



Developed with Robert Hackbarth, Parker High School, Janesville, WI

Volume 87 | Gr. 6–12

# Impressionistic monotypes



## Time

- The teacher should determine the amount of time needed for pre-planning the design.
- Approximately 5 minutes to prepare a registration board.
- Approximately 30 minutes to carefully transfer the FINAL design to the Speedball® Akua printmaking plate using a Sharpie® marker. The time may vary due to the complexity or simplicity of the original image.
- Approximately 80 minutes (or two 40-minute sessions) to create and print the image. Time may vary due to many factors. Students can add and subtract the inks over several periods because the inks will NOT dry out. The printing plate can be stored for extended periods of time before the final printing is done.
- Approximately 5 minutes to prepare the paper and transfer the image using the Speedball® Akua PinPress.

## Background:

Throughout history, artists have experimented with a variety of printmaking and painting combinations in a quest for achieving alternative processes for creating artistic imagery. Rembrandt, William Blake, Edgar Degas, and Paul Gauguin experimented with printing one-of-a-kind images. Degas and Gauguin called their images “printed drawings.” Today, this medium is recognized as monotype (ONLY one image made from the printing plate) or monoprint (additional prints made from the same plate using leftover elements that remain on the plate after printing). Making monotype images tends to force an artist to react spontaneously and improvise with the effects that appear on the inked printing plate. This can be difficult for many student artists. However, with careful planning and demonstrated instructions, immediate success can be achieved. After successfully completing several monotypes or monoprints, students can modify the basic techniques and experiment on their own, much like the master artists of long ago.

## Objectives

*Students will...*

- Be introduced to a form of printmaking, rich in history, yet relatively unexplored when compared to other art making techniques
- Incorporate additive and subtractive drawing, painting, and textural collage techniques
- Be challenged to create images that are skillfully planned to ensure success while experimenting with Akua Intaglio™ inks
- Be introduced to new materials and expected to master a variety of monotype techniques while making original artwork, including:
  1. Additive inking techniques
  2. Subtractive techniques
  3. Collage techniques for creating textures
  4. Block-out techniques

# Directions

## Prior to the Inking Process

1. Create an original sketch and composition from direct observation or student photographs. Some suggestions include animals, landscapes, natural objects, figurative studies, portraits, architecture, man-made objects, machines, geometric or organic shapes, or abstractions.
2. Finalize the sketch to fit the exact size of the Speedball® Akua printmaking plate. Trace the sketch onto the Speedball® Akua printmaking plate using a black Sharpie® marker.
3. Prior to the inking process, make a registration board by tracing around the Speedball® Printmasters™ paper onto a piece of mat board. Position the Speedball® Akua printmaking plate in the center of the registration board and trace around the outside edge. You will have two shapes that are centered on the mat board.



## Additive and Subtractive Inking Processes

1. Arrange the workspace so a 12" x 18" sheet of Grafix® clear acetate is easily accessible as the mixing palette. Using the Speedball® Akua Intaglio™ inks in primary colors, place the colors on the acetate and mix with a wooden craft stick, brayer, or brush to achieve the desired hues. (Uneven mixing can create color blends that add depth and interest to areas of the design.)
2. Flip over the Akua printmaking plate (the Sharpie® marker drawing should be facing down) and block out any areas with Grafix® Low-Tack Frisket Film or paper stencils to retain white areas on the final print.
3. Using a brayer, roll out a thin layer of ink on the palette and transfer the ink to the BACK of the Speedball® Akua printmaking plate. Multiple thin layers of color can be added and blended together to create unique backgrounds. Colors can be rolled over the entire surface of the plate and wiped away later or selectively inked.
4. Once the background has been established, add middle ground colors using a brayer, paintbrush, fingertip, cotton swab, crushed paper, painted textural surfaces, etc. The same tools can be used to subtract colors from the printing plate. (Water can be used with the wiping tools.) A light table can be used to aid the additive and subtractive ink processes. By wiping or drawing into the wet ink, color is removed and clear areas will remain. Remember to keep the color thin. Thick areas of ink will smear when printing the final image.
5. Add selective colors into the wiped areas using a paintbrush, brayer, cotton swab, pencil eraser, textural surfaces, or any other tools. Experiment with a variety of tools and materials. Thin cardboard stencils can also be created to block out ink from certain areas of the design. (Some of the ink may transfer to the back of the cardboard.)
6. Continue to add and subtract color until the desired result is achieved. Spontaneous decision-making challenges the artist and leads to accidental effects that can be unique and quite interesting.
7. As students gain confidence with the materials, experimentation is encouraged.
8. Speedball® Akua Intaglio Inks™ will not dry on the palette. However, Speedball® Akua Extender can be used to regain the desired ink consistency.



Mixing colors



Light table wiping



Additive and subtractive painting



## Printing the Image

1. Dampen the Speedball® Printmasters™ paper by soaking it in a tray of water for approximately 30 seconds to one minute. Soaking times may vary depending on the type of paper being used. An alternate method is to mist both sides of the paper inside a large plastic bag.
2. Hold the paper by the opposite corners and let most of the water drain off. Carefully place the paper between two blotters or newsprint. Pat the blotters to help remove the remainder of the water.
3. Place the paper on the registration board in the marked area, smoothing out any wrinkles. Make sure the surface is level.
4. Carefully turn the printing plate over and register the plate on top of the dampened paper.
5. Carefully place the Speedball® Akua PinPress on top of and in the center of the printing plate. Using light pressure, roll the pin press to all outside edges. Change directions of the pin press to ensure even printing.
6. Carefully remove the printing paper from the printing plate to reveal the image.



**Inking plate with brayer**



**Using pin press to ensure even printing**

## Cleaning Akua Inks and Supplies

1. Because Speedball® Akua Intaglio™ inks do not dry on the palette, there is little waste of materials. Inks can be reused until the palette has little room for mixing.
2. To remove Speedball® Akua Intaglio™ inks from tools and supplies, use liquid soap and warm water. It is recommended to clean tools after each session.
3. Dry all tools thoroughly so they are ready for the next inking session.



**Final print**

# Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Art and Design Education

Many state standards can be applied to this unit, but special emphasis should be placed on the following:

## C: VISUAL DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

**Content Standard:** Students will design and produce quality original images and objects, such as paintings, sculptures, designed objects, photographs, graphic designs, videos, and computer images.

**Rationale:** There are time-honored processes of making art and principles of visual expression that are essential to the practice of creating images and objects. These processes and principles change over time. Artists need to recognize and respond to these changes. Just as other subject areas have guidelines, procedures, and bodies of knowledge that students learn, so do the visual arts.

## L: VISUAL IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

**Content Standard:** Students will use their imaginations and creativity to develop multiple solutions to problems, expand their minds, and create ideas for original works of art and design.

**Rationale:** Imagination allows people to explore connections to the world, develop conceptual thought processes, and learn to use metaphors to arrive at original ideas. Art helps children become more creative, deal with complexity and ambiguity, be more flexible, solve problems in creative ways, use higher order thinking skills, and take risks.



## Materials list

- Speedball® 4" Pop-In™ Rubber Brayers, hard (6200108) or soft (9727884)
- Speedball® Akua Intaglio™ Ink, ultramarine blue [9733337(Q)], hansa yellow [9733337(N)], and crimson red [9733337(AB)]
- Speedball® Transparent Extender Base, 8 oz. (9727806)
- Speedball® Akua Printmaking Plates, pkg. of 3, 8" x 12" (9733570)
- Speedball® Akua PinPress, 20" (Z47327)
- Speedball® Printmasters™ Paper, pkg. of 50, 9" x 12" (9719930)
- Graftex® Dura-Lar® Film Roll, .002 mil (9732451)
- Graftex® Low Tack Frisket Film, pkg. of 12, 9" x 12" (9732469)
- Color Shapers® Kids Wallets, size 6, set of 5 (9729122)
- Royal Brush® Firm Burgundy Taklon Brushes, set of 12 (9729675)
- Sharpie® Black Fine-Point Marker [9726841(A)]
- Nasco No. 1 Knife with No. 11 Blade (4100418)
- Nasco Sketchbook Assortment, pkg. of 24, 8½" x 11", 80 sheets, (9720393)
- Nasco No. 2 Pencils, unsharpened, pkg. of 12 (NE20210)
- Craft Sticks, box of 1,000, 4½" x ⅜" [0500462(A)]
- Arnold Grummer's™ Couch Sheets for Papermaking, pkg. of 100, 9¼" x 11¾" (9711901)
- Assorted objects for adding or subtracting color and texture, such as cardboard, burlap, ribbon, lace, raffia, tissue paper, etc.