

Title of unit: Matisse/McKeen-inspired Block Prints
classes

Grade level: 5th

Time allowed: 5 days/45 min

Style and/or Genre: Nonrepresentational

Media: Soft-block carving

Teacher(s): Mrs. Snyder

NAEA or Nebraska State Standards and Learning Objectives:

Create:

FA 5.2.1.d Identify and use elements of art and principles of design (glossary) to brainstorm visual possibilities (e.g., create symmetrical and asymmetrical balance using line and shape).

1. Students will use an analogous color scheme of their choice when printing on their own decorative wrapping paper.
Assessment: Formal—see checklist
2. Students will carve away all negative space around their organic shapes.
Assessment: Formal—see checklist
3. Students will fill up the negative space of their wrapping paper with their prints.
Assessment: Formal—see checklist

FA 5.2.1.e Apply various techniques to develop craftsmanship skills (e.g., use cutting and gluing techniques to produce clean edges without visible glue).

1. Students will remove the negative space keeping the edges of their shapes distinct.
Assessment: Formal—see checklist

Standard(s): FA 5.2.1.f Demonstrate respect for accepted procedures regarding responsible care of equipment and materials.

1. Students will handle their gauges, scissors, and blades respectfully and carefully.
Assessment: Informal—Teacher checks for understanding.
2. Students will clean up their area every day: tools are put away, scraps are thrown away, printmaking tools are washed.
Assessment: Informal—Teacher checks for understanding.

Connect:

FA 5.2.4.b Compare and contrast works of art from a variety of contemporary, historical, and cultural contexts.

1. Students will compare and contrast the use of organic shapes by Henri Matisse and Allison McKeen in two different mediums.
Assessment: Informal—VTS, Teacher checks for understanding.

Present:

FA 5.2.2.a Communicate artistic statements (glossary) using art terminology (e.g., product, process).

1. Students will write an artist statement in Artsonia and answer the prompts on the screen.
Assessment: Formal—see checklist

Assessment and Evaluation: Formal (summative) or Informal (formative)

Grading checklist:

Matisse/McKeen Prints

Name _____

____ 20 pts Name is on it

____ 20 pts Negative space is cut out of the relief

____ 20 pts Positive space is cut cleanly with distinct, smooth edges

____ 20 pts Space of the wrapping paper is entirely filled

____ 20 pts Used an analogous color scheme

Theme, Big Idea, or Enduring Ideas and Issues; or Essential Questions:

Art can inspire—no matter what happened in his life, Matisse was inspired to make art even when his health was failing. Even with something as simple as cutting paper, we saw how Matisse crafted his “second life” through creativity. Alongside the theme of “art can inspire,” we see Allison McKeen—a contemporary artist making a name for herself today on TikTok and Instagram—drawing inspiration from older generations of artists like Matisse. Even though we never meet or talk to these artists we study in the classroom, they can have a lasting impact on us and our work.

Teaching Rationale:

How does this unit relate to learning theory?

- Like with any art project, students are reaching the highest level of Bloom’s taxonomy since the students are creating.

How is this unit appropriate for these students?

- As an intro to middle school art, it is important that students realize they are being held to a higher standard than at the elementary level. Students are being trusted with handling dangerous tools correctly, so as not to hurt themselves or others.

Materials:

- Scissors
- Sharpie
- Scraps of colored paper
- Soft-block
- Gauge with tips
- Water-soluble block-printing ink (different colors)
- Brayers
- Slabs
- Newspaper
- Large rolls of paper to cut into “wrapping paper”

Studio Procedure for Making Art including Technique and Process:

https://youtu.be/8nhg_A9rh8o

Vocabulary:

- Organic shape—shapes found in nature/asymmetrical shapes/blobby shapes
- Geometric shape—a “math” shape/shapes with hard angles and lines
- Gauge—printmaking tool that cuts away the block
- Slab—surface on which we roll ink
- Brayer—printmaking tool that rolls out ink
- Henri Matisse—artist who painted and cut-out paper. Used bright colors and organic shapes.
- Controversy—lots of arguing/“drama” over a subject
- Allison McKeen—contemporary artist who uses organic shapes in her printmaking
- Organic shape—a shape found in nature, not symmetrical, a sometimes “blobby” shape
- Contemporary—someone who is making art now
- Analogous—three or more colors that are next to each other on the color wheel/they share a common color
- Positive space – the surface we are leaving to be printed
- Negative space – the area we are carving away around the area we want printed
- Relief print – high areas are printed and the low areas are not

Artistic, Cultural and Historic Connections and Contexts:

- We learn briefly about Matisse's painting career and the Fauves before learning about his "second life" with cutouts. I think it is important for students to know their art history, but also, that an artist can change and branch out and experiment with new things. Matisse is inspirational for that reason, as well as the fact that he kept creating art all throughout his life, even when his health was failing.
- Allison McKeen is a contemporary artist who prints on recycled fabric with soft-block printing techniques, often with organic shapes. She is an engaging topic for the students since she is someone who posts her work on TikTok and Instagram. We can see her carving, rolling, and printing processes—with a lot of other artists we study in the classroom, they created so long ago that we can't watch footage of them actually working (except I DID find a very brief video of Matisse cutting, which is another way to connect these two artists!). I think having kids see someone creating art today is special and inspiring because then they realize that they can do it too.

Teaching and Learning Resources:

- Matisse's cut-outs for middle school Presentation for lesson
- https://youtu.be/8nhg_A9rh8o Instructional video I made for the process

Modifications and Differentiations:

- In case a student is gone for a day, or needs more time to pause/play/slow down the video, all of my slides and videos are available for the students on Google Classroom. They are very used to this and so it is a helpful material for them.
- For this lesson, high-ability learners just tend to move a little faster, but don't tend to get very far ahead due to the nature of carving.

Classroom Management Procedures:

- If the students get too loud or off topic, I just do the Mona/Lisa chant with them. They are used to it and they understand that it means to stop working and listen. The fifth grades honestly do it the best out of all of my classes! I usually just use it if I need to get their attention for an announcement.

Lesson Sequence and Delivery

DAY 1:

Pre-lesson/Entrance Routine

Time: 3-5 minutes

Daily Doodles: Mrs. Edgren has a prompt on the board that is the same for every class. Students are not always let out of classes the same time, so we will have a steady flow of students trickling in at different times during the first five minutes of class. Students work on these and then hand them in at the end of the week for participation points and cookie rewards.

Bell ringer

Time: 3-5 minutes

I have the first slide of my presentation on the TV. It has a picture of Henri Matisse as well as his name. As an activator, I asked my students if anyone could raise their hand and try to pronounce his name. After some fun attempts, we discuss how he was French so his name was pronounced "ON-ree" instead of "Henry", but I would still let them call him Henry if it was easier for them. All of my students ended up remembering the correct pronunciation of his name!

Transition / Segway/ Cross Curricular Connection/ Study/Learning:

Time: 2 minutes

Students are instructed to take notes alongside the presentation in their sketchbooks. We start by writing the artist's name after the discussion.

Class Discussion:

Time: 5 minutes

During the presentation, we have a lot of discussions about the content. For this section we are looking at [SLIDES 3-7](#). Some questions include:

- Do you know what the word controversy means? Why do you think Matisse's work was controversial? Don't you think it's crazy someone stole and burned his painting just because they didn't like it? Do you think being called a "wild beast" was a compliment?
- These colors are a bit unnatural aren't they? The wood on the boats is a bright red instead of a dull brown. What about the colors of the water?
- Do you like this painting? What colors did he use on her skin? What about the background?
- For "Green Stripe:" what about this painting? Do you like it? Why or why not? What colors did he use for the face? Mrs. Edgren says it looks like she has snot all up her nose. Did you know that this is a painting of his wife? Do you think that *she* would like the painting?
- How do you feel about this still life? It's different from Cezanne's or the ones you guys did. Can you even tell what the objects are? What colors is he using for these objects?

Teacher Demo / Direct Instruction:**Time: 8 minutes**

During the presentation—after the Fauvism discussion—I tell the students more about Matisse’s life. For this section we are looking at SLIDES 8-9. We talk about his failing health and vision and how he stopped painting to make cutouts. We watch a short video within the presentation about the cutouts and take a look at some of his works. During the video, students are instructed to write down a fact that they learn from the video.

For this section we are looking at SLIDES 10-18. After the video, we look at a few more of Matisse’s cut-outs so they can see them better. After that, I introduce them to artist Allison McKeen, a contemporary printmaker who uses organic shapes and bright colors like Matisse. We review the term “contemporary,” and then I have them learn the difference between geometric shapes vs. organic shapes and have them take notes and draw examples in their sketchbooks.

Assessment: Informal—VTS, Teacher checks for understanding.

Teacher Demo / Direct Instruction:**Time: 10 minutes**

We watch my instructional video and I field any questions that come up. I give a brief soapbox about walking-with-scissors-safety, and then students receive scraps of colored paper from me while they go get their scissors.

Studio / Guided Practice:**Time: 10 minutes**

Students cut their paper into two pieces, and then cut those two pieces into organic shapes. Then, students trace their shapes onto the soft-block with Sharpie. Students will carve away all negative space around their organic shapes. If they have time, students may start carving the block with the gouges (I had almost all students get to this stage!).

Checking for Understanding:

As the students work on their cutting and carving, I walk around to make sure everyone is following directions as well as handling materials safely. I had no problems with either of my classes because they were so motivated!

Safety instructions (as given in my video):

- Students are holding the gouge correctly (like a “lawnmower” or “knife”).
- Students are pressing down while they carve.
- Students are holding the gouge with their dominant hand and holding their block with their non-dominant hand.
- Students are carving away from themselves and their blades are not pointed towards their non-dominant hand at any time.

Clean-up Procedures:**Time: 1-2 minutes**

Students are instructed to throw away block and paper scraps and put their tools and sketchbooks away.

Checking for Understanding/Closing:**Time: 2 minutes**

While students are lining up at the door, I have students raise their hand and tell me a fact they wrote down from the Matisse video for one of Mrs. Edgren’s cookie coupons. I had a wide variety of answers!

DAY 2**Pre-lesson/Entrance Routine****Time: 3-5 minutes**

Daily Doodles: Mrs. Edgren has a prompt on the board that is the same for every class. Students are not always let out of classes the same time, so we will have a steady flow of students trickling in at different times during the first five minutes of class. Students work on these and then hand them in at the end of the week for participation points and cookie rewards.

Bell Ringer:

On the TV, I will show footage of Henri Matisse cutting paper: [Footage of Henri Matisse making a paper cut out](#)

Transition / Segway/ connection to a Cross Curricular Study/Learning:

Pre-Assessment: who can name either of the artists from yesterday? What facts did we learn about them?

Studio / Guided Practice:**Time: 15-20 minutes**

Students continue working on the blocks that they started yesterday. Students will continue to carve their softblocks until their shapes are the only raised surfaces. It is a short day (Friday) so there is less time. Remind students that edges of organic shapes need to be distinct.

Clean-up Procedures:**Time: 1-2 minutes**

Students are instructed to throw away block and paper scraps and put their tools and sketchbooks away. Gouges go on a basket in the middle of each table so students are not walking around with them.

Checking for Understanding/Closing:**Time: 2 minutes**

While students are lining up at the door, I have students raise their hands and tell me the names of the tools (gouge and block) that we are using. If we have time, I will also ask them to tell me the difference between a geometric shape and an organic shape.

DAY 3

Pre-lesson/Entrance Routine

Time: 3-5 minutes

Daily Doodles: Mrs. Edgren has a prompt on the board that is the same for every class. Students are not always let out of classes the same time, so we will have a steady flow of students trickling in at different times during the first five minutes of class. Students work on these and then hand them in at the end of the week for participation points and cookie rewards.

Bell Ringer:

On the TV, I will show a video from Allison McKeen's Instagram where she uses organic shapes:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/CkGivWtuluN/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Transition / Segway/ connection to a Cross Curricular Study/Learning:

For this section we are looking at SLIDES 19-20. On the TV, I will have an example of organic shapes vs. geometric shapes and students will raise their hands tell me which category they fall into.

Assessment: informal-teacher checks for understanding.

Teacher Demo / Direct Instruction:

Time: 5-10 minutes

For this section we are looking at SLIDES 20-23. On the TV, we will have a brief presentation about color and analogous color schemes. Then, I will show the portion of the demo video again where I roll out ink and put it onto my block.

Transition / Segway/ connection to a Cross Curricular Study/Learning:

Once I affirm that my students understand by asking them questions (informal assessment) I give them directions for their next steps: I will show the students where the supplies are in the classroom, remind them of cleanup rules, and then let them work.

Studio / Guided Practice:

Time: 15-20 minutes

Students will choose their colored inks and begin printmaking in analogous color schemes.

Checking for Understanding:

As the students work on their printmaking, I walk around to make sure everyone is following directions as well as choosing the right colors.

Directions (as seen in my demo video):

- Place a piece of newspaper under your block away from your wrapping paper.
- Squeeze some ink onto your slab.
- Roll out the ink on the slab with your brayer until you hear the snapping sound.
- Roll this ink onto the block and print.
- Print by gently pressing down on the back of the block, NO SLAMMING OR THROWING the block onto the paper or the table.

As for colors:

- After the presentation, students will know that their analogous color scheme must...
 - Be three colors
 - All be colors that are next to each other on the color wheel
 - They share a common color

Clean-up Procedures:

Time: 5 minutes

Students are instructed to wash their slabs, brayers, and blocks before putting them away.

Specific cleanup directions:

- Two people per sink will be washing their blocks. After blocks are washed and dried, they can be put away in their tote trays.
- Leave brayers and slabs on the counter so the next class can use them.
- Put all gouges in a basket on each table so that way no student is walking around with them.
- If you are waiting for your turn to wash your block, follow me to the home ec room.
- If you are taking your paper to the home ec room with me, hold onto it with two hands and have the wide side of the paper facing away from you.
- If you are finished with all of the other steps, or if you are waiting your turn for something, wipe down your desk or help your neighbor.
- When you are completely finished, line up quietly at the door with your things and wait for exit ticket questions.

Checking for Understanding/Closing:

Time: 2 minutes

While students are lining up at the door, I have students raise their hands and tell me the difference b

DAY 4

Pre-lesson/Entrance Routine

Time: 3-5 minutes

Daily Doodles: Mrs. Edgren has a prompt on the board that is the same for every class. Students are not always let out of classes the same time, so we will have a steady flow of students trickling in at different times during the first five minutes of class. Students work on these and then hand them in at the end of the week for participation points and cookie rewards.

Bell Ringer:

On the TV, I will show a photo from Allison McKeen's Instagram where she uses organic shapes:

https://www.instagram.com/p/CinAFkALqOS/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Transition / Segway/ connection to a Cross Curricular Study/Learning:

On the TV, I will have an example of different color schemes and the students will choose which ones are analogous. I will have students raise their hands and recap/give instructions as to what we did yesterday

Studio / Guided Practice:

Time: 30 minutes

Today, students can continue printing on their papers. They are also allowed and encouraged to cut their organic shapes apart like Allison McKeen does (pictures will be on the TV while they work).

Checking for Understanding:

As the students work on their printmaking, I walk around to make sure everyone is following directions as well as choosing the right colors.

Directions (as seen in my demo video):

- Place a piece of newspaper under your block away from your wrapping paper.
- Squeeze some ink onto your slab.
- Roll out the ink on the slab with your brayer until you hear the snapping sound.
- Roll this ink onto the block and print.
- Print by gently pressing down on the back of the block, NO SLAMMING OR THROWING the block onto the paper or the table.

As for colors:

- After the presentation, students will know that their analogous color scheme must...
 - Be three colors
 - All be colors that are next to each other on the color wheel

Clean-up Procedures:

Time: 5 minutes

Students are instructed to wash their slabs, brayers, and blocks before putting them away.

Specific cleanup directions:

- Two people per sink will be washing their blocks. After blocks are washed and dried, they can be put away in their tote trays.
- Leave brayers and slabs on the counter so the next class can use them.
- Put all gouges in a basket on each table so that way no student is walking around with them.
- If you are waiting for your turn to wash your block, follow me to the home ec room.
- If you are taking your paper to the home ec room with me, hold onto it with two hands and have the wide side of the paper facing away from you.
- If you are finished with all of the other steps, or if you are waiting your turn for something, wipe down your desk or help your neighbor.
- When you are completely finished, line up quietly at the door with your things and wait for exit ticket questions.

Checking for Understanding/Closing:

Time: 2 minutes

While students are lining up at the door, I have students raise their hands and tell me the names of the tools we used and what they are for.

DAY 5

Pre-lesson/Entrance Routine

Time: 3-5 minutes

Daily Doodles: Mrs. Edgren has a prompt on the board that is the same for every class. Students are not always let out of classes the same time, so we will have a steady flow of students trickling in at different times during the first five minutes of class. Students work on these and then hand them in at the end of the week for participation points and cookie rewards.

Bell Ringer:

On the TV, I will show an artwork from Matisse and an artwork from McKeen; the students will have to guess who made what.

Transition / Segway/ connection to a Cross Curricular Study/Learning:

Time: 10 minutes

Students will take their favorite individual paper that they worked on, take a picture, and upload it to Artsonia. There, they will answer questions and write an artist statement. I will be helping students who have trouble typing.

- Artsonia Questions that students will answer on their computers (formal assessment):
 - What was the easiest part of this project and why?

- What was the most difficult part of this project and why?
- Name the colors you used on your wrapping paper. Are they analogous?
- Did you decide you liked printmaking like this? Why or why not?

Individual Practice:

Time: 25 minutes

If there are students who would like to continue to print or carve another half-block, they may. If there are students who are behind in other lessons or classes, they are given time to work. If not, students are permitted to read an AR book. No computer games.

Clean-up Procedures:

Time: 3-5 minutes

Students are instructed to wash their slabs, brayers, and blocks before putting them away. Students will put their papers on the drying rack. Students are instructed to wash their slabs, brayers, and blocks before putting them away.

Specific cleanup directions:

- Two people per sink will be washing their blocks. After blocks are washed and dried, they can be put away in their tote trays.
- Leave brayers and slabs on the counter so the next class can use them.
- Put all gouges in a basket on each table so that way no student is walking around with them.
- If you are waiting for your turn to wash your block, follow me to the home ec room.
- If you are taking your paper to the home ec room with me, hold onto it with two hands and have the wide side of the paper facing away from you.
- If you are finished with all of the other steps, or if you are waiting your turn for something, wipe down your desk or help your neighbor.
- When you are completely finished, line up quietly at the door with your things and wait for exit ticket questions.

If a student does not want to keep their carved block at the end of the project, they are instructed to stack them onto my desk. Later, I will clean up any edges that need it and reuse the blocks in a future project.

Checking for Understanding/Closing:

Time: 2 minutes

While students are lining up at the door, I have students raise their hands and tell me the names of the artists that we learned about, facts about them, and the tools we used during the printmaking lesson.