Botanical Monoprinted Table Decor with CBTV Live

Chapter 1 - Chapter 1
Botanical Monoprinted Table Decor
^(upbeat music) - Hey everybody. Welcome to Creativebug. We're coming at you live like we always do on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but I guess we won't be coming to you live this Thursday because it's Thanksgiving. Can you believe it? I don't know how it's already November. I wanted to think about what will be a fun craft or activity for Thanksgiving. And I probably mentioned this on other live shoots and classes before. That at my house the thing that I'm always responsible for when we have a family meal is the table decor. It's one of the best that I love the most. It's something that my mom really appreciates when I put something together. It could be an arrangement. It could be interesting place cards. It could be anything. One year I did a paper leaf centerpiece. Things are always changing. And so this year I thought I would show you how to do some botanical monoprints. You can use this for anything. In fact, it's a technique from my newest book, Playing With Surface Design. It's always a class that we did here at Creativebug, the surface design series. So you can take this in any direction and it's kind of addictive. Once you start printing, you're not gonna want to stop. So maybe it's kind of cruel that I told you that you should do a couple days leading into Thanksgiving, but it's super fun and you can use it anytime of year. I'm just kind of switching it up and keeping this in mind for my table decor this year. What I have in front of me is like a beautiful mess, right? Can you see that? The main thing that I'm going to printing on is a Gelli plate. This is a silicone plate. It's reusable indefinitely. In my book and in my Creativebug class, I always use a sheet of gelatin like actual Jello, but not with any color and not with any sugar. That breaks down, I really love the way that looks. I love the monoprints it creates, but the Gelli plate is very indestructible. If you can kind of see this, it's this big cool silicone slab. You definitely need one of these to do your monoprinting, at least for this style. I've got a range of acrylic paints in my kind of autumnal decor here. I'm using folk art, both the regular kind and the multi-surface just because of the color and that's what we had in the studio. I've got a couple of these brushed metals for my metallics and then a couple of these really cool color shifts. I recently fell in love with these. If you can even just tell from the label. That when you turn this, you get these kind of iridescent colors. So we're gonna be using a combination of all of that. I've also got a spray bottle. Baby wipes, I use these all the time especially for this for my hands for wiping down my monoprinting plate and for my brayers which are over here. I've got two brayers going on a cookie sheet. You can use wax paper. You could use an acrylic sheet. Anything just to kind of like keep these corralled. I've got one for my light colors and one for my dark colors. And then I have all of this fun ephemera. We're doing botanicals, hence botanical monoprinting. So I have leaves that I've gathered. You can actually also use artificial botanicals. These hold up really nicely. They tend to be a little bit chunkier. What you wanna avoid are things that are too dry or crispy because in pressing and creating the monoprint, you can crush it and then it gets in your ink and it's very messy so try to keep things that don't have sharp spikes on them so no rose stem thorns. Things that still a little bit flexible, but you can see this is dried, but because I've printed it, this is all like many, many layers of paint. This kind of become rubberized because we're working with acrylic paint. All right, and because we're live, reach out and ask me questions. I've got paper, I've got all kinds of random stuff I'm gonna be playing with just so you can kind of see the process and let your brain take over and your imagination. So we're gonna start by inking up our plate. And let me just remind you that a monoprint means one of a kind,

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single, mono. So every print that you pull will be unique and they'll constantly be changing. I wanna start with the dark color. Like I said we're just using acrylic paint. I'm going right onto my Gelli plate. And using a brayer, I'm going to distribute the paint. You can also use screenprinting ink. I often use that. I want you to notice that to distribute the ink or the paint in case, I'm picking up my brayer. I'm not just going back and forth. If I do that, I just create a pattern with the paint. Instead I'm picking it up, letting it spin. (clicking) If you can hear it, that's what you wanna be going for. A nice, thin coat. For every item that you put down to pull a print, you're gonna get kind of a negative and a positive so I'm gonna show you what that looks like. Let's do our leaf. So leaf goes in to the wet paint. And then we need a piece of paper. I love using Strathmore drawing paper. It's my favorite paper for everything. I was talking to my friend, Christina, last night about how it's awesome for drawing, for calligraphy, for printmaking. This happens to be a chartreuse paper source, piece of text weight paper. And just using my hands I'm gonna place that paper right down on my plate. If you have anything really chunky or thick, you're gonna wanna use your fingers to get in around anything like the stem so that you get a nice clean definition of your shape. This is the magical part. Look at that. I better see those hearts flying by. Can I just say that? - [Woman] You're seeing a lot of hearts. - This is amazing. - And the surprised faces. (gasps) - [Courtney] The happy face, okay. This is your first print. We're gonna remove the object. And now we're gonna pull a second print. We have to work kind of quickly because we're working with acrylic ink and we don't want it to dry. We're under studio light so they're a little bit warm. Okay. Now let me just say at this stage, you can also use something like a clean brayer if you're afraid that you're not getting enough pressure. Do not get ink on this if you can help it because otherwise you'll pull ink onto the back of your print. Trying to keep it clean as best we can. (gasps) Let me see this. So I always think kind of every print, you wind up with kind of a negative silhouette style and then you create something that looks like a fossil. That what it reminds me of. It's like the fossil impression. So each time you place an item onto your stab for your monoprint, you pull two prints. We're gonna print over these. You can keep this as is. You can layer, you could be working on paintings, paper you already have, decorative paper. So you don't even have to work on plain paper. You can already have a layer before you even begin your printing. Let's keep it going though. Let's try something else. - [Woman] We have one question while you're working. - [Courtney] Yeah? - [Woman] Leslie wants to know where can I buy the silicone plate like yours? - Good question, it's called a Gelli plate. It's G-E-L-L-I, I'd duck under the table and show it to you, but you can get them at your local arts supply store. I believe JoAnn has them. They come in multiple sizes. The big guy is kind of an investment, but they come in little sizes and medium sizes. I think, as far as I know, this is the biggest that they make, because I teach this all the time. It was worth the investment. But you also make a sheet of gelatin and if you watch my Creativebug class, I talk about how to do that. And you can use that instead. It'll only last for a couple hours of printing. I've sprayed my surface with a little bit of water. It's gonna help me pull up the paint. Sometimes just the printing process will remove all of your paint, but I actually love how it creates this like water and oil effect so we're gonna print this. Just because why not? We have an opportunity to. I'm gonna grab some more paper. This happens to be regular photocopy paper, text weight, in this like lovely peachy tone. And nothing goes wasted here. You can infinitely layer. Look at that. You're just making your own custom paper essentially. Let's pull one more. Let's try a nice bright neon. So to pull up the rest of this ink, let's say I wanna switch colors, I'm actually just gonna use a whatever sheet of paper and just use it over and over until I've pull up all the ink on the plate. And that's how I'm cleaning it. So we might print on this later. We might use this as a background texture. We might cut a strip of this and use it for something else. It'll just go the side for now. All

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right, let's switch colors. Let's do kind of a ice tea color. I always have ice tea on the mind. Liana knows I can't start my day without my ice tea. Okay, so here we are, we're rolling. We're picking it up, hearing that roller, that brayer spin. I'm getting some lines here. That's from the edge of my brayer. It's a hard rubber brayer so it's giving a little more pressure. I'll just do a lighter touch. Try to avoid those. Let's try something a little more fun. How about a feather? Let's do a big feather. You can do that guy. You can see that these feathers have been through a lot of monoprinting. They've become their own plastic beings which are actually the more print with them, the more fun they are to print with. And let's do this feather too. And what color? Let's do it on just a creamy tone so you can see what that looks like. This has a little more texture than the leaf we just printed especially along the spine of the feather. The floor is very creaky today. All right. So here's our first pull. Isn't that pretty? You get all those amazing little tendrils of those tiny little delicate feathers at the base. So that's sort of our silhouette style. We'll pull this up. And let's pick another piece of paper. And we'll print again. Second pass. Remember on this pass if you need to use a brayer, at any stage if you need to use a clean brayer to get some pressure, that's fine. Your hands usually will be enough. And if you're working with the actual Jello, you can't use a brayer at that stage. If you press too hard, you might ruin your Jello. All right you guys, let's take a look at this. It's like so spectacular. Look at the detail. Amazing. You might get some color mixing with layers of ink and paint that have been already on the monoprint plate or possibly on a leaf or feather if you've been using it for a lot of printing. That's fine, some of that color mixing is really interesting and you can't really anticipate what'll happen. Let me use this to pick up this weird orange just for fun. Let's see what happens. Just to see if we like it. All right. Good, an extra layer. We'll just keep printing. Let's do a little bit of water again. I could just be using a baby wipe and cleaning it, but I actually like kind of the color separation and oil water kind of feel that we get when we add just water onto the plate. And you can play with this. You could comb into this. If you've seen my pace paper class, you can use rubber combs to play with it. I'm not getting a ton of separation. Let's do a little bit more water. If you're using a Gelli plate for the first time, you'll notice that your first couple of prints will have a lot of oil water separation. You kind of have to warm up the plate. And that happens too if you've put your plate away for awhile and then kind of come back to it. All right, getting a little bit of separation, not a ton. Let's use something I've already printed. And just pull up one little bit of this kind of watery surface. Just adding another layer. Nothing super wow just yet. Let's baby wipe it off just to get a really clean slate. And then we'll use our color shift. So the color shift paint, like I said, if you can even see the label, you kind of get this iridescence. It looks purple but when you move it or it's on a curved surface, you can kind of get a lot of different colors reflecting from it. I'm actually gonna use this color. It's called Blue Flash. And it's really pale on its own. It doesn't have a lot of wow, but when it's layered on top of other things, it's pretty spectacular. So we're just gonna play with it as a layering. And what should we use next? Should we use ginkgos? Let's do some ginkgos. I kind of like that. Let's print, just on this first layer, let's just print on something cream so you can kind of see what this color looks like. So you should understand the process by now. You lay down your paint or your ink. You put in your object. You take your first print, you remove your object, and then you get your second print. So it's kind of this tealy blue. As you rotate it in the light, I don't know if you guys can see, it's getting a little bit of color sheen. But let's print on top of something else. Let's print on top of this. This has been already printed with kind of that deep pumpkin color. And let's see if we get anything up. My ginkgo leaf's stuck. I'm just gonna layer a envelope. Now this isn't table decor, it's an envelope. I mean, unless you have little notes for everyone at table. That would be sweet. But I actually made a set of stationary for my mom last year that used this technique on gold envelopes

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with black and it was really beautiful. Ooh, yeah. So I don't know if you guys can see what happens when that blue flash goes over the pumpkin. I get this super ultra violet shimmery iridescence and you can see where the ginkgo leaf texture shows up. Hopefully you guys can see that. It's pretty phenomenal. All right, let's go bold, let's go with black. I'm not even gonna worry about cleaning my plate. This is also a color shift. This is called black flash and it's like a black and a gold combo. I use this to paint part of my pumpkin diorama that we did for Halloween. - Phil would like to know - Hey Phil. - [Woman] if there is any special care instructions for the Gelli plate. - Hi Phil, welcome. From the UK, does that mean it's very early or very late their time? I'm not sure. As far as the Gelli plate, it will care instructions on the back, but usually you just kind of wipe it out. You don't need to use soap. You can just use water. It comes with these little plastic transparencies that you wanna keep. It goes on the back and the bottom of the top and the top of your plate. And then you just put it back in its case. So if you needed any extra excuses to buy more vintage doilies at estate sales, this is the excuse that you were looking for. I use these all the time in class. And try to lay it down without moving the paint underneath too much. Now this is something that has kind of a wonky texture. We really wanna press hard so that we can get the definition. If we don't press hard enough, we're not gonna get all this interesting lace pattern. And let's do it on something crazy like this neon orange. Just to see what happens. All right, so now right now I can tell you, I'm not getting any contact with that plate. I can feel that the depth of these little ropes are not enough. That's why I'm gonna bring out the big guns, the brayer. And I'm really gonna press. Now again if I was working on gelatin and not a Gelli plate, then I would need to be much more delicate. Just see how this goes. That's my clean one, goes to the left. Ooh, cool. I love that, you get this like really interesting. And you can even see the black and gold. I think we might be breaking the monitors and the light. Can you see? See my excited face? This is like one of my most favorite things to do. I can do this for so long. It's crazy, I'll do it on my kitchen table. I'll just print up a storm. The entire dining room, the entire living room is covered in paper. Charlie has no idea where he's suppose to go. And it's phenomenal. It's like one of my favorite things to do. All right. - [Woman] That ties in Chelsey's question which is what is Courtney's favorite part of monoprinting on Gelli plates. - Chelsey's question? - Uh-huh. - Hi Chelsey, welcome. Your question was what is my favorite part of printing with a mono-plate. All the things? I don't know, it's just like image transfer. It's why these are the things that keep me interested for a decade. It's because you never know what you're gonna get. It's so amazing. I feel like we need more good surprises in our life. All right. Oh my God, I love it. Okay, so we have that pumpkin color underneath we did that, it's kind of our first print with the feathers. It gave us our silhouette print and then we did the second print with the color shift. We have a little bit of the blue still showing through. If you guys can see. I better see those hearts. Okay. All right, let's do. I mean I could keep you here for two hours printing. Let's do a little bit of water. Let's do a little bit of paint. Unless you guys have requests. - [Woman] Well Chelsey also wants to know what do you do with all of your prints? - Chelsey's asking what do you do with all of this stuff because you can see I'm surrounded. That's an excellent question. I'm gonna show you what I'm gonna do with it for my Thanksgiving. But as far as what you do with it, if you're a collage artist, you can cut it up. If you're Liana, what she does with her watercolor paintings is she uses a punch and she punches it into gift tags. I was actually gonna show you gift tags. Actually that's a good thing to remember. I'm gonna use it in different ways and I'm gonna show you what those ways are in a minute. They make great envelope liners. Remember you're working with text weight paper. Use bigger sheets, you could do gift wrap. Really anything, think about what you would do with any kind of decorative paper. Or scrapbooking paper, any paper you would buy in the store. You can make your own prints

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and you can use the botanicals from your backyard. I have this idea that it would be so cool to work with a landscape architect or somebody and do like a portrait of someone's backyard just by monoprinting the plants that they have in their yard. I think that would be so fun. Okay, I'm gonna do a little bit more water. Try to see if we can get a little bit of our kind of oily separation. So I'm getting a bit of. Not a ton. Let's instead just do a little bit of twine. And let's use some gift tags. I do have to kind of hunt for things because I start to pile up. All right, so I'm just using some gift tags I bought from JoAnn. I was a little messy there with my fingers. All right, I did not press hard enough so you can see I did not get that separation, but that's okay. This could be a first layer. It's still really pretty, I like how inky it is. We might need to press harder because my rope is fairly thick. We're starting to get a little bit of that oil separation too. Better, more interesting. So if you see up here. I'm actually not even gonna worry about where the rope is. And I'm just gonna pick up some of that really pretty separation that's happening. And again, like I said, these can be first layers. The thing that's also really awesome, right now if you were to watercolor paint this or dip dye this which is very popular, you are getting your tag or your envelope or your place card for your dinner table totally saturated and then you have to wait to do the next step. The cool thing about the Gelli plate is you're layering on a really thin transparent layer of ink which means all of this dries really quickly and you can start layering and playing and using it immediately which is awesome. All right, I'm just playing. So I can just have a stack of envelopes, a stack of cards, and just keep them on hand. I love how that's happening. Again, I don't know if you can see, but the color shift is happening at the top of this. And I can just keep them on hand and do this first layer of printing on everything. You see hand painted watercolor cards in specialty gift shops and they cost like $12 for four of them. So you can just make 100 in like five minutes. All right, let's do. Oh, let's do the bubble wrap just so you guys can see it. So bubble wrap is an occasion where you're not gonna pull two prints. You're just gonna pull one and the reason is because the bubble wrap is just a sheet or a square. There's no reason to make a print here. So what we're gonna do is press it down. Pick it back up and then make a print. Let's do this guy. Just so you can see. You can get that cool kind of oily texture of the bubble wrap. Different bubble wraps will give you different results. Let's do it again. Let's do more bubble wrap up here. And now you can see, I'm not cleaning, I'm not rebrayoring. I'm just working on the surface of this and just seeing what happens. Let's do this envelope. - [Woman] What would you recommend for a mermaid scale type print? - [Courtney] Oh, a mermaid scale. - [Woman] It looks like that could work. - Ooh, look how cool that is. Again because I have some of that color shift, I'm getting this iridescence in person. Again the camera may not be seeing it, but it's pretty spectacular. The question is what would I do for a mermaid scale? Anything with a scalloped pattern could work. You might try some of these doilies or other things. There are texturizing sheets for Sculpey and female clay. You could play with that. If you have sequin fabric, you could play with sequin fabric putting it down. You are kind of gonna devote whatever the item is to your printing box because it's gonna be covered with ink and paint after awhile and that's fine. That's a good question. This would be amazing. I know mermaids are really popular. I love mermaids, they're like my favorite. But mermaid parties are pretty popular right now. All right, we're just gonna put some copper. I don't care that things are mixing. We're gonna do one more print and then I'm gonna show you what to do with all this stuff. Thank you for your patience, but once I start, I can't stop. All right. Let's play, okay, so this is an example where I might not get a lot of detail on this first print. I might just get kind of this scalloped edge and a few little dots showing through. And that's fine. Let's print on top on this, why not? Press, press, press, press. Get some really cool layering happening with the copper. Let's peel this up. And then run a second print. This is just a little scrap that I had. I was

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working on gold paper. And you get something that has some really subtle layering, but also really pretty. This is what you can use for what I'm gonna show you next which is what to do with all this stuff. I know, C cam is not working. Hi, this is Brian. - Hi. - He's our director. - It cuts after 30 minutes. - I guess I've been printing really too long. (laughing) Because the camera stopped. All right. Okay, so just to answer Phil's question and because I should show you good studio habits and this is what I would do in my own studio slash my kitchen table. Is I would just wipe this down because we are working with the acrylic paint, we do not want this to dry entirely and ruin the plate. Like I say about a lot of things, this is not expensive as a tool. It's not expensive for you to use, but is expensive for you to waste. So don't let any paint dry on it. Just use your baby wipe, give it a good wipe off, and then you would replace the clear sheet that comes with it, right on top and store it in its case. All right, ooh, look at that, clear table, fresh table. So what am I gonna do with all this? Besides just collect it and think it's pretty and maybe make some envelopes out of it. So my idea is for table decor. Like I said, the thing that I am always responsible for in my family dinners and gatherings. So probably what I'm gonna is trim down some of it and put it on vases for our table arrangements for flowers. You can also put a candle in something like this. You don't want to put a dark opaque paper over your entire vessel for a candle because you want the light to shine through. So you can experiment on printing on tracing paper and also on vellum. Here's a little votive. And here's another thing, let's say you don't love this whole sheet as much as I do. When you cut down just a little strip of it to put on a vase or put on a votive, you're gonna get a really different feel and look. Likewise if you punch it down to make it a tag, you might get something really interesting. I think this tag is fabulous. This could be on your napkin. You can take that little strip that we did and put it around as a napkin ring. Maybe you write someone's name and that's where they're gonna be sitting. This could be your place card. Another really fun thing is printing actual leaves and then cutting them out. And this could be your place card. If you're very ambitious, you could do your entire table with this and do a beautiful runner all the way down. You can see that I've been working in a similar palette for everything. So I've got indigos and kind of coppery tones. When I first did this, you can see in the book, I used, of course, neons. I mean what else would I use, right? Let me show you. If we can find it. You can also see it on Creativebug because you can watch the class there as well. (gasps) I can't find it. I should've had it bookmarked. It's really spectacular. Just take my word for it. Here it is. So you get these really bright neons. And something I talk about in my Creativebug class is actually prepping all of my papers with a little bit of color blocking using a credit card. So, all of this stuff, you know, initially you may not have a purpose for it, but save it all because you can cut it down and use it for your gift wrap. You can use it in table decor like I'm gonna do for Thanksgiving. I think the little leaves would be really, really beautiful. Maybe you don't do an entire table, but maybe you make a special few and cut them out and they serve as your place cards. I just like the idea of, I'm not, I'm an okay cook. I guess I'm an okay cook. I'm responsible for three dishes this Thanksgiving. But in addition, I'm drawing from the strengths of the things that I am good at and the things I do enjoy which is helping my mom decorate the table. So this year, it's gonna be the monoprint table decor. I hope you guys have a good Thanksgiving and we'll see you next week. ^(upbeat music)

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