

Printmaking: Collagraph

Lesson plan prepared by Bonnie Baker for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

Supported by family and friends in loving memory of Ruth Rideout

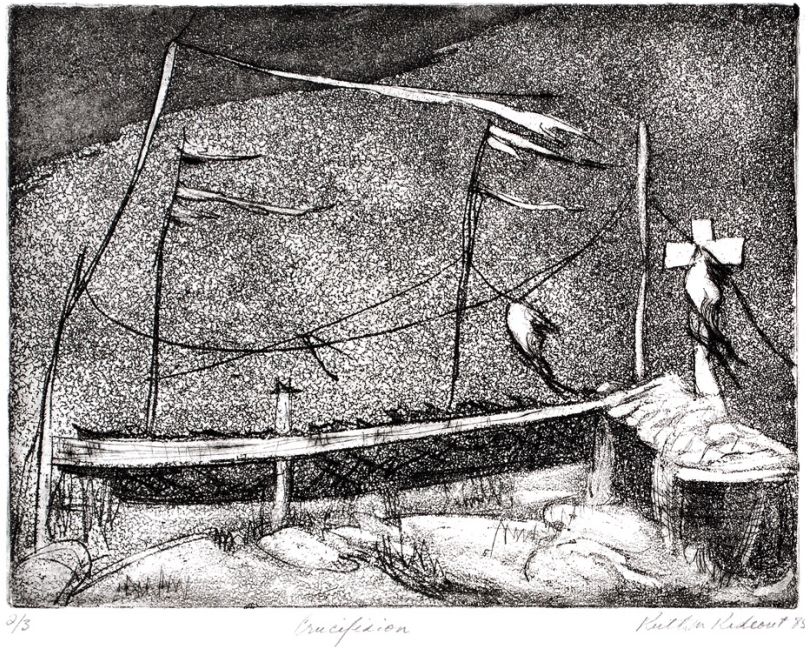
Suggested Grade/Age Levels

Grade 5 and up.

Adaptable for younger grades, with adult assistance

Introduction

Collagraph, sometimes spelled collograph, from the Greek words kolla meaning glue and graph to draw, is an easy, fun way to create prints with ordinary materials you have on hand at home and can be printed by hand. There are many ways you can build and print a collagraph plate giving you different, surprising results every time you print.



Ruth Rideout, Crucifixion, 1985
Etching and aquatint on Arches paper, 2/3 15.2 x 20.3 cm
Gift of the Artist through The Nova Scotia Printmakers Association, 1990

The variety of textures and simple shapes found in Ruth Rideout's etching Crucifixion are the inspiration for this collagraph print activity. In Crucifixion, she has created separate areas of different texture within the image conveying a sense of physical separation between the foreground, middle and distant spaces.

This activity can be broken into two parts over separate days.

Set up

- Flat surface covered with plastic, newspaper or rubber shelf liner
- Container with clean water for keeping brushes wet
- Clean up sink for washing your hands, brushes, roller, tools
- Art making clothes or apron (acrylic paint does not easily wash out)

Materials

- non-corrugated cardboard (food boxes work well)
- various materials for textures such as: netting, string, lace, yarn, fabric scraps, tinfoil, masking tape, corrugated cardboard, tissue paper, textured wallpaper, wax crayons, stick-on foam letters
- pencil and eraser
- scissors
- utility, precision or X-Acto knife (use with help of an adult)
- white PVA glue such as LePage or Elmers brand name
- reusable plastic containers
- water-based paint like acrylic paint
- popsicle sticks
- small stiff brushes, old toothbrushes
- foam roller

- foam tray or piece of stiff plastic larger than foam roller for rolling out paint
- paper - computer paper, paperback pages, fabric with tight weave
- metal or wooden kitchen spoon
- soft rags (old t-shirts are great)

Process

Part One – Building your Collagraph Plate

1. Cut two or more rectangle pieces of non-corrugated cardboard of the same size for the base. These are called plates.
2. On a thin piece of non-corrugated cardboard like a food box board, draw a design of simple shapes (in this accompanying video, this is a bird-shape).
3. Tear or cut out the shapes.
4. Glue the shapes to one of the rectangle plates.
5. Glue various types of textured material to your plate, such as string, lace, yarn, other cardboard, fabric, netting, tinfoil, etc. Don't make the layers too thick, under 1/8 inch high.
6. When finished, brush glue over the entire collagraph plate including the edges to seal it. Let dry completely.
7. While the glue on your first plate is drying, you can make another plate using different textures.

Part One – Printing your Collagraph (You can do this another day.)

8. Cover your work surface with plastic, newspaper or a piece of rubber shelf liner.
9. Set up your workspace with paints, brushes, roller, roller tray, rags, water container, paper
10. You can put paint or ink on the plate in two different ways. With a foam roller OR with a small brush. This is called inking the plate. To start, use only one method. Later you can combine methods.

11. With the foam roller, roll out paint on a Styrofoam or plastic tray to evenly cover the roller.
12. **Method 1:** Roll paint over the collagraph plate until the surface is covered with an even layer. You may have to roll in more than one direction.
13. **Method 2:** Use a small stiff brush or old toothbrush to apply paint to your plate, making sure the paint gets into small spaces. You can use different paint colours on different areas, but you must work quickly so paint does not dry out.
14. Lay the painted plate on the plastic, newspaper or shelf liner.
15. Lay your blank paper face down on the painted plate.
16. To make the print, rub the back of the paper with the palm of your hand or back of a spoon. Use your fingers or the pointy end of a paintbrush to pick up paint in hard-to-reach spots.
17. Lift your print off the plate. Lay print on a clean surface or hang to dry.
18. Add more paint to your plate to print again.
19. You can print different colours with your plate without cleaning each time. Wipe with a soft cloth especially in crevices to pick up the excess and then apply paint again. The new colour may mix in some areas with leftover colour to give you an exciting new combination.
20. You can print another collagraph plate with a different colour over top of the first. No two prints from the same collagraph plate need to be the same.
21. Clean your hands, tools, and tabletop with warm soapy water. Do not put your plate in water but wipe with a damp soft cloth and leave to dry. You can use it to print again once it is dry.

Tips

- If your cardboard plate is too thin, double up by gluing 2 pieces together.
- Speed up drying time of glue with a hairdryer on a low warm setting.
- When building textures on your plate, run your hand lightly over the surface after glue has dried but before printing. If you feel any sharp pointy bits sticking up, lightly sand the area to smooth and cover with glue again. Sharp pointy bits may tear through your paper when printing or break off while inking.

- When gluing or inking, keep your brushes in a container with water between use to keep glue/paint from drying on brushes. Wipe excess water off brushes before using again.
 - Instead of white glue, you can use glossy acrylic medium to adhere the various textures or to seal the plate.
 - When using acrylic paints, work quickly as acrylics dry very fast.
 - You can dampen your paper lightly with a mister before printing. Blot with a clean towel to make sure there are no pools of water sitting on the damp paper. It may help you to get a richer colour on the print.
 - If your paper keeps moving around when rubbing during printing, lay a piece of wax paper between your hand and the paper to decrease the friction.
 - Use warm water when cleaning brushes, tools and surfaces of glue, acrylic paint, and mediums.
 - Acrylics soften in warm water. If the jar lid to acrylic paints won't open, run under a gentle stream of hot water for a few seconds.
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Resources

- Collagraphs and Mixed Media Printmaking, Brenda Hartill and Richard Clarke, Bloomsbury Publications, 2012
- Practical MixedMedia Printmaking techniques Sarah A Riley, Bloomsbury Publications
- Print with Collage & Stitch, Techniques for mixed media printmaking, Val Holmes