

Art & Activities / Rubber Stamping Activity



Overview:

Repetition, decoration, pattern and design are explored in this lesson using Warhol's illustration technique of rubber-stamping. Elementary students can embellish shoe drawings with pre-made stamps while older students can create their own stamps and symbols.

Grades: K-12

Subjects: Art, Graphic Arts, Printmaking

Pennsylvania State Standards:

Arts and Humanities:

9.1.A Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening:

1.6.8 E Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations

Objectives

- Students will differentiate between pattern and texture
- Students will discuss repetition and placement
- Students will determine cause and effect
- Students will form opinions
- Students will test ideas through illustration

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Andy Warhol, Unidentified Male (with Decorative Stamps), 1950s

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About the Art:

Andy Warhol used rubber stamps to create repeated patterns and symbols in his commercial work and in a few of his paintings. In the 1950s Warhol was hired by numerous companies to illustrate their products, and his drawings often combined rubber stamping with a blotted line technique. The images on his rubber stamps included birds, butterflies, fruit, and flowers. The finished work contained texture and pattern and was filled with a playfulness that altogether made the products more appealing.

In 1955, Warhol worked on one of the shoe industry's most sophisticated marketing campaigns when he became an illustrator for I. Miller and Sons Shoes. At the time, I. Miller was attempting to create a new image for itself and experimented with marketing strategies that made use of repetition to imprint their product on the minds of consumers. Stamping allowed Warhol to quickly create a variety of illustrations along a similar theme. He could alter the color and composition of the artworks, giving his clients a selection from which to choose. The experiment was extremely successful, and Warhol became known in the industry as the shoe person.

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Points of View:

Warhol provided a twentieth-century update on the traditional notion of theme and variation through his use of the in-finitely reproducible photographic silkscreen. The subtle permutations he achieved in these paintings through his varied placement of screens and the density of his ink owes much to his familiarity with the repetition he was frequently called on to use in producing variations on a single commercial theme. Although the commercial work differed in function from that of his Pop paintings, it demonstrated his ability to take the same idea and interpret it in a variety of ways, and it reveals something about the process of art making he later called “machine-like.”

Donna M. De Salvo, writer and curator, *Success is a job in New York...: The Early Art and Business of Andy Warhol*, The Grey Gallery and Study Center, New York University and The Carnegie Museums of Art, Pittsburgh, 1989, p. 4 & 8.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is a pattern? (Define with the class and ask for examples.) How many times do you have to repeat an image for it to be considered a pattern? Test your hypothesis by using stamps or cut paper. Discuss the number of repeats and the placement in different pattern examples
2. List objects that have natural patterns.
3. List objects that are decorated with patterns by designers.
4. What is texture? (Define with the class and ask for examples) What kinds of things have textures? Can a “flat” image have texture?
5. What is the difference between a pattern and a texture?
6. Why is decoration and pattern used in commercial design?

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Activity: Shoe Stamping Activity

Materials:

- Carbon paper
- Colored ink stamp pads
- Colored paper
- Examples of patterns and textures (magazine images, reproductions of artwork, fabric swatches)
- Glue
- Images for stamps
- Markers
- Pre-made stamps (from crafts store)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Watercolors
- * Linoleum cutters
- * Soft rubber for carving stamps
- * Blank Shoe Drawings (page 9 of this PDF)



* Creating the rubber stamps requires fine motor skills and the maturity to handle sharp carving tools safely. Teachers may wish to create these stamps ahead of class time – or create a separate unit on the manipulation of cutting tools for older elementary students. Stamps can also be purchased at any local crafts store.

Procedure:

To Make Shoe Drawings: (To be completed by teacher)

Make copies of the Blank Shoe Drawings attachment.

If you would like to make your own blank shoes, either trace or draw a shoe onto an 8 1/2"x11" sheet of paper. Magazine advertisements are good sources for images. You can also create the shoe drawings by using Warhol's blotted line technique. Photocopy the images onto sheets of 8 1/2"x11" paper.

To Make Stamps:

1. Choose an image from which to create a stamp. These should be simple objects or shapes to create textures and patterns. Some examples: stars, moons, stripes, dots, suns, fish, birds, flowers, etc. Using a photocopy machine, manipulate the image to the desired size. Stamps can be easily repeated when they are between 1" and 3" in length/width.
2. Place a piece of carbon paper, graphite side down, on a sheet of printing block. Put the copied image on top of the carbon paper and tape it down.
3. Trace the outline heavily with pencil, transferring the image onto the printing block. Using a marker, redraw and thicken the carbon lines on the block so you can easily see the lines you need to cut around. The width of the lines depends on the cutting skills of the students.
4. Using scissors, trim your stamp from the large portion of rubber before you carve out the design or image with the linoleum cutting tools. Stamps are most manageable if kept 1 1/2" to 4" in any direction.
5. Carve around the marker-drawn portion with a linoleum cutter. Remind students they are removing any part of the stamp that they do not want to print.

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Stamping Procedure:

1. Choose a shoe outline and begin to design your shoe. Commercial artists plan their illustrations by identifying their audience and brainstorming what is appealing to this group of people.
2. Ink the stamps on the various colored pads, then press the stamp within the shoe outline or onto the background.
3. Create repeated patterns; consider the spacing, overlapping, and quantity of ink on the stamp. After 2 or 3 repeats note how the ink fades or gets lighter. You may want to play with the stamps and experiment on a practice sheet before actually designing your shoe.
4. Use watercolors or markers to embellish your stamping. Try alternating layers of watercolor and stamping for an interesting effect. Students may also wish to stamp colored paper then collage these pieces into their shoe design.

Wrap-up:

Prior to the critique, students should answer the following questions in their journals:

- Describe how you used repetition on your shoe.
- Did you create a pattern? If so, describe your pattern.
- Did you create a texture? If so, describe your texture.
- How did you use color to enhance your shoe or background?
- Why did you pick certain colors?
- Who would wear your shoe? Why?
- List some adjectives you would use to describe your shoe.

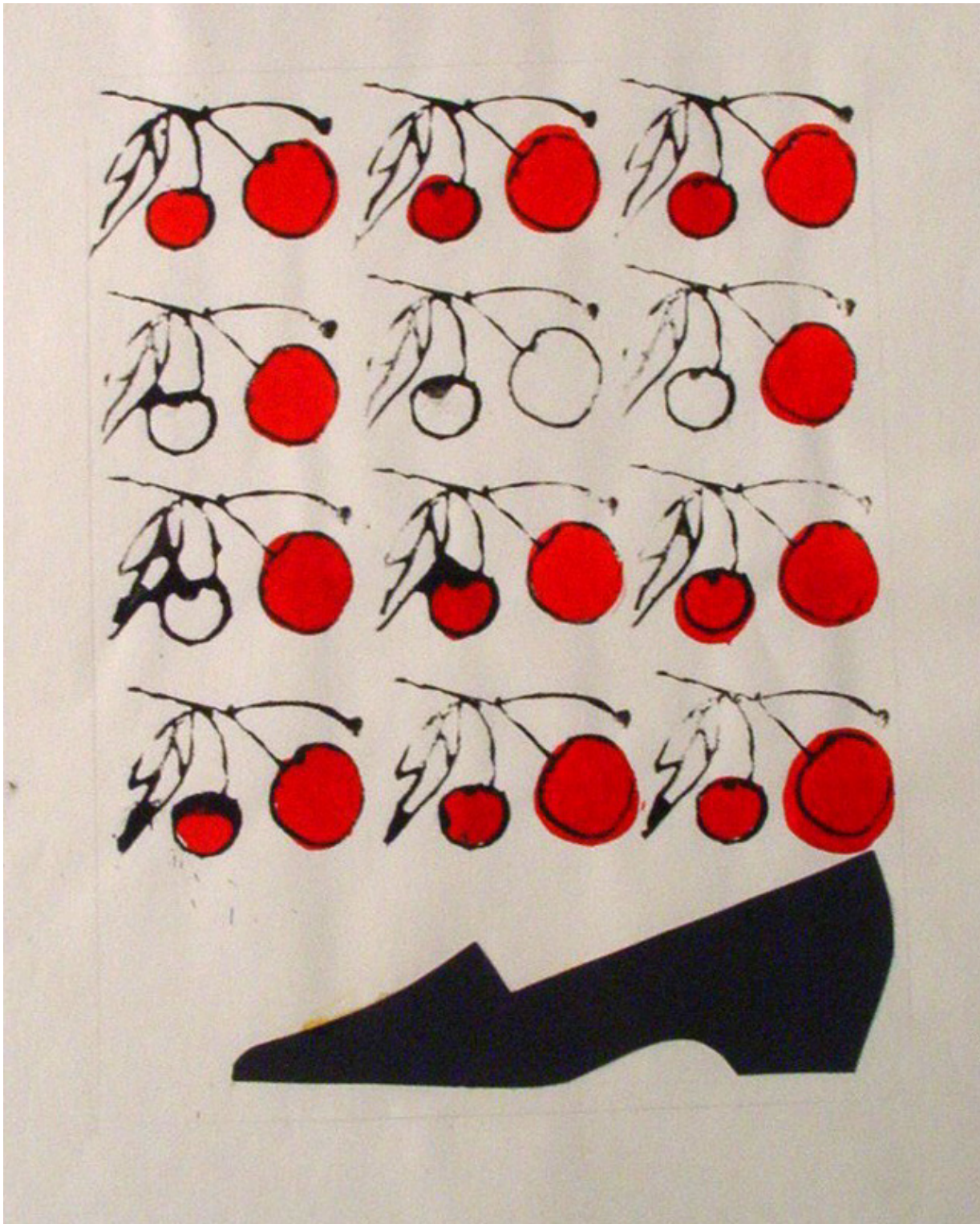
Students hang all of their shoe drawings on a wall in the classroom. Have students discuss their use of repetition, texture and pattern. Have students work together to rearrange the installation of shoes to create groupings of works with similar styles, colors, or textures. Discuss this new installation.



Andy Warhol, Unidentified Male (with Decorative Stamps), 1950s
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Andy Warhol
Shoe with Stamped Cherries, 1950s
ink, Dr. Martin's Aniline dye, and collage on paper
17 15/16 x 13 1/16 in. (45.6 x 33.2 cm.)
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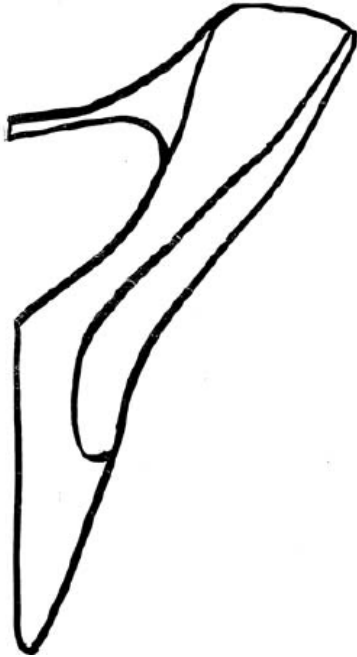
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Andy Warhol
(Stamped) Basket of Flowers, ca. 1958
ink, tempera, and Dr. Martin's Aniline dye on Strathmore paper
29 x 23 in. (73.7 x 58.4 cm.)
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Art & Activities / Rubber Stamping Activity / Handout: Shoe Blanks

Enlarge and Xerox:



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