

## **Lesson 3: *Carving Out a Journey*** (Exploring Walter Anderson's Linoleum Block Prints)

### **Mississippi Visual and Performing Arts Framework Content Strands**

#### **Key:**

Creating and Performing (CP)

Critical Analysis (CA)

History/Culture (HC)

Aesthetics (A)

Connections (C)

**Time Frame:** Five 50-minute sessions

**Lesson Overview:** Printmaking is a process by which multiple images are reproduced from a single source. There are technical skills inherent in the art of printmaking that are not required in drawing and painting. This lesson involves studying the linoleum prints created by Walter Anderson as part of his "public art" and creating linoleum prints using subject matter and techniques similar to those of Anderson. The major emphasis is on a unified composition using movement in line, balance, and texture.

#### **National Standards:**

Standard 1: Understand and be able to apply media, techniques, and processes.

Standard 2: Use knowledge of the structures and functions of art.

Standard 3: Choose and evaluate a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

#### **Mississippi Visual Arts Framework, Visual Arts High School Level I, Competencies and Objectives:**

- 1. Apply proficient skills and craftsmanship in selecting and using various media, techniques, and processes to create original expressive works of art. (CP, CA)**
  - a. Create works of art that communicate original ideas using a variety of media, techniques, and processes.
  - d. Practice safety and conservation in the use of tools, materials, and equipment in the creation of works of art.
  
- 2. Understand how to select and use the elements of art and principles of design applied through various media, techniques, and processes related to the communication of meaning. (CP, A)**
  - d. Utilize the elements of art and principles of design to create works of art that communicate ideas.

**3. Understand how media, techniques, and processes create effects that evoke a range of responses. (CP, CA)**

d. Analyze artistic intent in own works of art in relation to form, function, and purpose.

**4. Utilize perceptual skills and apply visual arts vocabulary to make informed judgments while creating and studying works of art. (CA, CP)**

b. Use appropriate visual art vocabulary related to technique and media as works of art are created.

c. Utilize the visual and organizational components of art and design while creating works of art.

**5. Understand that a wide range of critical analysis theories exist and provide valid methods for studying works of art. (CA, CP)**

c. Identify different ways the visual arts provide unique modes for expressing ideas, actions, and emotions.

**Intelligences Addressed:**

Bodily/kinesthetic, Logical/mathematical, Visual/spatial, Naturalist

**Essential Question:**

How are the elements of line and texture used to unify a composition in the printmaking process?

**Strategies:**

Teacher-directed instructions

Hands-on activity

**Art Concepts:**

Line can achieve movement in a composition; balance of texture is unifying in a composition.

**Previous Art Concepts:**

Contour line; line repetition creates rhythm; repeated motif creates unity; positive/negative space.

**Instructional Objectives:**

1. To become aware of lines, textures, and movement in the block prints of Walter Anderson.

*The learner will...*

Examine block prints of Walter Anderson and identify characteristics of his printmaking style.

Discover and describe how movement is achieved by Anderson through line repetition, flow, and directional pull.

Discover and describe how Anderson achieves balance through use of positive and negative space and smooth and rough textures.

Compare and contrast the relief prints of Walter Anderson and those of other artists, such as Elizabeth Catlett.

2. To create a relief print inspired by the work of Walter Anderson..

*The learner will...*

Draw a design for a relief print with emphasis on line movement, balance of texture, and positive/negative space.

Transfer the design to the printing plate.

Understand and use basic rules of safety while handling cutting tools.

Cut the design into the printing plate.

Print the design creating a series edition.

### **Vocabulary:**

**Barren** - A smooth surfaced device used to transfer the image from the printing plate to the printing surface by applying pressure.

**Brayer** - A roller used to apply ink to the printing plate.

**Burnish** - The act of rubbing the back of the printing surface over the printing plate in order to transfer the image.

**Edition** - A series of identical prints taken from the same plate and numbered in a particular way.

**Gouge** - A cutting tool used to remove parts of the surface of the printing plate to create an image for printing.

**Linoleum block** - A smooth, pliable surface used to carve an image for printing.

**Printing plate** - The surface from which the design is printed.

**Relief printmaking** - The process by which raised surfaces are inked and pressed onto paper.

### **Materials/Resources:**

Examples of relief prints from various artists such as Walter Anderson and Elizabeth Catlett.

Anderson, Walter (1982). *Robinson: The Pleasant History of an Unusual Cat*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.

Anderson, Walter (1984). *An Alphabet*. Jackson & London: University Press of Mississippi.

Anderson, Walter (1996). *A Symphony of Animals*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

<http://www.walteringlisanderson.com>

<http://www.walterandersonmuseum.org>

<b>Supplies:</b>	Linoleum blocks	Brayers
	Printing paper	Printing ink
	Inking plate	Barren or wooden spoons
	Linoleum cutting tools	Pencils
	Sketch paper	Bench hooks

**Preparation:**

To prepare for this lesson, collect a number of examples of prints including commercial print materials and fine art prints.

## Session One

**Instructional Plan:**

**Motivation:**

*The teacher will...*

1. Show examples of various kinds of prints such as newspapers, candy wrappers, and fine art prints.
2. Discuss the purposes of the printmaking process. The printmaking process dates back to the Babylonians who stamped designs into clay bricks. Today the term "print" refers to commercially produced products such as photographs, posters, and even tee shirts. The art of printmaking is a specialized area of the visual arts that develops technical skills not required for drawing and painting.
3. Discuss the development of printmaking and the advances made throughout history from Chinese copper relief to the Gutenberg Press, to modern offset printing.

**Activity:**

*The student will...*

1. Compare examples of prints and paintings and determine if both can be considered art.
2. Compare the unique qualities of different printmaking process through class discussion.
3. Make a time line of the history of print.
4. Examine prints across time and recognize differences in how they are created.
5. Look at different examples of fine art prints and the techniques used in creating them.

**Assessment:**

Class discussion on the history of printmaking and the unique qualities of print.

## Session Two

**Instructional Plan:****Motivation:**

*The teacher will...*

1. Show examples of linoleum prints by Walter Anderson, Transparencies #'s 5, 6, and 7, Elizabeth Catlett, and other relief print artists.
2. Discuss Anderson's use of nature as a subject matter. Walter Anderson created linoleum block prints to provide affordable art that was available to everyone. He chose to use primarily animals and nature as his subject matter.
3. Observe use of line and texture in the compositions.
4. Discuss how line, texture and use of positive/negative space unify the composition.
5. Compare the work of Anderson and those of other print artists.

**Activity:**

*The student will...*

1. Draw several examples of movement through the use of line using nature as the subject matter.
2. Draw several examples of line repetition, flow, and directional pull that show movement.
3. Draw several examples showing balance using positive/negative space and texture.
4. Create a unified composition incorporating the concepts learned by combining the best sketches.
5. Color in all areas that will appear black in the finished print.
6. Reverse the composition and transfer to the linoleum block.

**Hint:** Trace the lines of the drawing on the back of the paper to create a reverse image. Holding the paper up to a window makes the lines easier to see. Use ebony pencil to color over the lines on the front of the composition. Lay this over the linoleum block and trace over the reversed lines. This transfers the image, in reverse, to the linoleum. This step is especially important if letters or words are used in the design.

**Assessment:**

1. Teacher observation of students' work as they incorporate the lesson concepts into a unified composition.
2. Teacher observation of the process of transferring the image to linoleum.

## Session Three

### Instructional Plan:

#### Motivation:

*The teacher will...*

1. Introduce the tools used to carve a linoleum block. Certain technical skills are necessary to successfully complete a linoleum block print. The rules of safety are especially important since the carving tools used are very sharp and a fair amount of force is necessary to cut the linoleum. Once an area is cut away, it cannot be corrected, therefore, printmakers must be constantly aware of the compositional elements of positive/negative space and texture and make sure that a good balance is maintained.
2. Demonstrate how to use the tools to carve the linoleum block.
3. Demonstrate the basic rules of safety while using the cutting tools.
4. Conduct a cutting practice for students using scraps of linoleum. Students must successfully carve a design in the scrap linoleum while observing all safety rules before being allowed to carve their large block.

**Note:** An alternative to linoleum, which is easier to carve, is available in art supply catalogs.

#### Activity:

*The student will...*

1. Practice cutting techniques and safety rules using scrap pieces of linoleum.
2. Cut the linoleum blocks using a bench hook. Metal bench hooks may be purchased, or they can be made from wood.
3. Cutting away from self, use the small V-shaped gouge to outline the basic design. Do not cut too deeply.
4. Use a large U-shaped gouge to clean out larger areas of the linoleum, which will remain white in the finished composition.
5. Use knives and other shaped gouges to carve smaller areas.
6. Constantly monitor the composition for balance in texture and positive/negative space as well as movement in line.

#### Assessment:

Teacher observation of student carving techniques and adherence to the safety rules.

## Session Four

### Instructional Plan:

#### Motivation:

*The teacher will...*

1. Review safety rules as a reminder to students of the importance of using care when working with the cutting tools.

2. Review progress on the linoleum blocks in terms of compositional unity through the use of line, texture, and positive/negative space. Self-assessment is an important process, especially in linoleum block printing. It is important to constantly monitor the progress of the cutting process to insure a good balance between positive/negative space as well as textural effects.

**Activity:**

*The student will...*

1. Finish carving linoleum and cleaning out larger areas.
2. Self monitor the cutting of edges while cleaning out the cut away spaces.
3. Add texture to areas using small gouges or knives making sure there is a balance of rough and smooth areas.
4. Clean any rough edges away to prepare the block for printing.

**Assessment:**

Teacher observation of student work.

## Session Five

**Instructional Plan:**

**Motivation:**

*The teacher will...*

1. Introduce and demonstrate the process of pulling a print (inking, applying the paper, burnishing and pulling).
2. Show how to sign, title, and number an edition.
3. Most printmakers create an edition or a series of prints from one plate. The editions are signed and numbered in a certain way. Sometimes the artist saves the plate for future printing, and sometimes the plate is destroyed after a certain number of prints have been "pulled." If a plate is destroyed after a series, the prints are considered part of a limited edition. These prints are more valuable since they are the only ones in existence. Walter Anderson created a series of alphabet blocks that were discovered after his death in 1965. His family made prints from these blocks up until recently. The linoleum was beginning to deteriorate, and the decision was made to discontinue printing from them to preserve the blocks. Some original prints can still be found, but most of what is sold today is copies of the original prints.

**Activity:**

*The student will...*

1. Roll the ink onto a smooth surface using a brayer. This can be a piece of plexi-glass, plastic trays, or waxed freezer paper taped to the table. Make sure the ink is evenly distributed on the brayer.
2. Roll the brayer over the surface of the linoleum block, evenly distributing the ink onto the surface.

3. Place the paper on the printing plate and burnish it using either a barren, the back of a wooden spoon, or your hand. Hold the paper secure with your other hand so that it does not move on the plate.
4. Carefully pull the print from the plate and hang it up to dry. Repeat the process for the number of prints needed for the edition.
5. Title, number, and sign each print in pencil.
6. Prepare prints for presentation and display in a public space.

**Assessment:**

1. Rubric based on the objectives of the lesson.
2. Class critique of the displayed prints.

**Extensions:**

Advanced students may try a reduction print in which the original printing plate is printed, carved again and printed over the image in a second color, and carved again and printed over the image in a third color. Students may also add color to the dried print using oil pastels.

**Adaptations:**

Special needs students may create a glue line print or a collograph print in which pieces of tag board are cut into shapes and glued down to create the printing plate.

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