



FAMILY TREE MONOPRINT PAINTING

The tree is an archetypal figure, and is used in many cultures to symbolize the family, or humanity as a whole. In this activity, we will use the technique of monoprint to create our own “family tree” or “tree of life.”

Materials needed: plexiglass plates, printing inks, brushes, brayers, ink retarder [to delay drying], ink extender [to thin ink], Q-tips, paper towels, toothpicks, paper palettes, white paper suitable for printing.

Procedure:

1. Each participant will receive plexiglass, palettes, brushes and paper. Inks and other materials can be shared.
2. Plexiglass plates will be the “canvas” on which to create the image. Working in this way, the image will be printed backwards [if you hold it up to a mirror, you will see what the printed image will be].
3. Begin painting, using brushes to apply paint, and paper towels, Q-tips or any other instruments to wipe or scratch away paint to create textures. Think about the tree, and what it represents to you.
4. When the image is completed, lay the paper on top, in the desired position, being very careful not to slide the paper once it touches the painted surface.
5. Use the brayer to press the back of the paper into the image, pressing firmly and evenly to transfer the painting from the plate to the paper.
6. Lift carefully, again being careful not to slide paper and smear the paint.
7. Your painting has been transferred to the paper. This may be the completed monoprint, or the process can be repeated to layer images, textures, colors, lines, etc. on top of the first print. If you do decide to layer, be careful to line up your image properly, by making markings on the plexiglass before you lift the first print.
8. If desired, a second “ghost print” can be transferred to a separate sheet of paper.

Possible learning areas:

Self-expression, two-dimensional art making, printmaking techniques, texture and color