GET CREATIVE WITH

BAM
BOISE ART MUSEUM

Inspired by prints made by Gee’s Bend artists, from BAM’s Permanent Collection

Create a Quilt-Inspired Collagraph

Similarly to the way the Gee’s Bend artists repurpose fabric for their quilts, you will repurpose objects found in your home to create a quilt-inspired print. You will be making a collagraph, a print that uses the texture of a built-up surface to transfer the image, using ink, onto paper.

The Gee’s Bend quilt makers who have created prints found many similarities between quilt making and printmaking. They found that the graphic intensity of their quilts transferred quite successfully to prints. They also noticed that both art-making methods require the artist to maintain an overarching plan, though the end-result may not be immediately visible to the maker. The Gee’s Bend artists used a printmaking process called etching to create their prints, using their quilts as the basis for their printing plates.

As you plan your own design, consider the quilts that are significant to you. Do you have any significant memories of quilts? Do you have a friend or family member who makes quilts?

Materials
- Piece of Cardboard (As a base)
- Repurposed cardboard or fabric that you will cut and use to print.
- Water Based Printing ink OR Mod Podge, Acrylic Paint, and paintbrush
- Pencil
- White Watercolor Paper

Create a Quilt-Inspired Collagraph

Instructions

- Cut a piece of cardboard to be your base. This will be the size of your print.
- Create your plan. Use a pencil to draw your quilt-inspired pattern onto your cardboard. Geometric shapes will be easiest to cut out of cardboard.
- Once your plan is ready, cut your repurposed cardboard or fabric to match your design.
- Build-up your design from the base using your cut pieces of cardboard or fabric. If you choose, your pieces can overlap or stack on top of one another. The different heights of your design will create varying tonal effects on your print.
- Glue down your cardboard or fabric pieces to your cardboard base and let dry.
- Prepare your paper for printing by dampening your paper with water. Use a spray bottle or lightly paint water onto paper. Dab off excess water with rag or paper towel and set aside.
- Dab the printing ink onto your collagraph using a paintbrush or paper towel (avoid brushing the paint on to prevent damaging the layers of cardboard or fabric.) If you prefer to use Acrylic paint, first apply a layer of Mod Podge to reduce the porous nature of the cardboard. Once dry, you can apply acrylic paint.
- Place your dampened paper on top of your collagraph and press down. Rub the paper with your palms to pick up ink from all layers. You will start to see the watercolor paper becoming embossed with the texture of the cardboard or fabric below.
- Peel back the print starting at one corner.
- Re-ink your cardboard base to make more prints if you choose!

Questions to consider

- Has an older family member or friend taught you a tradition or skill?
- What kinds of traditions do you share (or want to share) with friends and family?