
Screen Printing for Beginners with Hilary Williams

Chapter 1 - Screen Printing for Beginners: Screen Printing with Tracing Paper Stencils

Screen Printing with Tracing Paper Stencils

Series Overview

- I remember taking my first screen printing class in college. I was a print making major and I'd done other types of print making and I'd done painting and I'd done drawing but the first screen printing class, even the first simple print that I did with just cut-out stencils was just totally mind-blowing. The vividness and the bright colors and the layering of the images on top of one another was just exactly what I had been looking for and I've been screen printing like crazy ever since. (upbeat instrumental music) Hi, my name is Hilary Williams. I'm a screen printing and mixed media artist. I create limited edition screen prints and mixed media paintings that I show around the Bay Area and throughout the country. When I first started learning how to screen print I just learned all the basics, cut-out stencils, easy stuff that you can do at your home and that's what I'm gonna teach you today. (upbeat instrumental music) I'll teach you how to set up a studio in your home, how to make cut-out stencils from tracing paper and frisket that you can use to print on paper or fabric. We'll be working in two color designs, so you'll learn how to register your stencils. I'll show you how to keep your work area clean, make clean, successful prints, and how to clean up properly. (upbeat instrumental music) It's creating multiples. It's about letting a lot of people share the work and have the work. It's really accessible to a lot of people and it's so exciting for me when they say, this is my first piece of art, and I'm like, that's so awesome (giggles). (upbeat instrumental music)

Part 1 Overview

(upbeat music) - Screen printing is a technique of printmaking to create multiples of your images. Using tracing paper stencils is a great way to get started. You can do it with minimal equipment and materials, and still get great results.

Making the Stencil

Tools and materials

- The tracing paper stencil print is a really easy print to start with because you need minimum materials. You don't need all that fancy equipment. You just need kind of the basics. So, for a tracing paper stencil print you need a screen, obviously. A squeegee, to squeegee your ink onto the page. I've got a couple inks here. For the print I'm going to do we're going to use an orange and a green, but of course they can be any colors you like. Got some tapes. This is some masking tape and some packing tape. Pretty basic. X-Acto knife or scissors. A pencil. Hopefully you have one of those around. I've done a sketch, but you just need an idea. You need something you want to print. So, we're going to do an apple and we're going to do the green for the leaves and the orange, red for the apple. And then you need your tracing paper. So, I've got a couple of sheets that we're going to use and we're just going to make our stencils straight out of this. So, how about we get started?

Cutting stencils

- Okay, so the first part we're gonna do is a tracing paper print, it's really easy, I show this print because you can do it without a lot of equipment, all you really need is a screen, a squeegee and some inks, some tracing paper and you're good to go. So, we're gonna do an apple, today, just real simple, two colors, we're gonna do a green for the leaves, and a little bit of decoration down there, and then a kind of red-ish color for the apple. So the first thing we need to do is get our images on tracing paper, so I've got a couple sheets right here, and just take your sketch, now, you can use a photo, you can use a sketch, you can use whatever you like, you can draw freehand on the tracing paper. You lay it over the sketch or photo, if that's what you're using, I'm gonna use a little bit of tape, just to secure it in place, I'm gonna grab a pencil, I'm gonna start with the green, so we're gonna do the leaves, and then the little decoration down here, again. And you have to remember, when you're doing the tracing paper stencils, that everything has to be connected, so if you've ever made a spray-paint stencil that you kinda spray-paint on a shirt, or God forbid, a building, or something, you know, that all the letters have to be connected, for instance, 'cause if you cut something out in the middle of something else, there's nothing to connect it to the rest of it. Same principle applies with the tracing paper stencil, and one thing when you're designing your tracing paper stencils, is you don't want to do too many little, fine lines. I've got a few in here, just to kinda push the envelope a little bit, but the bigger, bolder shapes tend to be the best when you're doing tracing paper, 'cause the little ones can get lost or get torn off. You don't want to make it difficult for yourself when you're just starting out, it can be frustrating. I'm doing these little leaves, these are just a little decorative, one here, okay. So we're gonna remove your sketch from underneath, and now I've placed a cutting mat below, 'cause we're gonna be using an X-Acto knife, you can also use a really, thick cardboard, you know, the kinds that come on the back of your tracing paper or a drawing pad, that can also work. So, we're gonna pull out our X-Acto, very basic tool, and start cutting. So, I'm just trying to follow my lines, you know, this isn't really exact in your printing, we're not trying to line up with anything, so I can be a little bit loose with it. One thing you want to do when you're cutting, is, it gets kinda difficult if you're going around curved edges, for instance, so using straight lines, or subtle curves is a little bit easier way to go, I pick it up sometimes, move it around, put a couple kinks in my leaves, go this direction, and you want to keep your hands firmly on the tracing paper, 'cause it kinda tears if you don't have a good hold on it. Alright, I've got those top leaves out, so I'm going to carefully lift that piece out, like there, and we can set that aside, won't be needing it, and move on to the little leaves at the bottom. Again, careful with those curves, like that, cut the last three, so again, it's important to watch those curves when you're cutting, and make sure you go slow, and don't do any fast movements, you might tear the paper. And you don't wanna make too many tears, 'cause those little tear lines, the ink will be seeping through there onto the page, and you want as little of that, as possible, of course, we're not making a museum masterpiece, here, but you want to be proud of your work. Alright, so, now we've got our green layer all cut out, and ready to print. I am gonna cut out the red stencil as well, for the apple, before we get printing, just so I have everything ready, and then I can transition into that. Or you could cut and then see how it looks before you cut your next one, if you like, you know, do it at your own pace. So I'm gonna set that aside, and again, we're gonna tape my sketch down and put a fresh piece of tracing paper over it, and place your tracing paper on, little piece of tape to hold it in place, and now we're going to cut out the apple. So we're kind of ignoring all of the leaves, we've already done that, we're moving on to the apple, this is the red stencil, and even include the little dip down there, for some character. I've also added these little cutout spots, where there's gonna be, I'm

gonna leave the white of the paper, and it'll act as kind of the shine on the apple, so you can use the white of the paper as another color in screen-printing, which is kinda handy, 'cause then you don't actually have to print another color, so that's a good way to get three colors when you're actually just printing two. So again, this is a nice shine-spot on that apple, okay, so we've done our drawing of our apple, I'm gonna set this aside, and get back to X-Acto-ing this out. Alright, put it in place, and just start cutting. I'm kinda lifting my X-Acto knife up a lot, but I just don't want to have, few tears as possible. Now, these little areas that I've done are kind of on the edge of how intricate you want to get, so we're gonna see how they're gonna come out, it might be a little bit of a risk I'm taking, but we're not gonna get anywhere if you don't take risks, right? Now, if you don't have an X-Acto knife, or whatever, you just don't feel like working with one, you can do tracing paper stencils with scissors, too, kind of the same way you would make a snowflake, or something like that, I mean, you don't have to fold the paper up, but you know, you can still make shapes and do a screen-print with just a pair of scissors. Now we got that, remove the apple, ooh, yeah, see these little flaps, there? We'll hope that goes well. Alright, so now we're gonna remove this to the side, get my cutting mat out of the way and we'll prep our screen and get ready to screen print the leaves.

Preparing for printing

- This is our screen we're gonna use. It's a 24 by 20 inch screen around. It's an aluminum frame. It's got a 110 count mesh. Now the mesh count is only as wide as its thread so 110 is about average. I would say if you're starting doing screen printing, that's about the mesh count you can get. You can go up to 300 when you're doing really detailed fine work in a professional setting. But this is good for our purposes. You can buy these screens and squeegees and inks at any, kind of, major art supply store. You'll have a screen printing section. They'll have all those things listed. You can also buy these hinge clamps and they just are used to clamp into the screen. So this board is gonna be our platform for printing. We're gonna take our tracing paper stencil with the leaves and attach it to our screen with some packing tape. And then we'll be ready to print. We're going to tape it onto the back of the screen. So I call this the back of the screen. And this side the front of the screen. So we're gonna do it on the back of the screen and then we're gonna print through the front of the screen. So since I want the apple to, the leaves to be in this direction, I'm going to tape them onto the screen face down. 'cause then when I turn the screen over, they're gonna be face-up and we're gonna print them and they'll be in the right direction that I intended them. We've got it face down on the screen. Got the packing tape. So, the packing tape is so you can actually tape the stencil onto the screen so it doesn't move anywhere. Makes sense, right? I'll tape down all four edges. And you also wanna make sure you're not getting wrinkles and things in your stencil because those will distort your image when you print. Another thing we're going to do is, I did not put some tape up here quite yet, so this part of the screen is open. I'm gonna put another piece of tape there because the space of the screen is open and the open spaces, if there's any ink that can get on it, can kind of seep through and bleed and make a big mess. Whether it's on your page or on your board. The less mess the better. Seal that up. There's another tiny space down here which I'm also gonna tape up. Okay. So it's taped on and put it right side up into the clamp. Put those bars in there. You just wanna center it as much as possible. Screw in so they don't move. So the reason why we have these clamps is to hold the screen in place while you're pulling a print, as well as hold it in the same place when you are printing your multiple prints, that the images land in the same spot and don't move around. So get those kind of secure, you don't need to squeeze the life out of them but make sure nothing is moving. Alright. Now that we have that in there, I'm gonna take this tape and just kind of

prop it up so I can also work beneath it. Now it's time to register our paper. I've cut down some sheets of paper. You can really print on any type of paper, this is a basic kind of card stock, so it's a little bit thicker. I like that, so that the ink doesn't warp the page as it would with a newsprint. But I have printed on newsprint before, I've printed on all kinds of recycled materials, fancy papers to cheap ones. This is kind of a middle of the road. So go with whatever you have around. Whatever looks good at the art store. Whatever you can find in the recycling bin. So right now we're going to register it. So registering is where I figure out where I want the print to land on the page. And this is important because I want it to land on the page and not off the page. But I also want it to land into a space where it'll kind of be central or off to the side, whatever you want, but I kind of want the apple to be a little bit in the center and then the leaves to be coming out of the top. So we're going to see where it lands. So that's kind of off center. Let me move it. This is kind of a tweaking process. I could have started way off and have to move it. It's just a process of, oh maybe a little bit to the right, a little bit to the left, et cetera. The apple's gonna go right here. I'm kinda looking at that. Maybe we are gonna move to the left a tiny bit. Gonna hold it up with my head too. That looks good to me. Once you have a spot where you like it, I'm gonna prop it up again and get our blue tape or masking, any color, just something you can see. And this is a basic registration technique where I'm just gonna take some pieces of tape and mark off the corners. Align it up as closely as possible. You don't need to do all four corners. I usually do two or three. This isn't the most precise registration technique that there is out there, but it's great for our purposes. Get those down. I'm gonna do one more at the top, just in case. Keep in mind, if you are not using all of the same size papers, that you may need to... Let's say you have one size paper and then you have another fancier paper, but it's a different size, you will need to register both of those sizes of paper. I'm going to remove the nice sheet of paper now. We're gonna print on a piece of newsprint first. It's nice to do a practice one before you actually do the first one. Especially if you're just starting out printing. You may need to do, like 20 practices. We'll just try one, hopefully, and hopefully I can get, get it right. The newsprint does not have to be registered. It can be any size. So just place it under the image where the image is gonna land on the newsprint and not on the board. Alright, now I have to grab my color. Got this kind of, it's a little bit bluish, but kind of a dark green. I thought that might look nice for the leaves. Now I didn't buy this ink pre-mixed in this to-go container. I purchased some inks from the art store, then we usually get a red, a blue, a yellow, a black and white and then mix our own colors. I've got a spoon, pretty basic. You probably have one of those at home. And you make sure it's the right consistency. Grab a squeegee, that one right there. So, let's do a double check here. Got my squeegee, got my inks right here. All set up, registered, clean paper. Think we're ready to go.

Print first color

- You wanna make sure you're kind of all set up and you have everything you need before you get started printing because you don't want to pull a first print and then be like "oh no, I forgot this and then you have to run somewhere and grab something", so you want to kind of do a set check before you get going with your ink. Alright. So we're gonna put the ink onto the screen. So you want your ink to have a good consistency. Don't want it to be too runny otherwise it'll seep through the screen and kind of make a mess and you don't want it to be too thick either, because then you'll have a hard time moving back and forth and using your print. If it's a little thick, you can add a little water. If it's a little runny, you're kind of stuck and you may need to start over. Usually when you get inks from a store, they'll come out at a decent consistency. So just kind of check it and if you need to add a little water, that's okay. When you're putting your ink on the screen, you want to be pretty

liberal with it. Your tendency at first is to be skimpy, but you need kind of a lot of ink, it acts as the lube between your squeegee and the screen to move back and forth. You also want a lot of ink because that's what you're using to print, that's what you're using to fill the screen and transfer onto the page. If you don't have enough of it, you end up with these ghost images that don't look quite right. You also want to place this ink on the screen as wide as your squeegee is, again, acts as the lube. If the edge of the squeegee doesn't have any ink for it, it's not gonna go back and forth very well. So gonna put these on. You also want to place your ink above your image. If I put a line of ink on top of the image, that open screen, it might seep through and again make more mess. So I'll put enough there. Alright, let's set that to the side. You want to have access to that, because you'll probably need to refill ink at some point during the printing process. Alright, so now we've got our squeegee. Now, a squeegee is, you know, usually wood. It's got a rubber kind of squeegee edge on it. It has two edges here, there's the edge here. And then there's the edge here. Those are the edges you want to print with. You don't want to print with this flat edge here and you certainly don't want to print with this edge here. You just want a clean print and the 45 degree angle on those corners is gonna give that to you. It's kind of like a windshield wiper, if you think about the blade there. Alright. So we're gonna remove the tape and lay the screen down. Gonna put the squeegee into the ink, kind of get settled in there, and remember, we're printing with that 45 degree corner edge. I'm gonna hold up the screen and now I need to flood the image with ink in order to transfer that ink onto the page, so we're gonna use that 45 degree angle, that corner edge, little bit of pressure but not too much, you're not actually printing the image right now, you just need a little bit of pressure so that you make a clean flood. Alright, so little bit, 45 degree angle. (loud squeaking) Here I go. So now my screen is full of ink and I'm ready to print onto the page. So lower it, settle it down, again, lift your squeegee back up and start at the beginning of the image, you don't want to print backward, basically. So what I do is I push the squeegee down and make sure I feel the wood. If you feel the wood, you know you're making contact with the paper. If you're making contact, then you're creating your print. You also need to space your hands appropriately, so this squeegee is just the right size to print the image that we are going to print. There are larger squeegees, there are also smaller ones. You need to space your hands so you get a good, even pressure along the whole squeegee. So you don't want to be holding 'em like this and you don't want to be holding like this, because then you might miss pressure points along the way. Alright, so you're making connection with that wood, have that 45 degree angle, that corner, and I'm gonna screen through, I wanna keep my pressure even throughout, if I let up at the end, then you know, I won't get those last little leaves on the print. So even pressure. One way I like to do that is by keeping my arms straight. (squeaking) Before I look and see what I've done and marvel at the glory of it, I wanna re-flood the screen. And again, taking that 45 degree angle, taking a little bit of ink with me so there's enough to fill the image. Move back down. Alright, now I'm ready to check it out and hang it up. I'm gonna set this on here, just like that. Get my tape, pop up the screen. Let's see what's going on under there. Well! Doesn't that look pretty? Came out pretty good! This is just the test too, it'll look better on the nice paper. We're gonna hang that up to dry. And you can use hooks, clothespins, whatever or you could lay them around all over the kitchen, doesn't matter. So I like the image, looks good, and I'm ready to print on our nice paper. Here's where those registration marks come in handy, remember those? Gonna take that nice paper and line it up with where you put those tape marks. Alright, looks good. So remove the tape. We're ready to print again. Lower the screen, again, get some ink. Make that contact with the wood, 45 degree angle, even pressure, straight arms. Print. Sometimes you're gonna feel an ab workout if you print all afternoon, or an ab workout, excuse me. So again, before I

go under there and marvel at my work, I'm gonna reflood the screen. It's full of ink, ready to go for the next print, it also helps the screen keep wet. The ink can dry in the screen, so if you keep it wet by flooding it after every time, makes it easier for that not to happen. Alright, now let's see. Doesn't that look nice? Pretty good! Got some of those nice little lines that I was a little nervous about, but they came out okay. Alright, put this up here. And we'll just keep lining those up. I'm gonna do a little addition, you can print as many as you need or you can print just one. I'm gonna print just a few here, not too many, how many apples can I really eat? Again, you're using those registration marks with every page from now on, lining those up. So you're making sure the leaves land in the same place, because you want the apple to then land in the same place and the image to be cohesive on every print. Remove the tape. Lower the screen. Get that 45 degree angle, pressure, even. (squeaking) Pull. Reflood. Another thing that you wanna do while flooding is make sure that you have a little bit of ink that you're flooding down with. If you don't have any ink, how is there gonna be ink to fill the screen, right? (squeaking) Clean flood. Prop it up. And hang it up. Register. (squeaking) (squeaking) So I've got enough ink on this screen to last quite a few prints, this isn't a very large image and the amount I've put on there, maybe 20 to 30 prints at the rate we're going. If you're doing 50 or 60 prints, you're probably gonna need more ink along the way. If you do need more ink, you kind of just apply it similar to as we did the first time, pick it up, use the spoon and apply it in that same area and just get going, kind of like we did right at the beginning. And you know, always add ink before you run out, so if it's looking a little thin, go ahead and add more ink. It's okay, don't be stingy. Another thing to think about when you're thinking about when to add ink is how big your image is. If I had an image that was 12 inches by 12 inches, square open, I'm gonna need a lot more ink to fill that image. So that's another thing to think about. (squeaking) And slow up. Alright. So the reason why I wanna use that clean edge, or the 45 degree angle corner edge, for many reasons, but if you kind of use the flat edge, like this part of it, you're gonna end up mashing more ink onto the page, and you can kind of see that when you get the ink on there. If I go like this, I'm just gonna be squeegeeing more ink through there and then it blobs out and makes a mess onto your page. So that's one reason why you want to make sure and use that clean edge. (squeaking) Also, you want to make sure and flood it clean. If you flood it like this, that's an example of what you're not supposed to do. See how much extra ink is on there? That's liable to seep through the screen and make blob marks on your page too. So that's why I want a... Clean flood! (squeaking) Okay! We finished all of our prints here, we've got a nice little section of apples we're gonna have. We are ready to clean up.

Clean up

- Cleaning up tracing paper stencils is also pretty easy. Grab a spatula. I get these at the dollar store. One dollar and you get four of 'em. We're gonna take off as much ink as possible off the squeegee and the screen. Ink is not super cheap, so you don't want to leave it on and wash it away. You want to save it. Also, it helps clean up if there's not a bunch of ink on there. It just, you know, speeds things up a bit. So, I do the squeegee first. Take the tip of that, all that ink. Don't forget the other side. Alright. Just gonna set that on that little space right there. I pick up the ink to clean up the screen so I'm not trying to hold the ink over here and put it in, and drippin' all over the place. You can use the edges of the screen to kind of, assist you. Alright, gonna clean this guy off. Set this down, and then we're also gonna clean the spoon off. See how much ink is on the spoon? Don't wanna waste that. Okay, just lay those on the screen for a sec. Before I go anywhere, I'm gonna put the lid back on here. So I just want to do that before I leave the room and forget. Put it back on

there. Unscrew this guy and release it. We're gonna take this whole setup back to our sink to wash all the ink off and clean the screen, and the squeegee and all the stuff. So, here we go. Okay, this is the sink room. We've got a sink where I wash out the squeegee, and the spoon and all that jazz. And then, our sink for washing out the screen. Before I really get cleaning anything, I'm gonna take off the tape. And, for better or worse when you do a screen, a tracing paper stencil, you will never be able to use it again. As you can see I'm tearing it to pieces, and I'm gonna throw it in the trash. It's the beauty of it, and maybe the pain as well. Get the last little pieces off. You don't want to leave those on the screen. They could get clogged in your drain. And place this in here. What we're gonna do is we're just gonna wash all of the ink off of the screen. We're just cleaning it off. It'll be fresh and new, and white, just like we saw it. Maybe there'll be a little trace hints of the inks, but it's basically just washing out the ink at this point. I have a pressure washer that I use, but you can also a garden hose, with maybe a sponge or something like that. It's nice to have that extra pressure if you get little spots that are dried in there, but it's not completely necessary. And this sink is kind of set up, you know, homemade. All the sinks that I've ever used are kind of put together with random stuff. You know, feed troughs, or big plastic bins. You can kind of create something on your own, or could buy one for \$2,000. I'm gonna turn on the water. And, the machine. (loud machine and gushing pressurized water) You wanna do both sides. (loud machine and gushing pressurized water) Okay. Turn the water off. So, we can still see a little bit of the green ink in the screen, and that's okay. Some dark inks can stain the screen a little bit. Periodically you'll try scrubbing 'em down with all kinds of stuff to get a little bit of that out. But as long as there's not an actual blockage in the screen, it won't effect your print. So it's okay. One thing you wanna do before you say that, "Oh yeah, it's clean." Is you wanna kinda hold it up to the light, and make sure that you don't see blockages in the screen. So I don't see any parts or particles, or little pieces of tracing paper left in there. Everything looks pretty good. Another thing you want to make sure of is that there's not a bunch of ink left in the corners. Sometimes that can happen and you'll miss it. So these look alright. And, we're gonna set this up, we have a drying, an area to dry the screens up here. You can lean them up against a table or whatever, but this is the things we have for drying them. Okay, so now after that's dry, if I want to, I can use it for the next layer. Before we get going though, we've got to remember our squeegee that's still got ink on it, and our spoon, and spatula. You can just wash these off, you know, use a little scrubby. Make sure they're clean. Don't have to eat off of it. But, you don't want any of that green ink getting into your other colors that you might use these tools with. Getting the squeegee blade clean is pretty important. If there is build-up of ink on the blade, it will effect the way that your print comes out. So making sure that the ends here, as well as the blade and the all surfaces are clean. Another thing I like to do, is take a little rag or whatever and dry it off. Make sure I get all those ink particles off. Edges, everything. Okay. Ready for re-use.

Print second color

- We are ready to print the next layer on our pieces. Grab a screen, this one's blank. And remember this apple that we cut out earlier? We're gonna use it now. So again, this is the way we want the apple to lay on the page. So we're gonna put it face down onto the back of the screen. Lay that down. We'll put it kind of in the center. Every time you do do a stencil, you do want to kind of center it. You want to have enough space around the area so that you can have the ink there so that you can put your squeegee there. Also when you get into the center of the screen, it's easier to make connection with the wood. If you're at the edges, it's kind of harder to push all the way down, so you're gonna get a bad print. So, this looks good. Grab the tape and we're gonna tape it down

again so it stays in place. We've got quite a bit of room at the bottom here. So I'm going to put some tape on there to close that space off. So the ink won't seep through. One more. We are good to go. So we're gonna turn this around, and put it into our clips. Screw those down tight. Now we need to register our apple to the leaves which we've just printed. Lift that up so we can work under there. Now we've got registration marks from the last printing that we did. So we're gonna want to take those off, so that we don't get confused when we put new registration works on. We can reuse these pieces of tape, they're still good. We'll just put them to the side. We're gonna grab one of our good prints. You don't want to register, again to the test print, because that's not the correct size. Sometimes when I'm printing I like to have a good but test print. So I register everything to one print. It'll get finger smudges on it and all that kind of stuff, but that's okay. But it's the same size, and I can register to that print. But it's not going to be the nice one, so I don't mind kind of moving it around and making a test out of it in some way. This one looks fine, but we got to use something. So trial and error kind of thing. Just trying to figure out where it fits, and where you intended it to be. So that's getting pretty close. Maybe I'll move it a little bit. That's a little off kilter, but that gives it a little bit of character. So I'm going to go with it. Now, place your registration marks, using those pieces of tape. Just need three sides again, don't need to do all four. I'm going to lift it up a little bit more to get this one up here. Guess another key thing I forgot to mention before you start printing your next layer is, make sure the other ones are dry. I've chosen an ink that dries fairly quickly, so they are all dry. If it's a rainy day, sometimes it can affect the ink drying time, or it depends on what brand of ink you are using. But these are all dry, so we are ready to go. Grab the ink that we want. I'm going to use this kind of red, orange color. It's one of my favorite colors to use, because it's not quite red, but it's not just super orangy. So I don't know, I just love it. And it might be good for an apple. You know I could print this apple teal blue, I could print it black if I wanted to so. This is kind of part of the process where you have a lot of creative control, and you can experiment and do different things if you like. Nice! Okay I'm going to prop it up a little bit higher. I'm going to swap out the nice sheet of paper with the test that we're going to print first, just to make sure. Again, this does not have to be registered, just throw it under so the image lands on top. And, get your ink on. Get your ink on, nice. Alright we're going to be pretty liberal with it again. More than maybe you initially think that you need. Enough to lube back and forth. Alright. Okay so remove the tape. Remember we need to flood the image before we get started. Get on that angle, 45 degrees corner. Got a clean little bit of pressure. And flood it up. Okay we are ready to see what this looks like. Lower the image. Again making contact with the wood on the 45 degree angle the corner of the squeegee, even pressure. And, pull. Alright, before you marvel. Get some ink there and re-flood the image. Lets see. Oh! That's kind of cute. Got my little shiny spots on there. Very nice. Nice bright orange color. Hang that up. And, I think we can get going on the good ones. So I'm just going to keep taking them there and, putting them under here to print, and hanging them straight back up. If you wanted to, you could take them all down and put them in a pile again. But that's not necessary. Alright using those registration marks again. Lower it, get that pressure on there, and- Okay. Flood back with the clean edge. Prop it up. Ooh! Want to see it? Super cute! That's ripe for a kitchen piece. (laughing) Hang that up, get the next one going. Same spot. And pressure, and pull. And ya again, if you screen print all day, you could be getting an ab work out. If you're not feeling that, maybe you're not putting enough pressure down. I'm not sure what I'm going to do with 10 of these, but they'll make good gifts you know. Gifts for any occasion. Wallpaper. Now this ink's a little bit runnier than the last we were working with, so as you can see, it's kind of dripping. But you know its not dripping in a bad way. It's just a little bit of a different viscosity than the last time. But this is fine.

You're well within the bounds of what's good. Flood back, again keep it clean. Keep it clean folks. Another thing you need to keep clean, are your fingers, you don't want them all in the ink, and all up there, and then they get on all of the edges of your page, and kind of make a mess so. Try and keep your hands clean. You're going to get some ink on there. But you know, keep an apron on, wipe it off. Keep a little rag if you need to, it's helpful. So we have one more. Get that all set. Alright. Still need to flood it, even though you don't have any more to go, just to keep your screen wet again, so the ink doesn't dry in there. And voila! We've got a little small addition of tracing paper stencil prints. So now we're ready to clean off this screen, just like we did the last one with the leaves. So we go in there, take the tracing paper off, and just wash off the ink. Clean off our equipment, and we're good to go.

Chapter 2 - Screen Printing for Beginners: Screen Printing Cards

Screen Printing Cards

Part 2 Overview

(relaxed music) - Screen printing cards is a great way to personalize your messages or letters. People love to see that handmade touch on there, and it really means a lot more to them. It's also great to have a lot of cards handy for all the different occasions that arise. We're gonna use tracing paper stencils in this workshop, so you might wanna refer to the introduction workshop using tracing paper stencils to get a feel for it. (relaxed music)

Create Stencils

Cut stencils

- We're gonna print a two color card here using tracing paper stencils. I have one of my stencils is a chicken, and I have the other stencil which is a little spoken bubble so that the chicken can be saying anything that you want on the card. You can fill it in Happy Birthday, or Happy New Year, or whichever, and then a little bit of accent on the ground, so they're gonna go together like that on the card. But first I have to cut them out separately. So I have my Exacto knife and my cutting mat and I'm gonna cut out the shapes. Now I can be a little loose with it. So I'm just gonna cut it out as loosely, according to my drawing that I've made. This one's a little detailed, this is probably as tiny and detailed as you would ever wanna get with tracing paper stencils, and we'll see how it comes out on the page as well. A little beak. And you can do, obviously, any type of cards. Christmas cards, birthday cards, and then you'll have a birthday card for everybody's birthday that comes up through the year. You can even do just unique cards where you just make one of them, something special for Mother's Day, or Father's Day. Anything you want. You can pull it out carefully here. I've got a lot of little corners here, so I'm doing it with the utmost care. Okay, so we'll set that one aside, then we can cut this one out at the same time. This one's a little bit easier, it's just more basic shapes. And with these you wanna go a little slow with your knife, just so you don't tear corners and things like that, it's delicate. There's the chicken's little spoken bubble. Okay, so now we're done with both of the stencils. And I'm gonna remove the cutting mat and get my screen ready to print.

Print Cards

Print first screen

- I'm going to take a screen, open screen. This is a old screen. But, as you can tell, it's been used before. But, it'll be fine for these cards. And I'm gonna lay it face down. So I'm gonna take my stencil that I'm gonna print first. And I want it to print this way. So, I'm gonna put it face down, onto the screen. And I wanna put it in the center. Even though it's a small stencil, I wanna make sure I have plenty of room around it to use my squeegee. Then I'm gonna use this tape, and tape it down in place. And make sure your stencil is flat, so that you don't get wrinkles in your print. Get that down on there flat. And I'm also gonna wanna tape off a large surrounding area, so that ink, when I'm moving my squeegee back and forth, so the ink doesn't seep through these open areas. You could also do this on a lot smaller screen, since you have such a small stencil. Okay, that should be enough. Set that aside. And I've gotta flip it over, so it's right side up. So we've got our inch clamps here, that I've screwed in to just one of my wood tables. Fit the screen in there. Set them in. Make sure they're not moving. Now we have to figure out where on the cards I want. So I have this paper right here, that I've cut to the size of the card. So what we're gonna do is do the printing on this bottom half, and then when I'm finished, I'll fold it in half to create the card. So I've got a couple different colors. I've got a green and a white. Just to play around with. I thought that would be fun. We'll start with the white. And we need to register the card. So we want the image to land on this bottom area like that. And we'll come under here. And just trial and error, move it around until we get it right. A little up from there. So, that's where I want the image to land on there. So after I've figured that out, I'm gonna tape off the corners. Put this up. Just gonna prop it up with my head. You could probably get away with doing a couple of these corners. But I'll do three. Make sure I... Oop, we don't wanna move it. Okay, so we've got three corners taped off there. That should be fine. Prop the screen up with some old tape reels. The color I have chosen for this layer is going to be a yellow. So I figured it'd be pale enough, so you can write some message in the bubble. But still get a little distinction. So, this is the color that I've chosen. And we've got our spoon here. Alright, good consistency. I have my squeegee. I have my paper that I'm printing on. Stencil ready to go. And I am ready to start these cards. So, I have kind of a large squeegee. Which you don't necessarily need. But this is my favorite one. We want to put enough ink to spread across the full length of the squeegee, even though our image is small. Again, be liberal with your ink. Never wanna have too little. Start by flooding the screen full of ink. And, give it a print. Get a hard, touch the wood with that corner, pull with your pressure, and flood back. Prop it up, and let's see what we got. Yeah. I wanna put that on the drying rack, and get the next one going. It did stick a little bit to the screen, so I'm going to take a little bit of photo mount, and just give it a quick spritz, so it sticks to the table, instead of the screen. Register that again. Again, feel that wood beneath your squeegee on the corner, at a 45 degree angle, pull. Flood it back, cleanly with that same corner. And, another good little print. Cool, so I'm gonna print about 10 or 15 of these. So I have a bunch of different cards around. So I always have something to send somebody on a birthday or whatever. Alright, now I'm gonna start on the green ones, and do a few of those. Just so I have two different color options. Oh cute, it looks great on the green so far. So I've come to my last piece of paper. Let's finish this one up here. Alright, so we're gonna wait for those to dry before we add the chicken layer. And in the meantime, we're going to take the stencil off, and clean up our screen free of ink.

Print second screen

- I'm now ready to print my second stencil, the chicken. I've taken the stencil and taped it on the back side of the screen just as we did the first time. So it's all ready to go. I'm now ready to register the previous card to the chicken so we know where to print it. They have dried nicely. We are going to remove the previous tape so we don't get confused here. I can reuse these pieces so I'll put them down there. No need to waste. It's hard to see where the chicken is but I can get a decent idea. It's hard to see it but see I can see the nose and there's the spoken bubble so I need to move it over a little bit up there. So that's lined up pretty good, right across from his beak looks like. So that's what we'll go with. Ready to tape that off. Oh I just moved it though. That happens sometimes. So they're lined up again and this time we won't move it. Oh so careful. And take my tape- I think I moved that a tiny bit. There we go. With these small sheets of paper, they're very easily moved around when you're trying to register. Oh, just like that. Let me just double check that again. Still looks good. Oh so careful. Okay. So before I load the ink, I'm gonna give the board a little bit of spritz because the last time it stuck so I have a feeling that it might stick a little bit this time too. Just a couple of spritz, that's all you need. And reposition it. Okay. I am registered. I have my ink. I'm going to do a very bright orange, almost a red. I thought that would look good with the yellow and the white and then also with that green color that I printed. And I'm ready to lay the ink on and print the chicken. Again, you want to be pretty liberal with that ink. It's a small image but you need the ink to maneuver the squeegee back and forth. Start by flooding. Let's see how it looks. Alright, it's such a little cutie. Look at that. He or she looks adorable, excuse me. It's a hen. Take our next one. And just do that second one. Alright. This one also came out lovely. I'm gonna see what it looks like on the green. Alright, that one looks good too. Now I'm just sitting here thinking about all the different things my chickens are gonna be saying. So I'm just gonna go ahead and finish printing the green cards.

Finish card

Finish card

- So, now my last step is to turn it into a card. I've got a friend with a birthday coming up, so I might as well send one of these to them. So I've got a paint pen that I'm gonna write happy birthday in the quote box. The inks I've used are glossy, so you would have to use either a Sharpie or a paint pen, or paint it on to get the lettering to stick. If you use matte inks, then you could use regular pens or pencils as well. Chicken says happy birthday. Now we have to fold it in half. And you can write a little personalized message inside. You've got yourself a screen printed card. Now I've got my green one too, and I've got a friend who I haven't seen for a while, so I'll just send her a hello card. Maybe the chicken will say howdy. Just like that. Fold that one too. Personalized cards.

Chapter 3 - Screen Printing for Beginners: Screen Printing on Fabric

Screen Printing on Fabric

Part 3 overview

(upbeat music) - For our last class, we're gonna print on fabric using cut-out stencils. I'll show you how to trace this design onto Frisket, which we haven't used before, which is a form of contact paper, and then cut it out. The print will be in two colors and we're working on a bit of a larger format this time. We're gonna print on fabric to make placemats today, but you can print on tea

towels, pillow cases, curtains, fabric yardage, anything you can think of. Printing on fabric opens up a whole new world of possibilities for home decor, style, or design. (upbeat music)

Materials

- We're gonna need our basic home studio set up for this class, which includes our printing board, our squeegee, our screen. For this project I have a little bit of a larger screen which I purchased online, there are many providers where you can find different sizes of screens. We have my original drawing for the design, our templates that we're gonna use to trace and cut out the designs. We have our cutting mat, then we've got our two different color inks here, our spatulas, spoons, packing tape, rags, masking tape, scissors, our Frisket roll, a Sharpie, and an Exacto knife, and then our fabric for the place mats which I cut to 14 by 20. I chose duck canvas for this project which you can find at any fabric store. But you can use any type of fabric to print on.

Screen Printing Fabric

Trace and cut stencil design

- Here is my original design for the place-mats, We've made it into a PDF which you can print out to make templates to trace from. You'll probably have to tile them together as they'll probably come in four different sections. Here is the one for the leaves. And here is the one for the flowers. Now we're gonna start with the flowers 'cause that'll be the first layer that we print. We'll get our frisket roll out, which is a form of contact paper, and place it over your template. Tape everything down so it's in place, including your template, and then we'll cut it. The frisket just needs to cover a little over the edge of the design, not all the way to the edge of the template. You also want to be tracing on the paper side of the frisket because the other side is the sticky which will go on the back of your screen, and that way you're gonna get your image the way you want it and not flipped around. You're also gonna have a little bit of trouble seeing through the paper which is why the template is marked in bold black. If you're having trouble seeing through the frisket just lay your template over the top and you can cut with the X-Acto knife through both layers. Another thing to keep in mind with these cutout stencils is you never want anything to line up exactly or be exactly too perfect because tracing through these and lining them up again is always a challenge. We'll just continue tracing the flower motifs until they're all finished. Then we're gonna remove the template from behind and start your cutting. Using your cutting knife you'll just cut around your lines. Careful around the curves. And this is a loose design so you do not have to be exactly on every line, which is the beauty of it. Now, importantly, for this particular design, is you're gonna want to save this circle. So cut out the circle separately. And save it by placing it on your template in its spot. We're gonna finish cutting out the flowers in the exact same way, saving the centers, and then you're gonna take your leaf template and trace and cut it in the same way that we just did the flowers.

Print first color

- [Instructor] Now we're going to put the stencil on the screen. It's very similar to the tracing paper but we're doing it with the frisket. First you want to peel off the backing. And what I like to do is peel off a little bit of it and then stick it to the screen, and kind of roll it out, like so. It's sort of easiest, kind of keep laying it out. You want to make sure that there are no bubbles. But you can adjust it later. See I have these bubbles in it, but we can fix that after we get it rolled out. Just start

pressing it down. Now that we have our frisket on we're going to cover up the gaps with packing tape so that we don't get any ink leaking through these open areas. Before we're ready though we have to place these dots in the center of the flowers. That's the beauty with frisket, is that if you were using tracing paper these would have fallen out and you wouldn't be able to use them again, but with frisket, because it sticks, we can use them. I'm just referring to my drawing to see where they're placed. And again I'll remind you this is a loose design, which is why it's perfect for this project. Now we're going to flip this over and get our fabric in place. Place it in your hinge clamps like so. Screw those in and tighten. We're going to lift it up and figure out where we want the design to land on our fabrics. I know this can be hard to see through, but I can see enough to where I can maneuver the fabric around underneath and put it in its right place. Now that we have it in place we're just going to mark off the corners so that we know where to put the second place mat, and we can make multiples. We really just need the bottom two corners, don't need to do all four. So now we are ready for the ink and we're going to use a fabric ink. So they have basic inks for fabric or for paper. Make sure if you're printing on fabric you get the fabric ink or one that says it's good for both. Alright, we're going to mix up this beautiful color and lay it on our screen. And again you want to put enough ink to span the entire image and you always want to put more ink than you think you need. For this I have chosen a squeegee that spans about half the length of our design. Now, if I was printing on paper I would have to choose a squeegee that spans the entire length of the design or print it vertically as well. But since we're printing on fabric you can print over it twice without harming your image. Paper would stick to the underside of the screen and therefore ruin the image. We're going to flood our screen and lower and raise it up flood it back down. Oh wow, look at that color. Fun, we're going to hang it up to dry. And now we're going to print a second one. Use your marks here, set it in the same place, and we're ready to lower and print again. And sometimes it does stick to the bottom. That's okay, so long as you don't go over it twice. There. You can continue printing as many placements as you like. I chose to do four. Now I'm going to clean up my screen and wash it out. Before you start the next layer you have to make sure that your screen is all dry and your prints are all dry.

Print second color

- My screen is all dry, and I've placed the leaf stencil on the screen. I've loosely registered it, but I just want to double check that everything's in the right place. So we want to leaves coming out of the side of the flowers and the stamens coming out from the centers of the flowers. Now that we figured out it's in the right place, I'm going to put our masking tape and mark the corners. Now we're ready to put our ink on the screen and print the last layer. Let me move this down. Again, for our inks, we've chosen a fabric ink. This is one that I mixed from mostly a blue and a black to get a navy color. I'm going to spread it on the screen. Again, wider than your image. And putting plenty of it on. We'll first flood the screen. (screeching) Flood the other half. And lower. And print. Gotta put some muscle under that. (screeching) Okay. Ooh, I love those colors together. Because I've chosen such a textured fabric, you can sort of see a little bit of the fabric peeking through, especially on some of those dark parts. Test around and try different fabrics and find out what look you like. I like this 'cause it gives me a little bit of vintage feel to it. Go ahead and print the rest of your placemats. The good thing about having a PDF is you can create multiples of the same design. The frisket, you can only use once, but you can always reprint out the PDF and cut it up twice. I did a different example of this same design where we've used hot pink for the flowers and gray for the leaves. We also have a couple other PDFs, one of which is made of pinwheels. I printed them in multiple

locations around the fabric. And this one I used a linen, but you can print on any kind of fabric. I also did the project in a different color. So you can mix and match different colors as well. For the linen, I just simply did a double-turn hem, and now we have a placemat with that, too. Even though we've been printing on fabric for this class, you can also use the frisket to print on paper. I've also used the same pinwheel design to create a set of cards. Using the frisket as well, I've created this cute little flower card. I've also done a variation of this card in pink. It's a three-color card, but I've used all the same techniques as we've learned in this class. Setting up your home studio using tracing paper or frisket stencils and being able to use paper or fabric gives you plenty of options to create anything that might come to your mind, from cards to placemats to pillows to curtains, the possibilities are endless.