we feel. With this in mind, use the copy paper to design your symbolic language and write a short phrase or sentence. Draw with dark lines. (Instruction continues on following page.)

4. Turn the drawing on the paper over and tape at the top to the printing plate so the image is reversed. We are using the back because if we print using the front our message and symbols will be reversed. Always remember this when using letters and printing this way.
5. Now use your pencil to trace over all of what you drew. Press hard enough to indent the foam without tearing or breaking through the foam. Don't worry if the paper tears.
6. Take off the sketch and tape a plain piece of paper or colored paper the same size as the plate to the top of the printing plate. This is called registering the print and makes sure we can do each color or print parts without losing the placement of the design.
7. Lift the paper up and color part of the background with your choice of marker quickly.
8. Put the paper back down over the plate and press with your hands, the back of a spoon, or other tool that will give you enough pressure to transfer the color.
9. Lift the paper and continue adding colors one by one repeating the above steps.
10. Remove the tape and study your print. You can glue the print to large colored paper, or other background preferred.
11. Repeat the process with different colors. You can wash off the colors and dry with a paper towel if you want to.
12. Continue modifying the design of your print by adding more line drawings to the Styrofoam plate.
13. **Extension:** Printmaking is a trial and error process and the first result might not be what you wanted. Continue making a series of your image, and number your prints as follows: 1/final number made. This number system indicates that the print is limited edition and signed by the artist.



Image: *Sample*, Rona Lesser



Image: *The Future Is Certain; It's the Past Which is Unpredictable*, Maria Loboda, *Egyptian Blue Coat*, 3, 2017, Digital Image mounted on Dibond, 44 1/8 x 24 1/3 in, Courtesy of the Artist and Maisterralvalbuena, Lisbon, and Madrid.



Image: Installation view, *Slavs and Tatars: Mirrors for Prices* at Blaffer Art Museum.