

Unit: Printmaking

Lesson: Simple Suminagashi Prints

Grade: 8

National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
5-8 Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts

Materials

Undo Suminagashi Marbling Ink
Zerkall™ Copperplate Paper,
Pan with plain tap water, at least 1/2" deep
Paper towels for blotting

History

The word “Suminagashi” translates literally as “spilled ink.” Centuries before the art of marbleizing papers was practiced in Western cultures, Japanese craftsmen created patterns by floating ink on the surface of water and transferring it to a sheet of paper. Because the nature of water is ever-changing and constantly moving, Suminagashi printers are viewed as great masters of control. Each monoprint is like a fingerprint — unique and unreproducible.

Preparation

1. Fill a plastic or aluminum pan, approximately 9" x 12" size with a minimum of 1/2" tap water.
2. Cut paper down to 7" x 10" pieces. Other papers may be used. For best results, use an unsized paper at least 80-lb weight

Process 1

1. In Japan, the traditional manner of creating Suminagashi prints involves making many concentric circles of two or more colors, sometimes hundreds in one print.

To make a traditional print, use two very small brushes and a small amount of two colors of Boku Undo ink. Load each brush with a different color. Touch one brush very gently to the surface of the water to apply the first color. Touch the second

brush inside the first ink float. Repeat, over and over again, alternating colors. Reload brushes when needed. Make a single set of concentric circles, or make a few on the surface of the water.

2. Make a print by laying unsized paper onto the surface of the water as flat as possible. The paper will absorb the ink immediately. Blot gently between two paper towels and allow to dry.

Process 2: Paper Dot Suminagashi

1. The Boku-Undo ink set contains a few punch-out dots of coated paper. These dots float on the surface of the water. Ink may be applied with a brush, dropper, or straight from the bottle. Apply one drop to the surface of a paper dot. The ink slides off the coated surface and onto the water in a thin, lightweight layer that floats around the dot— like an oil spill! Repeat by applying more dots of color. Experiment by disturbing the surface of the water with a paintbrush handle, toothpick or other tool. Swirl colors gently and pull plain water through.

2. Make a print by laying un-sized paper onto the surface of the water as flat as possible. The paper will absorb the ink immediately. Blot gently between two paper towels and allow to dry.

Vocabulary:

Marbling
Permanent ink
Concentric circles
Suminagashi
Monoprint

Hints for both processes:

1. Ink may react to additives in some public water sources. Test ink first to see if it floats easily on top the water. If it sinks too much, you may want to use bottled water.

2. Boku Undo colors are manufactured in Japan using modern formulations, so they're waterbased and rated AP nontoxic. They wash off hands easily with soap and water, but an apron is recommended to protect clothing.

3. Prints may be dried flat or hung up to dry. Once the ink is absorbed into the surface of un-sized paper, it won't rub off.

4. Boku-Undo inks will not stick if the paper is wet. Create masks by brushing letters

and designs onto the paper with water before printing. The area that was wet first will remain white.

