Fish Prints with CBTV Live

Chapter 1 - Chapter 1
Fish Prints
(bright upbeat music) - Hey, everybody, welcome to "Creativebug." We're coming at you live like we always do on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I'm Courtney. - I'm faith. - You probably recognize us 'cause we're often in this room showing you how to make something. Of course, because we're live, that means you can write in and ask questions, and I think you guys are gonna have a lot of questions about this one. - It's a weird one. - Have you ever done this technique before? - I did this at at summer camp, I think with some trout. - So, this technique is called gyotaku. I hope I'm pronouncing that right. And this is a traditional Japanese fish-printing technique. It was developed in the 1800s as a way for fishermen to document what they caught, and then it developed into its own art form on its own. So, it's a time-honored tradition. It's a little bit different than what we normally bring to you live. But the first time I did this, was actually at the San Francisco Center for the book on Earth Day. They had research octopi and I did like 12-foot long prints. And it was really fun and amazing. - It was amazing. - We're gonna scale it back so that it fits in your kitchen. And what we have here, are some fish that I picked up at my local market. And I based my purchases just on beauty, so I can't tell you the names of all these fish. So, I've got two that I liked the fins, some little baby octopus, which I think actually they were marinated, so I think this is a delicacy, and sardines. These are unfortunately missing their tails because they came that way. So, purchase some fish. If you happen to have a fish that you caught as a child and it's sitting in your freezer for a decade, like the only fish I ever caught in my entire life. - It's a really good idea. - Was sitting in the back of my parents' freezer for about 20 years. - Really? - Yeah. - Did you make a print out it? - They like tender cheese. - How did it thaw? - No, it got dumped in high school. - Oh, good. - Yeah. Okay. (chuckles) It's reassuring. - So, we're gonna show you how to print these. And the first key, is make sure that they're clean, and then they have to be really dry. So, what are you gonna print first? Let's pick an object to print and then we'll dry it off. - [Faith] I think I want that guy. - [Courtney] Okay, I'll do this fish. So, paper towels, baby wipes, these are very handy things. You could use gloves if you want. We're working on freezer paper. And you can do this on a cookie sheet. I'm working on freezer paper because the glossy side is up and I can wipe it down, which means I can apply my paint and I can do my printing on the same surface. And like I said, a cookie sheet would work fine too. - [Faith] I'm using gloves 'cause I have a bandaid, and also because I never pass up an opportunity to look like a mime. - I love it. I, despite being a vegetarian for most of my life, since I was a kid, actually. I was the first person in my junior high class when we were dissecting frogs to take off my gloves. - Really? - Yeah. 'Cause I couldn't feel it. I was like, what's the point of this? I can't even tell what's happening. (chuckles) Feels like plastic. - [Faith] Speaking of being a vegetarian, of course there is the ethical issue of printing with fish. - Right. This is not an easy one. I have to say, because I am a vegetarian, I find it okay to, once in a blue moon, maybe once every five or six years, spend a few dollars for investigating an interesting art technique that has a time-honored tradition. I think it's also a really cool way to be in touch with nature in a different way rather than just eating it. I feel like we're very detached from our natural surroundings, so this is an interesting way to get in there. I don't have to catch the fish, they're already dead. And it's kind of an interesting concept. - I like thinking of this process kind of the same way you do like vintage taxidermy where the beauty of the animal gets to last for a lot longer than the life of the animal. -

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Exactly, totally. Yeah, I think that's a good way to think about it. We're using just folk-art paint, you can use any craft paint. You could experiment with some printmaking ink, you could do oil-based or water-based. It's really your preference what the next step of this print is for. And I'm just using a foam brush, and I'm applying it. - [Faith] It's so weird. (laughing) - It is strange. - It's a really odd process. - [Courtney] In this case, you don't want it to be too thick. So, I'm gonna try to brush on a good amount of paint, but then I might try to brush some of it away. And like I said, I'm just using a foam brush. You want your fish to be as clean and as dry as possible. Actually, this would be really fun to do the first print like that where you're painting around it to create its silhouette. - [Faith] Ooh. - [Courtney] It could be kind of interesting. So, let's see, I kind of wanna buff off some of this. And really, a lot of this is about experimentation. It depends on how thick your paints are, what kind of fish you're using. You could use kind of makeup-applicator sponges. I'm gonna try to remove some of my brush strokes here. So, I don't want that to show up as much, I just want a nice thin layer. - [Faith] Oh, you're buffing it off with-- - [Courtney] A little, just a bit of paper towel. I'm gonna see how it goes. - [Faith] Okay. - [Courtney] All right, I'm gonna carefully just move this off back to my plate, and I'm gonna wipe down this surface so I can actually print on the surface also. So, I'm just removing all that extra paint. You do use quite a bit of baby wipes and paper towel for this process, and that's just 'cause we're all working in one station. If you were at home, you could make multiple stations. All right, carefully lay this back down. You could try this with copy paper. We're gonna use a kozo paper, which is a mulberry paper. It's a traditional printmaking paper. You can find this on a roll or in sheets in any art supply store that sells Japanese calligraphy supplies. - [Faith] And this is good 'cause it's very flexible paper, it's also durable. - Yeah. - [Faith] And so, we're getting it kind of wet with the fish. If you have a guts situation, this paper will hold up well to that. - [Courtney] Yes. Faith is a master book binder as well, so she knows a lot about paper and all of the rigors you can put it through. Actually, how's your daily challenge going, Faith? - [Faith] Oh my gosh, it's a blast. I'm having such a good time. People are submitting some really beautiful images of their spreads, and I'm really gonna miss it when it's gone. - I know, right? - I'm gonna miss watching myself every day. But Courtney reminded me this morning that there's always mirrors. (Courtney chuckling) - If you haven't checked out Faith's daily challenges, it's pretty awesome. It's a full month of bookmaking techniques, including popups and some other fun stuff. There's actually one of the techniques I'm dying to do. I've seen a little bit more time. - Which one? - The popups. - Oh. - I have a really specific concept, ever since somebody filmed it. - You do? - Yeah. - [Faith] Awesome. - [Courtney] I am smoothing over with my kozo paper onto my fish, and I'm just hand printing this. You're not using a brayer or anything else. Because there are so many bumps, lumps, and so forth, you need to do this. It does wrinkle the paper, that's fine, that's part of the process. And I'm gonna peel it away. (Courtney gasps) Cool. That's so cool. - [Faith] That's really dreamy. - [Courtney] You don't need to wipe off your fish necessarily. Let's just see how that came out. - [Director] All right, we have a couple of questions. - Yeah. - First one, Liana-- - [Courtney] Hi, Liana. - [Director] Is asking, would you leave the scales on or take them off? - The scales? Liana's asking do you leave the scales on or do you take them off? You leave the fish as it comes. So, don't get a prepared fish that has, actually, where I went when I went to buy this fish, the gentleman cut off the tail and fins and I had to try to communicate in hand gestures, don't cut off the tail, it's actually what I need it for. Because often, butcher shops or fish shops will prep a fish for you for eating. And because we're printing it, we want it as intact as possible. Is this morbid? But I feel like this would be a good way to memorialize your goldfish, like your fair goldfish. - That's a great idea. - Do a little fish print? - Yeah. - These are also monoprints, which means they're one of a kind. You can only pull this

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exact print once, even if you're using the same fish to print over and over and over. I was looking up this technique, like I mentioned, it's called gyotaku. - [Faith] Look at that. - Oh, I love that texture. - It's so weird. - It's really cool. - Aw. - [Courtney] I love that. Gyotaku, there are a lot of artists who actually specialize in this. And so, once they print, then they go on further to add detail with colored pencil to make it look like the actual fish. I'm printing this in purple, but I could, with different foam brushes, apply paint to match the color of the fish itself as it is in real life. And so, I've seen some like really delicate techniques for applying your paint so that it looks even more like the original fish. - [Faith] I have to show you something. This is what I blotted it with. - Ooh, that's even cooler. - [Faith] So, I'm not gonna blotter the next time. - That's really cool. And I think that this is a really, you get into the crevices a little bit more. - Oh my god, I love that. - [Faith] Maybe next time let's try it on fabric. - [Courtney] Yeah. This is the Viva paper towel, they're a lot like fabric. And actually, I bet you mow Saha would love that. You know how she takes like the paper towel and saves like every little scrap of paper? - [Faith] I'm not gonna throw it out. - That's really cool. - Okay, next question. Colleen wants to know, will the paper smell bad later? - Good question. Colleen's asking, will the paper smell bad later? And this is where your preparatory work comes in. Really important. You wanna clean these as best you can, you want to dry them as best you can, and that will help. There is a little bit of an odor. But if you leave it out in your backyard, or just over a couple of days, the smell will dissipate, for sure. Especially, buy fresh fish. Make sure you're buying fresh fish. When I did the giant-squid print, it was a little smelly, but it was fine after a couple days. All right, cleaning off this one. You can buy a single octopus leg. This is gonna be a little tricky to print just because it's so thick, and to get it to life flat. So, I might have to muscle it a little bit and see what happens. - It's gonna be really odd. - I am trying to get it as dry as possible. I saw some complicated techniques where people pin things onto boards and so forth, but we're just gonna just press it into place and see how well it does. - [Faith] I'm gonna try this little itty bitty one. - Oh. - I'm gonna do a couple. I'm gonna do a group scene. - [Courtney] I love it. - [Faith] If you are printing this on fabric, you would probably want to use a fabric paint or fabric ink. - Yes. Totally. - As my sister says her friend has a bunch of t-shirts covered in fish. - [Courtney] That's awesome. Your sister Gracie? - [Faith] Yes. Hi, Grace. - [Courtney] Hi, Gracie. We miss you, come visit us. Actually, because this guy is so big, I could use this like a rubber stamp and print it. Instead of covering it in paint, I can press it down onto the paper, let's try it. These live shoots are all about experimentation, so why not? - [Faith] I would say if you're even remotely curious, you must give it a try 'cause it's very unusual and a little bit disturbing. And you know, art should be challenging. - [Courtney] Yeah. All right, this is like a three-handed situation. - [Faith] Do you need my help? - [Courtney] No, no, I'm good, I'm good, I'm good. Okay, here we go. Like a rubber stamp. Little octopus. - [Faith] Oh, wow. (Courtney gasps) Oh, that's so odd. - Oh, so cool. I didn't get all the way to the end, but oh, that's awesome. - It's amazing. - [Courtney] It's a super interesting pattern. - [Faith] And this paper would definitely be great for using later because it's just plain old texture. - Yeah. - And you would have no idea of knowing it's actually made-- - That's octopus arm. - [Faith] With a leg. - [Courtney] Yeah, tentacle. - [Faith] Tentacle. - [Courtney] I know I said arm, you said leg. Tentacle. - [Faith] We don't know what we're talking about, because we're not ethologists. Right? - Is that right though? - I'm not sure. - A fish expert? Not that an octopus is a fish. - [Faith] Oh my, I just keep getting wronger and wronger. - [Courtney] No, no, it's okay. Yeah, it's super interesting. You get over the squeamishness. Trust me, you do. At first, I was like, ugh, I don't really wanna touch these things, especially since I don't eat them. But then I'm like, this is cool and really strange and fun. - [Faith] I'm a little bit hoarding my painted fish. I want a bunch of 'em. (Courtney Gasps) - [Courtney] Oh, yeah, that's

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literally a school of fish. - Yeah. Yeah, I think that's cool. Let's do a little guy. Because this is on a roll, it's rolling up on me. So, I'm actually just gonna keep printing on the same page. I'm gonna try one of these small guys. - [Faith] Also, if you're curious if it smells like fish in here, oh yes. - [Courtney] It does, but fresh fish, actually. It doesn't smell any worse than Fisherman's Wharf. - [Faith] And the little octopi smell like sesame because they were pre-seasoned, which is another reason why you should be sure to wash your fish after you bring them home. - [Courtney] Yeah. Okay, let's do, I'm painting liberally here. I'm not gonna worry. - [Director] Okay, interesting comment from Phil Phil Rushmere. - Oh, Phil. - Hey, Phil. - [Director] Phil first asked if you could use this technique on something other than fish. - Yes. - So, I asked Phil, do you need other objects for other animal parts? And he said that in the UK, you can actually buy a heart from a butcher. - Ooh. - Yes. Phil's asking, can you do this technique with other things? The answer is, yes. You can make a monoprint with almost any object as long as you're okay inking it. So, something that you might see more often than fish prints are leaf prints, different textures in nature. And when I, I don't think I mentioned that gyotaku actually means fish rubbing. So, if you think about a plant rubbing, that's something that's more common. And as far as the beef heart, oh yeah, look at that one. It's cool. - It's so wild. - It's got this little like movement. As far as the beef heart, I probably shouldn't say this on live television. But when I was living in France, I did study abroad, and you could buy a beef heart for a euro. And we used it in a photo shoot, actually. - What was the photo shoot? - It was with my friend, Alicia. - That sounds very-- - It was on a plate. It was just a prop. - Intense. Oh. - It was a prop. - A prop heart. - But we were so, as Americans, I was like, whoa, we could buy a heart for a Euro, one Euro, which is actually a little-- - That's not a lot for a heart. - I know. So, to be honest though, I don't think a beef heart would give you a very clean impression. The nice thing about the fish and the sea creatures is the scales, and that's where you get some really nice fine texture. We are being a little heavy handed with this. I think if we were master fish printers, you would see even more detail in the scales. And that's really the beauty of this monoprinting technique. But you should try it and let us know. All right, I haven't tried the sardine, or maybe I wanna try this fish one more time. - [Faith] The thing with the little fish, is it's harder to transport them without feeling like you're smudging the paint off. - Yeah, that is trickier. - Okay. We're trying our tiny school. - [Courtney] And some fish naturally have more moisture in them, so they might be harder to print. - [Faith] If You get yourself a damn fish? - [Courtney] Dry it off. Phil is an Instagram friend, yeah? - [Faith] Yes, and Phil's making some beautiful book art spreads. - [Courtney] I know, for Faith's daily challenge, I've seen Phil's stuff a lot. So, thanks for tuning into live shoot, Phil. - [Faith] Okay, here's my school. (Faith gasping) Ooh. - [Courtney] Oh, that's cool, though. That's awesome, I love the shape. You don't get as much of the scales. But if you get really close, you can see some of it, and you can add some more tails. - [Faith] Yeah. - [Courtney] But like you said earlier, like with the octopus tentacle, you could just use it as texture. Right? - [Faith] Sure. - [Courtney] Let me show you a few others, because we're quickly running outta room. I was gonna show you a couple of things. - [Faith] Are we. - [Courtney] This is a tiny baby octopus that printed just kind of okay. But I went back in with colored pencil just to add to that, because I had seen that technique, I thought that was interesting. Of course, this is not a scientific approach to this, but it is kind of a fun way to get the actual texture of the animal. I did a large octopus that I picked up at my local grocery store. - [Faith] That is amazing. - And it looks like something from "Alien," but it's still really fun and interesting. I kept moving these tentacles around to get different configurations, which was really fun. Just like fish is doing, ah, fish. Just like faith is doing with her fish, you can do a school of fish, this is two fish. And you can see a little bit more texture in detail on the scales here. I hadn't perfected my painting

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system, so I'm missing a little bit there. But you can really experiment with your materials and with your types of printing, experiment with different types of paints. And you could even try some printmaking inks. Remember I said you could use water-based or oil-based? We're printing on both regular paper and also the kozo paper and paper towel. - Or fish. - [Courtney] I think Faith is liking the paper towel the best. - Oh, we did have, this morning when we were washing off the fish, a couple people with whom we share an office, asks, are you going to eat them afterwards? We would not recommend this. - Yeah, because we're using craft paint, even if you wash it really well. Anything that you don't touch with paint, you could try eating. - [Faith] And why bother? - But actually Liana asked, could you do this with, not color, gel food coloring? - Oh. - And why not? Try that, because then you could wash it off and eat it. Although, it might turn your mouth pink. Food glowing is pretty intense. - That's pretty nutty. - You should try it. (Faith laughing) - And if you do try it, please let us know. - Yeah, we'd love to hear more about it. - We'd love to see your pictures. - Thanks for tuning in live, and we'll see you next week. (bright upbeat music)

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