Learning the Frottage Technique

Lesson plan prepared by Emma Hoch, Gallery Animator for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Suggested Grade/Age Levels

Recommended for ages 4+ with assistance from parent/guardian

Introduction

This activity, which uses the frottage technique, is inspired by contemporary artist Charley Young's drawings *Shroud: The Macara Barnstead Building*. Frottage is a direct rubbing technique that records the specific texture of an object underneath paper or fabric. It will be surprising to see all the different textures that emerge from surfaces in and around your house.

The frottage technique is something that Charley often uses in her practise. These artworks are four drawings that were plans of a large site-specific artwork Charley created using the frottage technique to make a record the front of the 185 years old Macara Barnstead Building in Halifax. Using fabric and printmaking ink, Charley did a direct rubbing of the entire front of the historic building to record the unique textures of what it looked like before it was demolished.

Left: **Charley Young**, *Shroud : The Macara Barnstead Building 1*, 2013. Pencil crayon, plastic sheeting, thread, ink and image transfer on Somerset paper. 57.0 x 75.8 cm; Right: **Charley Young**, *Shroud : The Macara Barnstead Building 2*, 2013. Pencil crayon, mylar, thread, ink and image transfer on Somerset paper. 57.0 x 75.8 cm.
Both: Purchased with a gift from Mark Bursey and Jane Wells, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2018

Left: **Charley Young**, *Shroud : The Macara Barnstead Building 3*, 2013. Pencil crayon, ink and image transfer on Somerset paper. 57.0 x 75.8 cm; Right: **Charley Young**, *Shroud : The Macara Barnstead Building 4*, 2013. Pencil crayon, mylar, thread, ink and image transfer on Somerset paper. 57.0 x 75.8 cm. Both: Purchased with a gift from Mark Bursey and Jane Wells, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2018

Set Up

- Working on a table top of flat surface

- Materials ready to use

- If using crayons – removing the paper around each crayon

Materials

- Paper
    - scrap paper, computer paper, construction paper. Paper that isn't too thin or thick
- Pencil, pencil crayons or crayons
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Materials from around the house that have different textures
    - Many can be found in your kitchen

Process

1. Have your paper ready to the size you want. You can cut the paper to smaller size or use it full size sheet. On each paper, you can create several small rubbings or one large one.
   - You can use darker paper, but you will need to use a lighter drawing device for the texture to be noticeable
2. When using your drawing device hold it on its side to allow for there to be more surface area to rub over the texture.
3. With your texture materials close by select one and place your piece of paper over the area that you want to rub the texture and hold the paper firmly against it.
   - For some materials work best on a tabletop
   - For some textures, you will need to do the rubbing where they are - like the siding of your house, your floor or the sidewalk. When doing rubbings in and around the house it is best to have a parent/guardian help choose the best surfaces
4. Start rubbing your drawing device back and forth over the paper.
   - You can experiment by using different colours for your rubbings. You may want to layer different rubbings on top of each other or repeat the same rubbing several times using a different colour layered over top.
   - You can try pressing lightly or harder over the texture to see the different results.

5. Experiment with as many surfaces as you can find! Some things may not show up as much as hoped and some may surprise you.
6. Once several different rubbings have been made bring them back to a tabletop to look at. You may start to see an image emerge from the rubbings
7. Cut and tape or glue your rubbings together to make an image, such as a building, landscape, creature or place. You might be inspired by Charley Young's drawings and want to create a city building!

Resources

http://charleyyoung.com/shroud

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