

station gallery arnold shives: lino block printing

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INFORMATION TO SPARK THINKING ABOUT ART



facts:

brayers (rollers) used in lino block

Linocut was developed in the 20th century. Two of the most famous artists to use it were Picasso and Henri Matisse.

Due to ease of use, linocut is often used in schools to introduce students to printmaking. Did you know that Station Gallery has a school program, A is for Art for visiting students to try out printmaking?

feature work from our Permanent Collection

The artist Arnold Shives was born a couple of days after Christmas in 1943. He continues to live in Vancouver, the place of his birth. He is very much influenced by the sea and the mountains as we can see in his print of Mount Garibaldi. It was during his final year of high school and his two years at the University of British Columbia that he became acquainted with painter Gordon Smith. After returning to Vancouver, Shives continued to paint and in the early 70s he devoted himself to intaglio and relief printmaking. In 1975, he had a successful exhibition at Toronto's Pollack Gallery; he cites this show as marking a turning point in his career. For the last 35 years he has been exhibiting nationally and internationally.

"The Printmaker is a most peculiar being. S/he delights in deferred gratification and in doing what does not come naturally. S/he takes pleasure in working backward or in opposites. Left is right. Right is left. Backward is forward. The Printmaker must see at least two sides to every question."

Jules Heller

Process: What is Linocut?

Linocut is a printmaking technique, similar to a woodcut in which a sheet of linoleum (sometimes mounted on a wooden block) is used for the relief surface. A design is cut into the linoleum surface with a sharp knife, V-shaped chisel or gouge, with the raised (uncarved) areas representing a reversal (mirror image) of the parts to show printed. The linoleum sheet is inked with a roller (called a brayer), and then impressed onto paper or fabric. The actual printing can be done by hand or with a press. The advantage of lino cut is the softness of the materials and thus the ease with which it can be cut. It is also especially suitable for bold, decorative designs.

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feature work

Did you know that Canada has active volcanoes? Mount Garibaldi is one of the most recognized peaks of the Coast Mountain range just outside of Vancouver. And, yes, the mountain is a well-known volcano, probably the most famous in BC.

This print is based on two trips the artist made to that mountain in October, 1974. He climbed up the glacier on the west side of the mountain. He recalls: "it was a warm, cloudless day and we reached the summit without difficulty and were back at my car in eight hours." The journey was a piece of cake—so he returned several weeks later to do it again. This time things were different. The weather deteriorated. Sleet and rain menaced their every move. In a couple of places they broke through hidden crevasses in the glacier.

This print is based on the artist's perilous experiences and the sketches and photos he took on his journey. Contours swerve and flow throughout the piece. Sticking out of the glacier is a *nunatak*, which is an exposed, often rocky element of a ridge, mountain, or peak not covered with ice or snow within (or at the edge of) an ice field or glacier.



Mount Garibaldi
1975

linoblock on rice paper
74 x 56 cm
Gift of Geraldine Davis, 2000

curriculum questions

Where did your eye start in viewing this print?

What colours has the artist used in this artwork?

Can you point to the shapes that seem to be at the front? What part of the artwork is the most important?

curriculum link

Grade 1, Principle of Design Focus : Contrast (from The Ontario Curriculum for The Arts 2009)

Contrast: occurs when there is some change in value in a composition. Contrast shows the difference between shapes and can be used as a background to bring objects out and forward in a piece of artwork. The key to working with contrast is to make sure the differences are obvious. Contrast adds interest and emphasizes what is important.