


A SIMPLE GUIDE TO SCREEN PRINTING



Vidabeth Bensen and Barbara Forshag

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INTRODUCTION

When looking at an art print, most people do not know the difference between one that is handmade and one that is made on a color copier or a computer. An image that is copied or printed out is simply a duplicate of something already created. However, when someone cuts out a stencil and adheres it to a screen, or when a person paints a design on a screen, and then creates an image on paper or fabric using that design, the result is an original work of art that can be signed and numbered by the artist. This makes it more valuable than a machine-made reproduction.

Screen printing (also known as silk screening or serigraphy) is a versatile process that can be used to integrate the arts and academics in the classroom. It can be used to raise funds for school programs and to give students a new and interesting medium to pursue in school and on their own.

Many teachers, both art teachers and regular classroom teachers, would like to use screen printing in their classrooms as a way to enrich their curriculum and to introduce a new and exciting medium to their students. However, many of them feel that there's no way they can manage to teach it in a classroom. The books or websites that they have reviewed make the process too complicated and use too many expensive materials for them to try it on their own.

This book teaches an easy way to make original multiples of students' work. During many years of teaching students in the classroom and working with teachers, we have discovered simple methods of screen printing. We have found many shortcuts, and undoubtedly you will find others. Once mastered, screen printing will allow the "artist" in you and your students to come to the surface.

Screen printing can provide an enjoyable activity for years to come. We hope that this book will enable you and your students to make screen prints successfully.

HAPPY PRINTING!

Vidabeth and Barbara



CHAPTER 1.

AN OVERVIEW OF SCREEN PRINTING

Screen printing (also known as silk screening and serigraphy) was invented by the Chinese centuries ago and was originally known as *silk screen printing* because it involved silk fabric, which was stretched across a frame to create a screen. Because few printmakers use silk anymore, the process is now known by the more generic term of *screen printing*. Today screens are usually made by stretching polyester tightly across a wooden frame. Serigraphy is another name for screen printing and typically refers to the process used by artists for making fine art prints.

Commercially, screen printing is used for printing cards, posters, textiles, t-shirts, and hundreds of other products. Almost any surface can be printed on, and with the right set-up, hundreds of multiples can be produced in a short period of time.

Screen printing is basically a stenciling process. There are several different ways of preparing a screen for printing, but this book concentrates on the paper stencil method and the drawing fluid/screen filler method. Both of these methods use simple equipment and can be used with any age group in any setting. Both methods are described in this book; choose the method that works best for you.



CHAPTER 4.

THE PAPER STENCIL METHOD

There are several methods of screen printing. However, two of them in particular are simple and use relatively inexpensive materials; those are the two that are discussed in this book. This chapter explains the paper stencil method. Chapter 5 explains the drawing fluid/screen filler method. Either method will work as well as the other. Complete the steps in either chapter to prepare for the screen printing process, and then proceed to Chapter 6 to continue on to the actual screen printing.

Note that the instructions for both of these methods are for printing using one color only. To use multiple colors, read this chapter (or Chapter 5) first, then Chapter 6 about the printing process, and then see Chapter 9, which explains how to adapt these two methods for printing two or more colors.



Materials Needed

- ✓ Scrap paper
- ✓ Fine-tipped markers
- ✓ Masking tape
- ✓ Freezer paper or 100% rag marker paper
- ✓ Precision knives or scissors
- ✓ Cutting boards or cardboard
- ✓ Pencils
- ✓ Screens

Designing the Print

When you are creating your design to be screen printed, there are a few pointers to keep in mind. Simple shapes are best, no matter what you plan to print on. T-shirt and poster designs must be bold so that they can be seen from a distance. The following criteria will determine the type of design to create when using paper stencils:

- Purpose of print (t-shirts, cards, banners, posters, etc.)
- Size of print
- Complexity of design
- Number of colors in design



- Number of prints needed
- Printing area available in classroom or studio
- Equipment available

Many students who are artistic take pride in making detailed drawings of their subject matter, but these types of drawings do not lend themselves well to screen printed designs, especially when using the paper stencil method. It can be difficult to break these students away from this style of art. Encourage them to work with large areas of color as opposed to the pencil and marker lines they prefer. Geometric shapes, cutouts, shadows, and silhouettes are good examples of the types of drawings best suited for paper stencils.

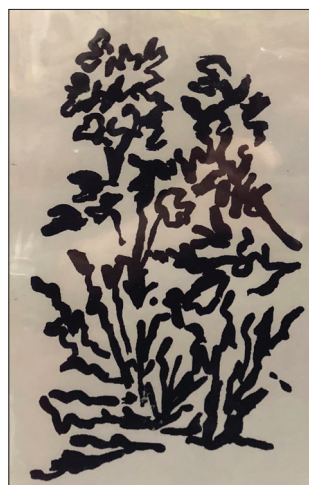
A misconception about screen printing is that letters must be done backwards in order to print forwards. They do not. Students can create their letters and numbers just as they always write them, and they will be fine when they are printed. When including letters or numbers in prints, make sure to have students use cartoon-style or block fonts as opposed to thin pencil lines. No matter what type of stencil they will be using, thick, bold shapes are best.

Note: If you are printing on t-shirts and will want to sign your design, you may want to include your signature or initials in your image. See Chapter 8 for more information on signing and numbering prints.

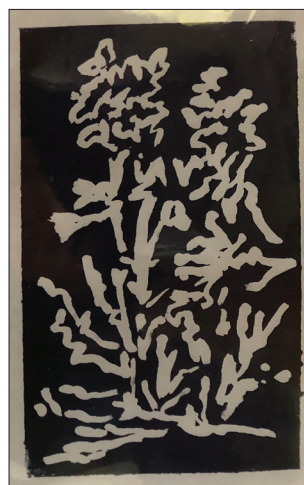
1. Make several drawings on scrap paper of the design to be printed until you decide on a final version. If you will be printing on paper, make sure that your image is small enough to enable you to leave a margin that is at least one inch wide all the way around the paper (although the margin could be much greater if you choose a smaller image). To facilitate the printing process later, it will be helpful if you draw your final design on paper that is the same size as the good paper that you will eventually print on. If you will be printing on t-shirts, simply make sure that the design will fit well on the shirt.
2. Decide whether the print will be positive or negative. In a positive print, the design itself will be printed. In a negative print, the area around the design will be printed.

Vidabeth's Views

Students tend to make one drawing and be done. However, most artists make many sketches before they are completely satisfied with their drawings. Tell the students to get creative and to keep trying out ideas.



Positive



Negative