



Monotypes or monoprints



Standards

VA:Cr1.1.8a

Document early stages of the creative process visually and/or verbally in traditional or new media.

VA:Cr2.1.IIa

Through experimentation, practice, and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.

VA:Cn10.1.IIa

Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research, and experimentation to explore unfamiliar subjects through art-making.

Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Learn the processes involved in the creation of original monotype or monoprint images.

Introduction

A monotype is created by covering a printing plate entirely with ink and then removing the ink partially or wholly for the lighter and white areas of the picture being made. This process is carried out using brushes, toothpicks, cotton swabs, foam rubber, fingers, etc. One can also start with a clean plate and apply the ink in various ways to achieve the intended effect. If the ink is too thickly applied, it will spread from the pressure when printed, forming a blot. If too thin, it won't show up at all. When the picture on the plate is finished, it runs through a press with dampened paper (or hand burnished) to form a unique one-of-a-kind print. Almost all the ink transfers to the paper so it is not possible to make more than one print, hence the prefix mono. However, hand burnishing does allow for a second print (ghost print) creating subtle image variations from the original.

The process of monoprinting and monotype printing is the same, but when doing monotypes, the artist works on a clean plate. With monoprints, however, there is always a pattern or part of an image which is constantly repeated in each print.

Artists often use some kind of pattern such as lace, leaves, fabric, etc., to add texture. Many effects can be achieved in monotypes that are not possible with any other technique.

(Source: "What are monoprints and monotypes?" Monoprints.com. ©1999–2011.)



Monotype print



Ghost monotype on colored paper

The inking process:

1. Students will create an original pencil sketch drawn to the exact size of the plate material. Subject matter can include (but is not limited to) landscape, seascape, portrait, still life, architecture, nature, etc. They will then follow the next steps.

2. Transfer the drawing to Speedball® Speedy Carve™ using a burnisher or hand rub. The graphite should transfer to the plate material. If using a Speedball® POLYPRINT printing plate, the drawing can be traced lightly with pencil; however, a relief line might be present in the POLYPRINT material. This may be advantageous for the younger artist, as a white line will be present throughout the application of inks and will appear as a white line in the final print.



Original sketch and hand rubbed transfer of drawing to Speedy Carve™



Masking tape frisket on circular shape



Multiple inks mixed with brayer to create sky



Light blue rolled over a paper mask



Medium blue rolled over a paper mask

3. Masking tape friskets can be applied prior to inking, thus preserving areas of the print image that need to remain white. The tape will be removed prior to making the final print.
4. Arrange inks on a mixing tray or Plexiglas®. Roll out inks to an even consistency and apply one or more colors to the plate. Keep the inks thin to avoid ink buildup. (Optional: Dry with hair dryer prior to adding detail.)

5. Ink removal is the subtractive method of creating a monotype print. To create additional white areas, remove ink with sticks, a mat board edge, sponges, fingers, or textural objects. Create a painted transparent appearance by using wet brushes.

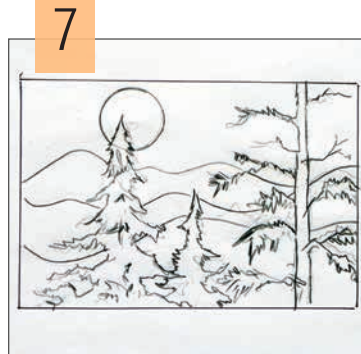
6. Additive methods of applying inks to plates include rollers, brushes, mat board, sponges, wooden shapes, and inked textures.



Subtract wet ink with sticks to create lines



Add lines by pressing mat board edges into wet ink



Stencil image traced from original sketch



Cut stencil on cutting mat



Position stencil over plate and tape in place



Stencil trees with rollers or brushes

7. Stencils are a very effective method for adding hard-edged shapes to the monotype. Use heavy tracing paper to trace the shapes from the original sketch. Cut out the stencil shapes with an X-ACTO® knife on a cutting mat or heavy cardboard prior to inking the plate.

8. Additional textures can be added to the plate using textural tools, such as mat board edges and dry sponges.
9. Allow the plate to dry completely before transferring the image to paper. If necessary, repeat any of the previous techniques for additive or subtractive ink manipulation.



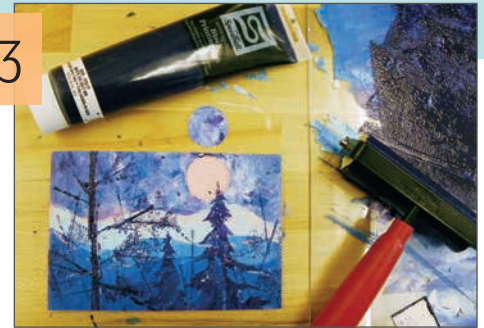
Tree created with mat board edges pressed into ink



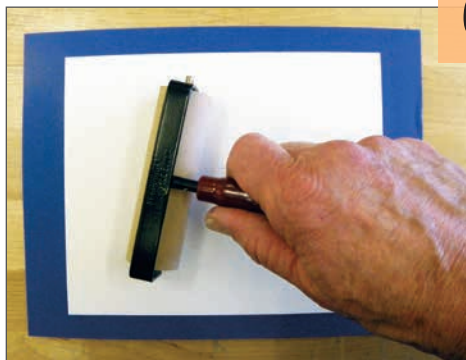
Dry sponges pressed into ink to add leaf texture

The printing process:

1. Cut Speedball® Printmaster® paper larger than plate.
2. Soak paper in a tray of water for 30–45 seconds.
3. Remove any masking tape friskets. Place printing plate right-side up on a clean surface.
4. Blot paper between two sheets of blotter paper to remove most of the surface moisture. Work quickly because dry paper won't transfer the image.
5. Place damp paper over printing plate and cover with a heavier sheet of paper. This protects the damp paper from tearing during the burnishing process. Use registration marks if necessary.



Masking tape frisket removed prior to printing

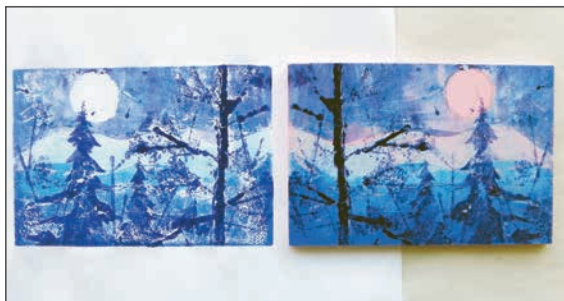


Roller used to transfer print

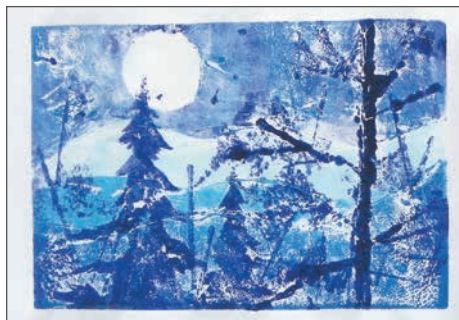


Hand pressure to transfer print

6. Using medium pressure, burnish the print with a Speedball® soft rubber brayer or a flat hand. Burnish the surface one or two times to create the desired effect. Overburnishing causes the inks to become more moist, therefore creating an ink that has a tendency to run and smear. An optional method of transferring the image is to use an etching press, set to the optimum pressure for the plate material being used.
7. Carefully peel the print from the printing plate and allow to dry. Prints will wrinkle slightly when dry. Prints can be flattened using a warm iron or dry mount press. Cover print to avoid ink transfer to the heat surface.



Final print with plate showing remaining ink residue, suitable for a ghost print



Final print



Washed plate showing original sketch and slight staining

8. If enough ink remains on the plate, an additional ghost print can be made. Repeat the printing directions. (Refer to the orange paper ghost print at the beginning of the instructions, on first page.)
9. Wash and dry plate and clean up all work spaces.
10. The Speedball® Speedy Carve™ can be reused numerous times. Previous images may stain slightly.



Materials list

- Speedball® Speedy Carve™ ([9727814](#), [9714659](#), [9729095](#), [9731147](#), [9731253](#))
- Speedball® Printmaster® Paper ([9719930](#), [9719932](#))
- Speedball® Water-Soluble Block Printing Ink, set of 5 tubes ([9715250](#))
- Speedball® Soft Rubber Brayers ([9701365](#), [9701366](#))
- Ink Mixing Trays, Pkg. of 10, 6" x 9" ([9703440](#))
- Plexiglas® Acrylic Sheets ([3300129](#)) or other surface
- White Taklon Brushes ([9729673](#))
- Sponge Pieces, cut into various sizes ([9704496](#), [0300400](#), [9716111](#), [9717865](#))
- Masking Tape ([9701124](#), [9701126](#), [9701128](#))
- Pacon® ArtlSt® Tracing Pad, 40 sheets, 9" x 12", 40 gsm ([9729877](#))
- Newsprint Pad ([9734518](#))
- Sketch Pencils ([0900168](#))
- X-ACTO® Retractable-Blade™ #1 Knife ([9729433](#))
- Alvin® Professional Self-Healing Cutting Mats ([9730908](#), [9730906](#), [9730907](#))
- Speedball® Transparent Extender Base, 8 oz. (optional) ([9727806](#))
- Scissors ([9712473](#))
- Hair Dryer
- Blotters
- Sticks
- Textured Materials (lace, leaves, fabric, etc.)
- Newspapers