

## Exploring and developing as an artist:

**Printmaking.** These pages have some ideas for you to think about when you are planning your ideas and making your prints.

### Resources: What you might use

Books	Magazines	Art Exhibitions
Other artists at your art centre	Trainer	Internet / Video/TV
Art Centre Manager	Drawing or Design books	Cultural designs or stories
Museum Collections	Rules for protecting your rights	Marketing Information and plans

## IMPORTANT: be aware of all your rights

There are special laws to protect yours and your community's designs, ideas, writing, stories and arts. These laws say that intellectual property, moral rights and copyright from your arts, stories and ideas belong to you.

You may agree to let other people use some of them. If you do, they have to give you a contract with a list of what they will use, how it will look or sound, why they are using it and what fee you will be paid. Your art centre manager can help you with the contract and manage the fee for you. Your art centre will need to have:

- protocols for the adaptation of work by others : **This protects the moral right.**
- extent to which the work may be used: **This protects the copyright.**
- procedures for seeking permission to use the work of others, including systems for the administration of copyright: **Your art centre can do this for you , and so can other organizations. This includes making a contract.**

The contract describes all of your rights and everything that you agree to being used. It includes the fees and a timeframe for how long the agreement is in place.

You and your art centre manager might want to check things through with Arts Law center: <http://www.artslaw.com.au/Indigenous/> or Phone them: 1800 221 457

## Techniques for printing

Before you start printmaking, you can get ideas about how other people have used their art skills and about how prints can look.

Find out what techniques you could use. This depends on some of these questions:

- What sort of printmaking studio do you have access to?
- Do you have a printing press to use?
- What printing materials can you use?
- What can you print onto?

You can still make lino prints, collograph prints and mono prints without access to a printing press. You can also print onto materials like shirts, wood, metal sheet, ceramics etc.

Mono prints are made by putting inks onto a flat, smooth surface – like glass or Perspex. You can paint, roll, smudge or rub the inks on. You can scratch lines into the ink and wipe, brush or wash ink away. Whatever you end up with on the smooth surface can be transferred onto paper by applying pressure to the back of the paper with your hands, a roller, a press or a barren – an object that you ‘polish’ across the back of the print to apply pressure to the surface and pick up the ink.

Lino prints can also be printed with a barren – an object that you ‘polish’ across the back of the print to apply pressure to the surface and pick up the ink. Some barrens are made of bamboo and some of ball bearings. Some times the back of a large kitchen spoon does the same job!

Collograph prints are made by building textures up onto a board – usually cardboard. Often the complete board is coated with shellac before it is inked up, so it can be cleaned and re-used. You can print from anything really – even grass or hair, if you want to. Some beautiful collographs are made using PVA glue to draw thick lines onto cardboard. Usually collographs are printed using a press.

Investigate these techniques more by doing some research on the internet, through a library or by asking other artists or your trainer to show you some of them.

Trying things out helps to find your own expressive marks and also it shows you have enough knowledge to improvise – to try your own ideas in your own way.

## Research

Do research into other people's art work. Maybe your art centre has prints other people have done. If you can go onto the internet, you can look at print art by artists from all over the world.

Research may involve:

- looking for information in books, journals, newspapers.
- visiting exhibitions, museums, print workshops.
- experimenting with techniques and materials.
- listening to lectures and talks.
- asking people with relevant expertise.

You might make some little drawings, or write some words or tell you trainer, mentor, manager, or friend about what you have seen, what you liked, why you liked it, and how you might use the idea.

You can write down or tell others what your new ideas are about, so that you can remember later on, when you start to make your own design.

Your research might include asking at galleries to see what is selling well. How much does it sell for? What sizes, colours, shapes, designs, language groups or artists sell well in various places. It is a big market place and finding the right way to sell your work can take some time and some careful planning.

Your research might include looking at a colour wheel to decide what tones, tints and colours will make your print good.

## Concept

The idea you have, the feeling or the image that guides your design can be called your concept. The concept can be in your own mind and may be guided by:

- the subject matter or theme for the prints. Perhaps the body identity, land and place, politics, culture, social issues or spiritual concerns.
- where the work fits in relation to other artists around you, your history, your art making.
- the vision of the image: its colours, form and design.

It helps to make some drawings and notes about your concept. That way you get more ideas of how to make your print in layers, colours, textures, lines and shapes – before you begin.

## Process

Working your concept into a print might include:

- no change to the first drawings or vision in your mind.
- changing things you drew in response to the kind of printing techniques you will use.
- changing the techniques or the concept altogether.
- changing the vision of the image: its colours, form and design.

## Body of Works

When you make a print, it sits within a 'body' of works. That might be all your prints from years of printmaking, or the art centre's body of work. It might even be within the tradition of Australian printmaking.

- Knowing what 'body' of work surrounds yours, relates closely to it, or shares similarities with it, means you can identify the context.

The context might be about history or culture, language or place. It might be about politics. Talk to other people about the context of your work, and think about how your research has added to placing your work in its context.