

Drawing - Crayon Engraving with Oil Pastel

After applying a thick coat of crayon to their papers and covering it with black paint, the children scratch in designs and embellish them with oil pastels. For ages 9 to 13. Plan 4 sessions.

KEY IDEAS

- Understanding the engraving process
- Working with line, color, pattern, and texture
- Exploring uses of crayons and oil pastels

LANGUAGE

engraving, pattern, texture

YOU WILL NEED

- Sturdy paper with a glossy side, such as oak tag or poster board, cut into 8- by 10-inch pieces
- Crayons (See note below.)
- Black liquid tempera paint
- Brushes
- Liquid soap
- Newsprint paper cut into 8- x 10-inch pieces
- Pencils
- White chalk
- Tools for engraving, such as wooden stylus sticks, rounded toothpicks, nails, popsicle sticks, nail files, and small screwdrivers
- Newspaper pads
- Tissues or soft rags for wiping the crayoned papers

Note: Choose crayons that have strong color and good wax content—Crayola crayons were used in this lesson. The most brilliant colors work best. Black crayon should be avoided since it won't show up against the black tempera paint.

PROJECT

First Session

Preparation

- Cut the paper for the engravings into 8-x 10-inch pieces, planning one for each child plus a few extra for demonstration.
- Add approximately one tablespoon of liquid soap to each pint of black paint. Test the paint to be sure it adheres to the crayoned surface and can be engraved without chipping.
- Cover a paper with crayon before class for the demonstration.
- Set out cut paper, crayons, newspaper pads, tissues, black paint, and brushes.

How to Begin

- Explain to the children that an *engraving* is made by scratching a design into a surface to

produce a picture. In this session, the children will put a thick layer of crayon on their paper and then apply a coat of black paint. In the next session, they will make engravings by scratching into the black paint, revealing the colors below.

- Demonstrate how to prepare the paper by first placing it on a newspaper pad. Using a light colored crayon, mark off sections on the paper by either making a scribble design or creating a pattern, such as concentric circles or squares. Explain that the children should fill in the resulting shapes with a variety of bright colors, using a limited or full range of colors depending on the mood or effect desired. It is important to use strong pressure when applying the crayons to build up a thick layer of wax; the crayon must be applied evenly, leaving no paper peeking through. When the papers are completely covered, use a tissue to lightly brush away any little flecks of crayon on the surface.
- On the paper that has been prepared for the demonstration show the children how to cover the crayon with a layer of black paint. Spread the paint gently and evenly across the surface, being sure all areas are covered with no puddles of paint left behind.
- Have the children put their names on the back of their papers, apply the crayon, and then paint the surface with black paint.

Second Session

Preparation

- Set out the dried papers and the demonstration paper from the previous session.
- Cut the newsprint paper into 8- x 10-inch pieces.
- Set out the newsprint paper, pencils, and tools for engraving.

How to Begin

- Explain that in this session, the children will be making their engravings by using tools to scratch through the black paint, exposing the colors underneath.
- Preliminary drawings should be made on newsprint paper using only basic outlines. For example, draw the shape of a tree, but not the individual leaves. Transfer the drawing by covering the back of the newsprint with white chalk and placing it, chalked side down, on the black tempera-coated paper. Go over the lines of the drawing with a pencil, leaving a white outline on the black surface. Use a tool to engrave the outlines into the black surface.
- These engravings are most effective when there is an abundance of details filling the papers. Discuss the many *patterns* (designs made by repeating symbols), and *textures* (the visual feel of a surface) in everything around us, such as leaves on a tree, bricks in a building, stars in the sky, and waves in an ocean.
- On the demonstration paper, show the children the variety of lines that can be achieved by using different tools. Thin lines can be made with the pointed tools and solid areas can be removed using the Popsicle sticks or small screw drivers.
- Have the children plan their compositions, transfer them to the black tempera-coated paper, and begin engraving. Encourage them to work on all sections of the paper, gradually building up details and patterns to keep the final designs balanced.

Third/Fourth Session

Preparation

- Set out engraved papers and engraving tools.
- Set out oil pastels and pads of newspaper.

How to Begin

- In the following sessions, the children will complete their engravings and then enrich them with oil pastel colors.
- Explain that oil pastels can be applied over some of the black tempera surfaces. Place the engraving on a pad of newspaper to make it easier to put on the oil pastel. It's important to work carefully so as not to cover the bright colors of the already engraved areas.
- Have the children continue to add details, patterns, and textures to their drawings and then apply oil pastel to complete their engravings.

NOTES

- For this project to be successful, it is important that the papers are covered with lots of evenly coated wax. The tempera paint cannot be scratched off areas with insufficient wax.
- Remember to have the children put their names on the back of their papers before applying the black paint.
- Keeping the size of the paper small allows the children more time to fill the engravings with lots of patterns and textures.
- When making the preliminary drawings on newsprint, remind the children to use only basic outlines, saving the details, patterns, and textures for their engravings.
- Scratching off the black paint can be messy, so cleanup is easier if the work is done on sheets of newspaper.
- Although this project is similar to using commercial scratch-art paper, having the children prepare their own papers gives them a better understanding of the engraving process.
- In some instances, the picture may be further enhanced by engraving patterns and textures through the areas of oil pastel as seen in the sand on the beach in the picture below.

LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR WORK

- Review the process that was used to make the engravings.
- Discuss how the use of patterns and textures add interest to the engravings.

What the children might say...

- *My hand is getting tired from pressing the crayon so hard.*
- *How can I get rid of a mistake?*
- *I'm going to draw the bricks on my house after I add the oil pastel.*

What you might say...

- *If your hand is getting tired, stop to wiggle and stretch your fingers for a few minutes.*
- *Since a mistake cannot be erased, you might try adding lots of patterns and textures*

around it to blend it into the design.

- *Adding the oil pastel before you draw your bricks will certainly be a lot easier than trying to color in each brick.*